



Beachcomber's souvenirs decorate the shingle on a harbour house.

if you're not so lucky, you are likely to see a familiar face during your visit. Author **JK Rowling** has spent some of her Harry Potter fortune on a home here, and **Madonna, Billy Joel, Martha Stewart, Steven Spielberg** and **Jerry Seinfeld** are a handful of the A-list names you'd recognise on mailboxes around town ... if their names were listed on mailboxes. Seinfeld's spread is particularly impressive, complete with a 22-car garage (and yes, it's full). Though they come here to retreat to their "cottages", celebrities are fixtures on the local social circuit and it's unlikely you'll return home without rubbing elbows with one or more of them.

Arrive on a Friday afternoon and check in to the historic, upscale **Hunting Inn**, right in the heart of East Hampton. Literally steps away from Main Street's shops and

restaurants, you can't find a place to stay that's more convenient; it's also across the street from a Hampton Jitney stop. If you're hungry, the renowned steakhouse, **The Palm**, is inside the inn; it also serves fresh lobster and other seafood dishes. Popular among locals and visitors alike, The Palm consistently ranks on *Zagat's* best restaurants of Long Island list, released annually.

If you're willing to range farther afield, **Starr Boggs**, in Westhampton, is a must-dine restaurant known for its seafood and its original Andy Warhol paintings decorating the walls. Conch chowder and crab cakes are house specialties, but don't miss Little Neck Clams, either; they're harvested fresh from the Long Island Sound. The restaurant's mahogany wood bar is a tantalising invitation to tipple and, from your stool, you'll see the Hamptons' glitterati parade past en route to a table.

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE

Originally from Dublin, **Janet O'Brien** is a leading light on the Hamptons social scene – not just because she's on every guest list, but as the force behind her company, Janet O'Brien Caterers+Events Inc., based in NY and the Hamptons. She opens her little black book for us.

"Sag Harbor, or the 'Hidden Hampton', is my first port of call. First up, the 'lovely hour' at **The American Hotel** is like 'happy hour' only prettier. This vintage Victorian hotel on Main Street in Sag Harbor hosts the well-heeled crowd for lunch, dinner or drinks. Be sure to book a table on the porch for brunch. (001 631 725 3535, theamericanhotel.com)

Surrounded on three sides by water, Long Island's east end is best enjoyed by sea. Whether you're looking for a casual cruise or an elegant yachting experience, Jenny Landy can arrange your charter at **East Hampton**



Yacht Company. (001 917 743 2525, easthamptonyachtco.com)

East Hampton, voted one of America's most beautiful villages, is home to c/o **The Maidstone Hotel**, a country inn with Swedish flare. Its **Living Room Restaurant and Lounge** is the place to rub elbows with notable celebrities. (001 631 324 5006, careofhotels.com/maidstone)

Voting on who serves the best Lobster Roll in the Hamptons is more divisive than national politics. With its pond-side setting and catches fresh from the sea, **Duryea's** in Montauk gets my vote. Arrive onsite with your bottle of wine or grab "to go" to watch the sunset session at **Ditch Plainses Beach.** (001 631 668 2410, duryealobsters.com)

Surf Lodge in Montauk

serves up killer cocktails and sunsets. Its chill lounge deck on Fort Pond with DJ Rob or live music from local songstress Nancy Atlas, is a social epicentre and a favourite of mine. (001 631 668 1562, thesurflodge.com)

The Hideaway, also in Montauk, is a must for the most delicious fresh and authentic Mexican food. It's the perfect après surf, après beach local spot. (001 631 668 6592, thehideawaymontauk.com)

Everyone, from kids to hedge fund managers, is into the surfing culture of the Hamptons. Your one-stop-shop for all the gear you need and lessons is **Air and Speed** in Montauk. You can take surf lessons by the day, hour, or week. (001 631 668 0356, airandspeedsurf.com)



The local farming families that sell the freshest local produce straight from the field (squeezing tomatoes allowed) are quintessential to my business success. Visit **Pike's Farm Stand** in Sagaponack on Sagg Main Street just south of Route 27 (001 631 537 5854) or **Halsey's Farm Stand** 512 Deerfield Road, Watermill (001 631 726 4843) and stock up on the best produce for your picnic."

PHOTOGRAPH BY TANYA MALOTT



The well-kept vineyard at Wolffer Estate, the place to head at sunset for a chilled glass of wine.

Even if you don't have an invitation to an exclusive party, you can still get in on the action. Various websites and social networking groups have sprouted up recently to tip members off to events; you can register for free on a site like *HamptonsUndercover.com* in advance of your visit to receive VIP invitations. If that all seems like too much work, opt for a hotel bar, such as that at **Surf Lodge** in Montauk, which also offers live concerts to amp up the energy, or one of the area's popular nightclubs. **Pink Elephant** and **The White House** are local favourites. And don't overlook gallery openings, the annual **ArtHamptons** art fair, fundraisers and charity benefits; these are key to the Hamptons' social scene and are the easiest way for visitors to clink glasses with other movers and shakers.

Besides beachcombing, eating, and glass-clinking, the Hamptons offer plenty to keep you entertained for a weekend or longer. One of the most popular pastimes on the South Fork is exploring **Montauk**, the most eastern point on Long Island. A 30-minute drive from East Hampton, the once-shabby Montauk has only recently become a magnet for travellers, thanks to the renovation of a number of hotels into freshened-up, boutique lodgings. Here, you can taste the salt in the air and see the fishermen pulling in their hauls while trying your own hand – or legs – at the coastal life. Montauk has become world-famous for its surfing; if you want to test the waves for yourself,

EAT AT ...

The Living Room Local and slow are the buzz words here. (207 Main Street, East Hampton, 001 631 324 5006, careofhotels.com/maidstone) **Harvest on Fort Pond** Plates for sharing at this restaurant on the pond. (11 South Emery Street, Montauk, 001 631 668 5574, harvest2000.com/hfp) **Lobster Roll** The blue, white and brick building, with the words "Lunch" jutting out of the roof, may seem unassuming, but this is the best place for the eponymous – and obligatory – lobster roll. (1980 Montauk Highway, Amagansett, 001 631 267 3740, lobsterroll.com) **LTBurger in the Harbor** Big burgers chased by chi-chi shakes at this celebrity hotspot – check out the signatures on the wall near the register. (62 Main Street, Sag Harbor, 001 631 899 4646, ltburger.com)

SLEEP AT ...

BUDGET Sole East Updated retro chic. (Rooms from \$189, 90 Second House Road, Montauk, 001 631 668 2105, soleeast.com) **MID-PRICE The Hunting Inn** Historic and convenient, particularly for visitors coming in on the Hampton Jitney. (Rooms from \$250, 94 Main Street, East Hampton, 001 631 324 0410, thepalm.com/Hunting-Inn). **SPLURGE Capri Boutique Hotel** for the social set, with a shiny white and bright beachy colour scheme. (Rooms from \$395, 281 County Road, 39A, Route 27, Southampton, 001 631 504 6575, caprisouthampton.com)

SHOP AT ...

BookHampton East Hampton's independent bookstore has beach reads and local history. (41 Main Street, East Hampton, 001 631 324 4939, bookhampton.com) **Sag**

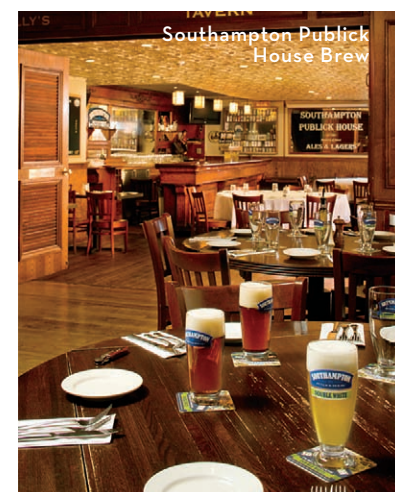


LT Burger

Harbor Farmers Market Local goods like honey and candles make easy-to-pack gifts to take home. (Check Sag-Harbor-Farmers-Market Facebook page for current location)

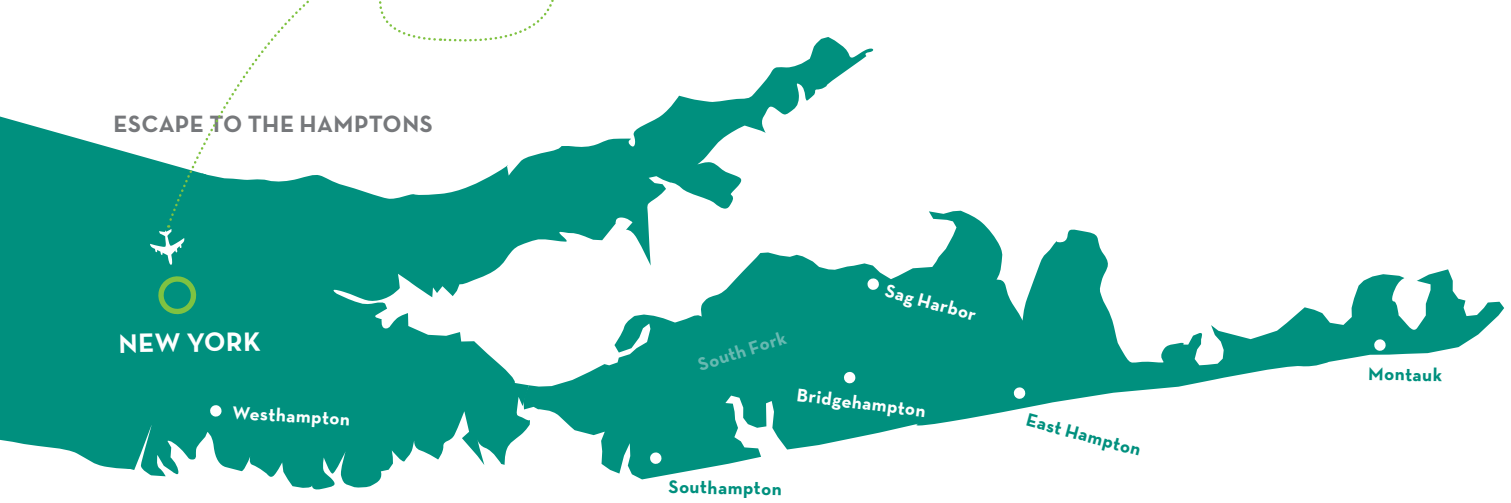
DRINK AT ...

Wolffer Estate Vineyard Spectacular sunset over the vineyard, with wine on the stone terrace. (139 Sagg Road, Sagaponack, 001 631 537 5106, wolffer.com) **Southampton Public House Brew** at the Hamptons' oldest brewery. (40 Bowden Square, Southampton, 001 631 283 2800, publick.com)



DON'T MISS *Discoverlongisland.com* has up-to-date calendars for current and upcoming events in the Hamptons and surrounding areas of Long Island. Key summer events include—**June 29** Southampton Fresh Air Home Benefit Fireworks Show; **July 13-15** ArtHamptons International Fine Art Fair; **August 26** Hampton Classic Horse Show

ESCAPE TO THE HAMPTONS



GETTING THERE

If you're going to sit in traffic – and you are, if you travel by anything other than helicopter or boat – let someone else do the driving and take the Hampton Jitney. From JFK, you'll need to take a taxi from the airport to Fresh Meadows, Queens (tell the driver to leave you at the corner of 190th Street and the Eastbound Service Road of the Long Island Expressway). The stop for the Jitney is in front of

the Fresh Meadows Cineplex Odeon Movie Theatre. There are regular Hamptons departures; check the website for specific times (approx \$53 return for weekend ticket; hamptonjitney.com). The trip can take from 2.5 – 4 hours, depending on traffic. Another option is to take Long Island Rail Road's Montauk Line train from Penn Station in Manhattan. Average trip time is three hours. (mta.info/lirr)



Surfers' delight – Montauk is known for its quality surfing – and chilled out nightlife.

several shops rent gear and offer lessons for first-timers. End the day at any of those renovated hotels' bars or restaurants; **Surf Lodge** and **Sole East** are popular spots for those in-the-know.

Following Long Island's winery trail is another option for daytime activities and is a perfect way to fit in a visit to many of the Hamptons' villages. A favourite stop on the winery trail is the **Wolffer Estate Vineyard**, a 23-year-old European style winery and vineyard that sits on about 20 hectares of a 70-hectare parcel. Visitors can arrange tours in advance or show up any time for a tasting. If you're searching for gifts to give friends and family, there are plenty of shops waiting to help you fill your suitcase

... for a price. Cynthia Rowley's boutique at the newly opened **Capri Hotel** in Southampton sells colourful, casual jewellery, sun hats and board games that spark memories of sun and sand. **Montauk Carriage House**, in Montauk, sells handmade jewellery and prints of local landmarks, such as the Montauk Point Lighthouse, one of the oldest lighthouses in the US.

You might even want to pick up a souvenir for yourself, proof that you were here, summering with New York's cool set. 🍀



Aer Lingus flies from Dublin to New York twice daily, and from Shannon to New York, Mon, Wed, Fri and Sun.