

# HELLO, HAMPTONS

Words — Jean Nayar

**G**raced as it is with ribbons of shimmering beaches, sprawling waterfront estates and spectacular gardens, it's little wonder the Hamptons stands as the favored seasonal playground of New York's rich and famous and Wall Street elite. Composed of seaside communities stretching roughly 60 miles along the South Fork of Long Island's East End, it also offers yachtsmen access to some excellent cruising grounds. A robust mix of culture, superb food and wine, a vibrant social scene, exceptional shopping and a high concentration of A-list celebrities amplify its allure. And, not unexpectedly in an amenity-rich context like this, the real estate market is as rarefied as the social scene.

Given the demand for limited property in the Hamptons, particularly along the waterfront, home prices on the East End have soared in recent years and are now among the loftiest on the planet. "A 6.4-acre East Hampton beachfront property sold in February this year for one hundred and ten million dollars, the second highest sale in the Hamptons," says Gioia DiPaolo, managing director of Douglas Elliman Real Estate's Sag Harbor office in the Hamptons. "Number one was an eighteen-acre East Hampton property that sold for one hundred forty-seven million in 2014."

## LAY OF THE LAND

*Yacht owners in the Hamptons rarely dock at their own homes. Instead, they generally keep their boats at any of the dozens of marinas or private yacht clubs.*

Long before the area earned its reputation as a summer decampment for the social set, the Hamptons' villages and hamlets were populated by farmers and fishermen rather than fashionistas. The picturesque cottages and saltbox farmhouses they built in late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the quaint villages of East Hampton, Amagansett and Wainscott — as well



Property



as the Federal, Greek Revival and Victorian dwellings constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the whaling port of

Sag Harbor and other nearby areas — later attracted waves of literary figures, like Walt Whitman, Kurt Vonnegut and John Steinbeck, and artists, such as Willem de Kooning, Larry Rivers and Jackson Pollock, who firmly established the Hamptons as a nexus for the arts. The East End's serenity and charm, plus its proximity to New York City and the sea, eventually made it an ideal getaway among affluent New Englanders, who began building the area's ubiquitous Shingle-style summer cottages there shortly after the Civil War.

Its popularity as a summer destination coalesced in the 1920s after developer Carl Fisher purchased 9,000 acres at the island's eastern tip and created tennis courts, a golf course, polo field and marina at the expansive Montauk Yacht Club Resort and Marina, where the Vanderbilts, Whitneys, Astors and other wealthy socialites of the day summered near the sea. One of just two deep-water ports in the Hamptons, the Montauk Yacht Club is preferred today among sport fishermen. Megayacht owners, on the other hand, tend to opt for the protected port in historic Sag Harbor, at the private Sag Harbor Yacht Club or at one of the two public marinas nearby.



## MY SEA VIEW

Longtime Hamptons resident and yacht owner Ted Conklin opened the American Hotel in Sag Harbor in 1972. It has been a treasured hangout for local celebrities like Billy Joel and Donald Sutherland ever since.



**Why did you settle in Sag Harbor and revive the American Hotel?**  
I was 23 years old and I was looking for something to do. I found this old building that hadn't had a restaurant since 1911 and hadn't really operated fully since before the first World War. It was a fascinating, fun project. It had four outhouses in back and a coal stove in the kitchen, and I thought I knew what I was doing, so I bought it. We got it open Fourth of July weekend 1972, and it was a hit from the beginning.

**How has Sag Harbor changed since then?**  
Well, all the old Victorian buildings that had 11 Irish children and the grandparents in the attic are now owned by a couple from

the city. The housing stock has been tremendously restored, but the nature of the demographic has certainly changed.

**Tell us about your yacht.**  
I have a vintage Trumpy. I've always admired Trumpys and for many years I was looking for one that I could afford. I finally found one in 2007 that was offered in a fire sale by a guy in Florida who was caught up in the crash. It was a post-war version, so it had really good bones with three staterooms and a beautiful salon, a wonderful aft deck and a particularly long battleship bow – you can have 20, 30 people on the boat without a problem. Whereas most similar boats need lots and lots of restoration, mine only required

a small fortune and a few months to improve.

**Where do you take her in winter?**  
In October, I take the boat into the Hudson River and cruise up to Albany to go leaf peeping and experience the festivals in the Hudson River towns. Later, in October and early November, we bring the boat down to the Palm Beach area. Again in early May, we take the boat north and then live on it pretty much until September at the Sag Harbor Yacht Club.

**Where do you cruise?**  
A trip on the Hudson River on a motor yacht is like traveling the Rhine or the Danube – it's extraordinary and very few people do it. The best cruising in the country is from Sag Harbor into Gardiner's Bay past Shelter Island and the Peconic system over to southern Connecticut.

**Where do you take own-of-town guests for lunch?**  
I'd take them to the Dockside [Bar

**PEOPLE WATCHING**  
Ted Conklin's American Hotel is a sure bet for celebrity sightings. Among the big names that reside here are Martha Stewart, Richard Gere, Calvin Klein, Katie Couric, Jennifer Lopez, Sarah Jessica Parker, Paul McCartney, Paul Simon and Gwyneth Paltrow, to name but a few.

& Grill in the historic American Legion building), of course!

**How do you spend your Sunday afternoons?**  
I'm a golfer, so if I'm not sitting out on the porch at the hotel, I would go out to a golf club and entertain there. It's an embarrassment of riches here – we have the National, Shinnecock, the Noyac, the Atlantic, the Bridge, the Maidstone. There are so many great golf courses on the eastern end of Long Island – it's better than Monterey Peninsula in California. It's absolutely top world class.

**What's the key to the good life here?**  
We try to be as non-commercial as possible and recognize that we're lucky enough to be in a town that's the center of the universe.



# HOT PROPERTIES

**26, 28, 32 ACTORS COLONY ROAD, SAG HARBOR**  
\$47,500,000

**\$751**  
Average price  
per square foot  
in Sag Harbor.  
— source: Trulia

Owned by an A-list celebrity, this traditional property is reflective of the classic Hamptons style. The 6.3-acre waterfront estate, which includes two guesthouses, feels incredibly secluded yet is only five minutes from Sag Harbor. Anchoring the property is 19,000-square-foot Strongheart Manor, built in 1902, which has been renovated into an energy-efficient geothermal home.



**40 DUNE ROAD, BRIDGEHAMPTON**  
\$22,995,000

The Hamptons has seen a growing trend of contemporary properties. This 4,500-square-foot home on 2.4 acres has 360-degree views over the ocean and bay. Recently completed in 2014, the five-bedroom house features a light-filled floor plan with walls of thick glass and industrial elements like floating staircases and exposed iron supports.



## A Quick Guide to THE HAMPTONS

**Farm-to-table.** Local restaurants are passionate about fresh food; some of the best include Gabby Karan's Tutto Il Giorno (reservations are not accepted unless you know Gabby or her mother, Donna Karan), Wölffer Kitchen and Sen in Sag Harbor, and Pierre's and Almond in Bridgehampton.

**The place to be.** On a Sunday afternoon, many of the larger-than-life locals dock their yachts at Andre Balazs' Sunset Beach hotel, where the mood is reminiscent of the French Riviera.

**More than wine.** The many vineyards in the Hamptons and the North Fork (sometimes referred to as the Un-Hamptons) offer tastings, music and events throughout the season. Wölffer Estate, a local favorite, holds weekly Twilight Thursdays and Sunset Fridays and Saturdays with live music and dancing.

**Village life.** Each of the many villages and hamlets in the Hamptons has its own character and attracts different crowds. Literary types often land in quieter Bridgehampton, where the annual Hampton Classic Horse Show rounds out the social season. Finance moguls generally settle in Southampton, while actors and artists tend to congregate around Sag Harbor, and Millennials converge on Montauk to party.

**Garden accoutrements.** Gardens are amazing in the Hamptons, and so are the garden shops. Local award-winning landscape designer Frederico Azevedo's shop, Unlimited Earth Care in Bridgehampton, offers outdoor furnishings and accessories suitable for both gardens and yachts.

**Music scene.** Music lovers must visit The Stephen Talkhouse nightclub and bar, one of the best music venues on the island.

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