

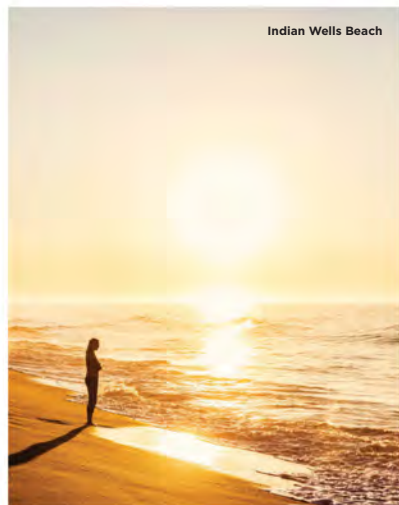


The Insider's Guide To Hanging Out in the Hamptons*

*Even if You're Not a Celebrity or a Billionaire

There's a summer's worth of
carefree fun to be had in the fabled enclave.
You just have to know where to look

By Kristin Vuković
Photographs by Julien Capmeil



Indian Wells Beach

I'm standing on Indian Wells Beach in Amagansett

on the south shore of Long Island, marveling at the vastness of the Atlantic, watching waves lap and recede. During the depths of the pandemic, I spent hours like this, witnessing the ocean's moods: white-capped waves strong enough to push formidable mounds of sand into the parking lot; tranquil, rolling surf that caressed the shoreline like a long embrace. No matter the weather, my ocean viewing trips became an almost daily occurrence. Standing on the beach reminded me of the fleeting nature of life, the sands shifting beneath my feet.

Amagansett was our shelter. It was where our toddler daughter spent her first year of nursery school, where we made new and lasting friends with neighbors and fellow parents. As the pandemic eased, we discovered favorite local haunts where we're now welcomed like family.

And now it's time to share that hospitality. It turns out that despite the Hamptons' reputation as the toughest of social geographies to crack, this trio of East Hampton's beachy hamlets—Amagansett, Springs, and Montauk—can feel like home to any visitor. Welcome to the Hamptons.



Amber Waves founders Katie Baldwin and Amanda Merrow



Amber Waves Market



Coche Comedor



The Reform Club

AMAGANSETT

THE VIBE: WARM-HEARTED CHIC

Long Island's East End boasts a rich farming and fishing heritage; some farms trace back a dozen generations, and its fertile ground sustained indigenous peoples for millennia. Amagansett, despite its upscale evolution, has preserved its agricultural legacy, and one of its pillars is **Amber Waves Farm, Market & Café**, a nonprofit that aims to unite food and community through education, workshops, dining, and delicious shopping.

Founders Katie Baldwin and Amanda Merrow chart their legacy from opening Amber Waves Farm on newly conserved farmland in 2009 to reopening the adjacent Amagansett Farmers Market as Amber Waves Market in 2017. And Amagansett embraces its soil-loving, warm-hearted anchor. "It's like your fun meetup spot," Baldwin says. (The outdoor café is the ideal spot to grab a casual lunch, or coffee and freshly baked pastries.)

So who better to ask where else to eat in town? Merrow calls **Coche Comedor**, a no-reservations Mexican spot with the largest tequila and mezcal list on the East End, a "farmer haunt." Their other favorite—and mine—is **il Buco al Mare**, which opened to acclaim two summers ago and serves standouts including DOP burrata with cherries, and black garlic skirt steak with Montreal spice. It's also fun to browse **il Buco Vita** next door for Italian tabletop collections, antiques, and homewares from local artists and designers.

Summer in the Hamptons means lobster rolls, so it's vital to know the best players: first, the aptly named **Lobster Roll**, where the sign has the word LUNCH emblazoned on it. For a more under-the-radar option, head out Route 27 to **Morty's Oyster Stand** on the Amagansett-Montauk border for Morty's Lobster Roll with black truffle salt on a Hawaiian roll. (Yes, get that frozen BBC cocktail—you'll thank me later.)

And the shopping! Amagansett Square (where you'll find me at a **Mandala Yoga Center for Healing Arts** outdoor yoga class) is home to **Love Adorned**, one of

Atlantic
Avenue
Beach



my favorite shops for eclectic vintage jewelry and unusual items for the home, inspired by owner Lori Leven's world travels. One can stroll the afternoon away along Main Street, home to a sparkling collection of shops, including **E-E Home**, Elizabeth Eichner's curation of elegant, artisan-driven wares.

For overnighers, Amagansett has double the goods. Within its 17th- and 18th-century buildings, **The Roundtree Amagansett** layers quiet, modern luxuries in its rooms and suites, renovated standalone shingled cottages, and a two-bedroom house. A dedicated shuttle to nearby Atlantic Avenue Beach during summers makes the dream complete. Nearly hidden (and all the more desirable for it), **The Reform Club** is an oasis of suites, cottages, and a four-bedroom house, all with art-forward interiors and edged by mesmerizing privet gardens. It's a heady escape within an escape.

SPRINGS

THE VIBE: ARTSY CALM

Artists attract artists, and the leafy-green, largely residential hamlet of Springs owes its bona fides to Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, and Willem de Kooning. "A flourishing art community took root when Pollock and Krasner moved to Springs in 1945," says Helen A. Harrison, director of the **Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center** in Springs. "They were the magnet that drew many of their colleagues from the city, and also encouraged native-born Bonackers [local parlance for locals] to try their hand at art."

No matter the beach weather, a visit to the Pollock-Krasner House is a must. Seeing the house and studio, with its paint-spattered floor from Pollock's famous drip technique and walls bearing evidence of Krasner's dynamic action paintings, is worth the trip alone. (Book at least two weeks in advance; tours run Thursday through Sunday from May through October.) Harrison reveals a few more art-lovers can't-miss stops: **Ashawagh Hall**, for its shows by local artists and events like the Springs



EHP Resort
& Marina



Sí Sí restaurant



Sunset Harbor
restaurant

The Ranch

Arts & Culture Musts

The 16-acre **LongHouse Reserve**, founded by renowned textile designer and collector Jack Lenor Larsen, is “the jewel of East Hampton,” says Scott Blueborn, citing its remarkable sculpture garden. He also recommends visiting **Guild Hall**, a multidisciplinary cultural institution with innovative programming in East Hampton. In Montauk, **The Ranch**, founded by former Marlborough Gallery president Max Levai, features two exhibition spaces—a sculpture field and a 4,500-square-foot Carl Fisher barn that has been converted to a gallery space—and a twin structure that remains an active horse stable. The 27-acre privately owned property is open by advance appointment only. “**The Art Barge**,” a beached WWII Navy barge on the south shore of Napeague Harbor in Amagansett available by appointment, boasts panoramic views and has hosted classes since 1960 based on the teaching philosophy advanced by Mabel and Victor D’Amico—and it still champions the creative potential of adults and children today.



Invitational Art Show, and **The Leiber Collection**, with “amazing Judith Leiber handbags and Gerson Leiber paintings.”

Artists, like all of us, have to eat, so I tap illustrator, designer, and Hamptons native Scott Blueborn to sketch his night-out picks. Blueborn likes the margaritas and mushroom tacos at **Rita Cantina**, which opened two summers ago. He also likes **Bostwick’s on the Harbor**, another no-reservations star where locals line up as early as the 5 p.m. opening for plates like steamed mussels in lemongrass-red Thai coconut curry sauce.

And while Blueborn is right to name Springs the quietest of the hamlets, the food scene continues to pick up steam. **Sí Sí** and **Sunset Harbor** (which opened in 2021 and 2022) now join the party at **EHP Resort & Marina**, which offers luxe accommodations amid the yachts, ranging from studios to three-bedroom suites and standalone cottages on its nine-acre property. With waterfront perches and sunset views, both restaurants are magnets in their own right (with apologies to Pollock and Krasner). I’m a fan of **Sí Sí**’s Mediterranean menu, especially the spaghetti vongole and whole roasted branzino. At **Sunset Harbor**, the vibe is family-style plates and a sushi and nigiri menu that highlights local tuna and other fresh catch. Whether overnighing here or not, the morning play is to grab City of Saints Coffee and fresh pastries at **Buongiorno**, EHP’s Italian-style bakery with a charming boutique. But perhaps most of all, it’s incumbent to enjoy the charms of artistic Springs while they remain in lovely balance. “It’s the most down-to-earth,” says Blueborn, “but it’s changing the fastest.”

MONTAUK

THE VIBE: STILL SURFY

Known as “The End,” Montauk is a place you go to really feel like you got away. A fishing and surfing haven located at the tip of the South Fork, Montauk has changed dramatically over the past decade, but it’s still home to a dynamic surfing community. “My mother, Terry Patterson, took over the New York District of the ESA [Eastern Surfing Association] back in 1992, and that’s where my surf journey really began,” says Tripoli Patterson,

Marram



Studio floor at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.



Ditch Plains Beach





The HAUS
Boat from
Destination
Haus



The Crow's
Nest



Duryea's

an internationally recognized surfer, Hamptons native, and owner/director of Tripoli Gallery of Contemporary Art in the East Hampton hamlet of Wainscott. "My favorite culture places in Montauk are the fishing docks, because that's the true character of Montauk and what it was built on," he says. "I really love **The Dock**," he says of the classic fish and drinks spot on Montauk Harbor. "It feels the most authentic, and the crew that run it are locally friendly."

There's no arguing that Montauk is ushering in a new wave of chic. **Marram**, a 96-room luxury boutique retreat, sits directly on the Atlantic Ocean with coveted beachfront access. The promise here is one of restoration: Connect with nature in the newly redesigned open-air communal lounge, and then feed body and soul at **Mostrador Marram**, a South American café featuring seasonally crafted rotating menus and fresh pastries. Re-center in rooms without televisions and with spiritual and creative programming, including salt cave therapy, personalized tarot readings, private energy healing sessions, and singing bowl sound baths. For a family-friendly retreat, **Daunt's Albatross** is a newly renovated, family-run, third-generation motel nestled between the beach and downtown. Across the street, the also newly renovated **Bird on the Roof** serves a spectacular brunch.

Founded by mother/daughters Laureen, Kendra, and Carlyn Vellante, **Destination Haus** hosts buzzy HAUS Boat, poised to be the landing pad this summer, while **Duryea's** holds its pole position as a Montauk classic. They take walk-ins, and trust me when I tell you the giant, family-style lobster Cobb salad and market fish are worth the wait—and while you're waiting, you can shop at its boutique. And speaking of waiting, while **The Crow's Nest** hotel/restaurant has limited parking and accommodates walk-ins only, I'll wait as long as it takes for my favorite pasta in the whole of the Hamptons—local lobster tagliatelle with Calabrian chili butter. And its Lake Montauk beachfront, with bonfires on cool evenings, is a perfect place to witness the ethereal, captivating East End light. Because now it's yours, too.

The Insider's Guide to East Hampton Beaches

Many Hamptons beaches require local parking permits or seasonal parking passes that sell out quickly, so you might need to take an Uber to access hidden gems. East Hampton's **Main Beach** is popular for a reason, with its summer music series and fresh fare at **The Beach Hut on Main**. (Fan favorites include ahi tuna tacos and lobster rolls.) If you have a car, **Atlantic Avenue Beach** in Amagansett is one of the most beautiful ocean beaches in the Hamptons; you can park for \$50 per day and stay for lunch because the "**Shack**" serves the usual beach fare and ice cream for kids, plus you can rent umbrellas and chairs. **Louse Point**, a beach in Springs with tranquil waters and lovely views, is one of Helen Harrison's favorites. In Montauk, **Ditch Plains** is "a classic surf beach and provides easy waves for beginners and experts alike," says Tripoli Patterson. If waves aren't your jam, you can find respite at **Gin Beach**, which is kid-friendly due to its calmer waters. (Grab a fresh seafood lunch at nearby **Inlet Seafood Restaurant**.)



Beachfront
at Marram