

Hollywood on sea!

OK! heads to the Hamptons, an idyllic hideaway beloved by the A-list

August is the month when Hollywood's finest holiday in the Hamptons. You'll see them everywhere – building sandcastles on the beach, listening to music recitals, watching polo and attending art gallery openings. It's a constant social whirl for those who move in these star-studded circles!

Located at the eastern end of Long Island, around 100 miles from Manhattan, the Hamptons are a gorgeous collection of seaside towns situated where Long Island splits into two arms, the North and South Forks. The North is known for its vineyards, farms and old world charm, while the South is home to the Hamptons and the two main towns, Southampton and East Hampton, connected by a string of picturesque hamlets such as Bridgehampton and Sag Harbor.

With 50 miles of pristine shoreline, quaint towns lined with boutiques, antique stores and galleries, the Hamptons are one of America's chicest holiday spots.

When should you visit?

Summertime (from Memorial Day in late May to Labour Day in early September) is the peak season – hotel prices rocket but it's the best time to celeb spot. To mingle with the showbiz crowd take in the Hamptons International Film Festival in mid-October, where you may rub shoulders with the likes of Alec Baldwin and Pierce Brosnan.

Where will I spot a celeb?

Head to the beach and you may find yourself sunbathing next to Sarah Jessica Parker. Gwyneth Paltrow or Liv Tyler. Gwyneth and her husband Chris Martin bought a sprawling £3.3m mansion here in 2006 and she's often spied around town. Just last week she attended a party with her mother, *Meet The Fockers* star Blythe Danner. Gwyneth's pal Beyoncé was also in the Hamptons last week, celebrating husband Jay-Z's album launch alongside Kelly Rowland and Jada Pinkett Smith. *Chicago* star Christie Brinkley owns a 21-acre estate here, Kourtney Kardashian spent Independence Day in the Hamptons, while Sir Paul McCartney holidayed at his home here in June with his fiancée Nancy Shevell and may even marry there.

Where should I stay?

For a great location, check into the Southampton Inn in the quaint seaside town of Southampton. When we first glimpsed the Tudor-style inn OK! did a double take as both the architecture and the five-acre lawn set for croquet was more reminiscent of an English country house than an

American hotel! All 90 spacious rooms (21 have connecting doors – ideal for families) are individually decorated in a cosy, unpretentious style and there's also a resident cat. By day enjoy a variety of lawn games, head for the tennis court or do laps in the 50ft pool. In the evening dine at the Oso restaurant that uses fruit and vegetables from the hotel's garden. The Inn is just a stone's throw away from the Southampton's main shopping and restaurant-lined street and a mile from Cooper's Beach.

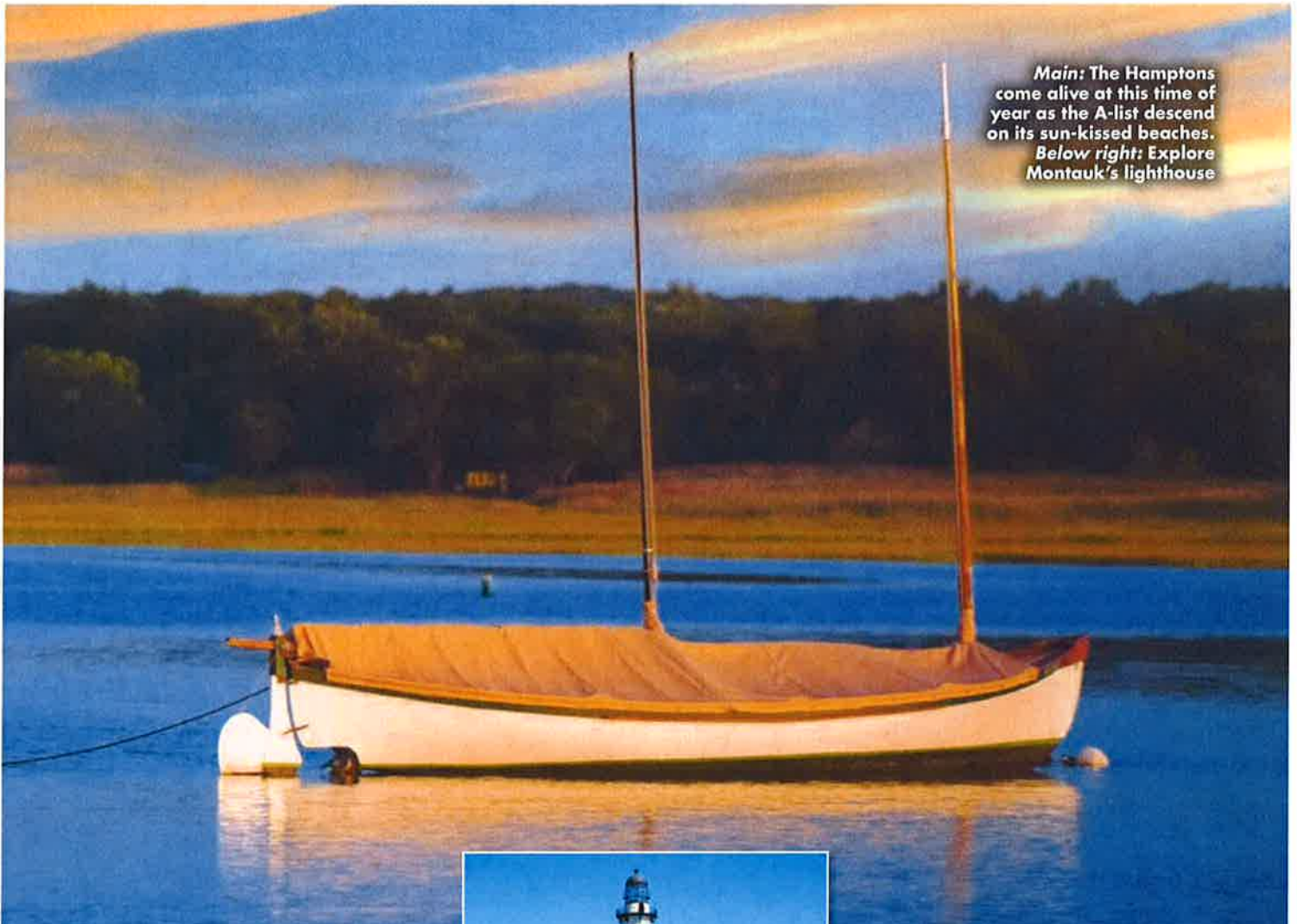
To live it up like a celeb, rent your own pad. We loved the Villager, a chic five-bedroom house with its own pool, in East Hampton.



Below: Spend the day watching the surfers in Montauk or spy Gwyneth (right) on the beach at Amagansett



Main: The Hamptons come alive at this time of year as the A-list descend on its sun-kissed beaches. **Below right:** Explore Montauk's lighthouse



Where can I eat?

Newcomer Scrafina in East Hampton is already a popular haunt. *OK!* loved the laid-back atmosphere, the signature truffle pizza and the Veuve Clicquot and mushroom risotto. At 75 Main in Southampton, *OK!* enjoyed the fairy-lit atmosphere and the teriyaki steak. The barman makes a mean Cosmo too! Another must? The Living Room in East Hampton. Set within the Maidstone Inn, this cosy bar-restaurant with its eclectic décor offers a Scandinavian menu. Rumour has it Kylie Minogue and Sharon Stone have visited. Don't miss a visit to Nick & Toni's where Gwyneth Paltrow and Brad Pitt have been spotted or at the Indian Wells Tavern for fab steaks and burgers, where Renée Zellweger and Ethan Hawke have been seen.

Where can I shop?

For some serious bargains head to the island's North Shore to the Tanger Outlets in Riverhead. You'll find hundreds of shops including Juicy Couture, Ugg and Calvin Klein. In Southampton, 200 boutiques housed in whitewashed, wooden houses line the leafy streets. In East Hampton browse big names such as Tiffany & Co and Gucci as well as Ralph Lauren and his daughter's candy shop Dylan's, where Apple Martin likes to shop.



Left: Designer stores line East Hampton's streets. **Above left:** *OK!* stayed at the Southampton Inn



What sights must I see?

The Hamptons are all about the unspoiled beaches – Cooper's Beach in Southampton was recently voted one of America's best or rub shoulders with the stars at Gwyneth's local Amagansett Beach near East Hampton. Tiana, Peconic and Noyac Bays are best for windsurfing, while Shinnecock is great for diving. Down in Montauk, on the tip of Long Island, *OK!* spent a morning watching the surfers hit the waves. While you're here take time to explore Montauk and its lighthouse. Serious divers should go wreck diving and explore the watery remains of the *Oregon*, a 508ft passenger steamer that sank in 1886. There's also whale watching and deep-sea fishing trips on offer, while on dry land you can play a round of golf, go horseback riding at Deep Hollow Ranch or hike the 32 mile Greenbelt Trail.

Perhaps a visit to a vineyard is more your scene? Here even they have celeb links! Bedell Cellars is owned by movie mogul Michael Lynne, producer of the *Lord Of The Rings* trilogy.

Art lovers should take in the Jackson Pollock's House in East Hampton, while kids should visit the Children's Museum, where you can 'drive' a fire truck. Or head to Greenport on the North Fork, where you can visit the *Bounty*, a schooner used by Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*.

How do I get there?

Virgin Atlantic (0844 209 2770; www.virginatlantic.com) fly three times daily to New York JFK and twice daily to New York Newark. Fares start from £526 including tax.

Rooms at the Southampton Inn (www.southamptoninn.com) start from £115 per night. Homeaway.co.uk offer 600 rental properties in the Hamptons and 180 on Long Island. The Villager, a five-bed house in East Hampton with heated pool and pretty garden, costs from around £3,654 per week. For more details visit www.homeaway.co.uk/p372681.

Rent a car with Avis (www.avis.co.uk, 08445 810 147) from £153 for seven days. **OK!**

REPORT BY ROWENA CARR-ALLINSON EDITED BY ANNABEL MACKIE, *OK!* TRAVEL EDITOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES, MOWGLI FRERE, XCLUSIVE

Where are the Hamptons?



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE LONG ISLAND CVB WWW.DISCOVERLONGISLAND.COM. FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ON NEW YORK STATE, CALL 020 7629 6891 OR VISIT WWW.ILOVENY.COM.