



Tug boats near Gardiner's Bay in East Hampton

Everyone has their postcard-perfect picture of the Hamptons—an indelible first image of the Atlantic’s ferocious waves crashing on East Hampton’s Main Beach, or the pastel evanescence of Napeague Bay at sunset. Where else in the world do verdant lawns and boxy privet hedges creep so near to the glistening sea? No wonder this landscape—and the light it reflects—has attracted so many generations of artists, from 1891, when American impressionist painter William Merritt Chase started the Shinnecock Hills Summer School of Art, to the 1950s, when Jackson Pollock and later Willem de Kooning immortalized it in their work.

My first memory of the East End of Long Island stretches back to the summer of 1967, when I was 3 and my parents took me to my grandparents’ house overlooking Smith Cove on Shelter Island. My grandfather

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was an avid boater who loved to tack around the bay in his sloop. “Coming about,” he would say. “Hard-a-lee,” I’d reply. Once moored, Grandpa would float on his back in the salty water, pitching stones over the jetty in an effort to clean up his beach. I wasn’t nearly as skilled at hurling stones over the jetty, but I did learn to swim. I also learned to finagle my grandmother into buying me treats at a funky little store down the road called the Glass House. On a good day it was a Barbie doll. On a bad

day, a box of Red Hots or an Atomic Fireball. Sunday nights were reserved for family dinners at Mashomack, a private hunting and fishing club set on 2,039 acres on a peninsula across the bay.

I've spent my fair share of time in the Hamptons—first Shelter Island and later Quogue, where my father owned a beach shack before moving to Sag Harbor in the mid-1980s. On the only sunny day in the summer of 1996, my husband and I exchanged vows in Sag Harbor's Egyptian Revival-style Old Whalers' Church, with its grand white facade and prim, peeling pastel interior. Afterward we celebrated on a bluff overlooking Gardiner's Bay in Springs, not far from the modest wood-frame house and studio on Accabonac Creek where Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock lived and worked.

Now, years later, my grandparents are gone, and their Shelter Island house is, too. In fact, so many of the landmarks of my youth in the Hamptons have disappeared. Places that, on a hot August afternoon in 1967, I would have sworn would be there forever: Dreesen's, the East Hampton purveyor of powdery donuts, and the beloved Glass House, too. These days, instead of donuts and penny candy, visitors buy \$5 ice-cream cones at Scoop du Jour. Places change, perhaps more than people. But if you know your way around this end of Long Island as I do, there are still countless simple pleasures and secret spots to discover.

One of my favorite places is Mashomack, which has remained intact and is now a public nature preserve and a sanctuary to all kinds of flora and fauna, including a dense population of breeding osprey. A hike along Mashomack Preserve's 20 miles of trails circumventing the coastline is a perfect precursor to an indulgent dinner at Terry and Lisa Harwood's nearby Vine Street Café. The exposed beams, the

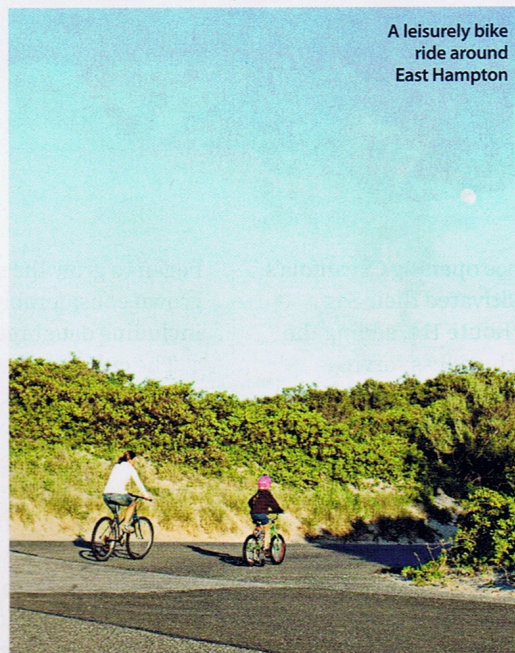
low-key decor of simple white tablecloth-covered tables, and the delicious food draw regulars such as Bottega Veneta designer Tomas Maier, who likes to sit on the back porch and order house specials such as bay scallop ceviche, strip steak with bordelaise sauce, and sticky toffee pudding. Barring a Saturday night reservation at Vine Street, visitors to Mashomack can also pack a picnic from another not-so-secret spot in Sag Harbor: Cavaniola's Gourmet, where Michael and Tracey Cavaniola sell artichoke-and-Asiago panini, freshly fried potato chips, ➔



Round Swamp Farm in East Hampton



The Gardiner Mill in East Hampton



A leisurely bike ride around East Hampton



Cavaniola's Cheese Shop in Sag Harbor

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, LEFT: ERICKA MCCONNELL, DAN JOSEPHS, ANNIE SCHLECHTER, TARA DONNE; OPPOSITE: DAN JOSEPHS