



# DEEDS & DON'TS

The Inside Scoop on East End Real Estate

## Piece Of History

A shy \$13 million is the ask for this late-1880s Stanford White–designed home, one of the legendary “Seven Sisters” built on a bluff above Montauk.



# PEDIGREED PERCHES

FOR DESIGN ENTHUSIASTS IN SEARCH OF A HOME with architectural cachet, the East End never fails to deliver. But take heed: The market’s moving fast. Set on 2.2 acres overlooking Hook Pond and the ocean beyond, an East Hampton residence conceived by architect Robert A.M. Stern is on the market for \$8.95 million with Denise Wilder and Mike Moran of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. Stern designed the 6,263-square-foot seven-bedroom home—his first foray into the shingle style—for artist Norman Mercer and his wife, Carol, in 1975. History buffs will jump at the chance to own one of Montauk’s famed “Seven Sisters,” listed for \$12.995 million with Rylan Jacka and Mark



Robert A.M. Stern

Webb of Sotheby’s International Realty. Designed in the late 1880s by architect Stanford White, the four-bedroom manse occupies 2.3 acres on a bluff above the ocean. Meanwhile, on Shelter Island, Penelope Moore of Saunders & Associates is listing a contemporary gem: An \$8.1 million home originally designed by Peter Schladermundt (he conceived structures for the 1964 New York World’s Fair) and updated by Frederick Stelle of Stelle Lomont Rouhani Architects. The three-bedroom steel, glass, stone, and wood pad consists of two volumes joined by a glass pavilion and features a sauna, a pool, and water views. In the market for something more temporary, but don’t want to skimp on style? Harald Grant

HOUSE: GAVIN ZEIGLER/SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



**Jaffe Gem** Architect Norman Jaffe designed this 1980s contemporary on Meadow Lane, a stark departure from the trademark shingled abstractions typically associated with his work.



Norman Jaffe

of Sotheby's is representing a 1980s Norman Jaffe-designed beachfront property on Southampton's Meadow Lane. Available to rent in August for \$250,000, September for \$100,000, or year-round for \$650,000, the 6,500-square-foot six-bedroom residence sports a sleek, almost futuristic, white-columned exterior on four acres with a gunite pool, a tennis court, and bay and ocean views. The only downside is having to leave when the lease is up. —*Laura Fenton*



## IT'S A MAD, MAD MARKET

The COVID-19 pandemic has delivered an unexpected jolt to East End real estate, with an influx of buyers and renters in numbers not heard of since 9/11. "It began as a storm of rental requests this spring," recounts Compass agent Cee Scott Brown, "but as rentals became scarce and people realized that working remotely was a viable new option, they started looking at sale properties." The onslaught of renters and buyers has flipped a years-long slump virtually overnight, adds Hara

Kang of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "There's no doubt that the market is currently favoring sellers and landlords," he says.

To that point, bidding wars—even over rentals—have become commonplace. "Properties that normally run \$10,000 a month are fetching as much as \$20,000 or \$25,000 a month

this summer," says Brown, adding that the majority of these rentals have been scooped up sight unseen, with tenants often relying on 3-D virtual tours of properties, especially during the first two months of

## THIS ISSUE'S

# BIG DEAL

Fashion designer Elie Tahari has been trying to unload his two-acre oceanfront retreat in Sagaponack since 2017, when it first hit the market for a whopping \$45 million. The estate was relisted for \$39 million last November, but perhaps more attractive than the price reduction right now is the fact that the beach house is still available for those seeking temporary respite: It can be rented for \$450,000 during the month of August or \$1.1 million annually. The centerpiece of the home: a dramatic great room that occupies the structure's heart, a converted



Elie Tahari

200-year-old barn. (The residence's three bedrooms—including the master suite, with panoramic ocean views—are located in a contemporary addition.) Given that the house is a relatively modest 4,500 square feet,

Tahari is throwing in renovation plans commissioned from Stelle Lomont Rouhani Architects, which would expand its size to eight bedrooms and more than 10,000 square feet. Outside, there's a 60-

foot pool surrounded by Russian olive trees, a meditation garden, and a pergola. "The house is perched high enough that it has total privacy, but low enough that the beach is easily accessible," says Sotheby's International Realty's Keith Green, who is sharing the listing with the firm's Ann Ciardullo. "With the doors open, the house seems to breathe the ocean inside." —*L. F.*

the pandemic. According to Kang, "Many people were left debating whether it's really worth spending \$60,000 to \$350,000 on a summer rental when that money could be put toward a down payment instead. And as options for turnkey rentals became few and far between, some would-be renters turned into purchasers by default."

Has the checklist changed for this new breed of buyer? City dwellers who are considering hunkering down on the East End are seeking out family-friendly properties with enough space and amenities to be comfortable

"There's no doubt that the market is currently favoring sellers and landlords"

for the long haul. "A minimum of an acre of land is among the most requested criteria," says Kang, "and there's a huge appetite for new construction, especially if it's completed and ready to close within two to four weeks of signing contracts." The deluge, he adds, isn't showing any signs of slowing down,

even now that midsummer is upon us. "The second quarter was one of the busiest we've seen in 15 years, and inventory has dropped to nearly nothing in both the rental and sales markets. Homes that are priced right are seeing offers within the first five days of being listed." —*Jean Nayar*



### BEFORE THEY WERE BROKERS: Kelly Killoren Bensimon

Many people know Kelly Killoren Bensimon from Bravo's hit series *The Real Housewives of New York City*, but her professional credits go well beyond television. After modeling during college (she attended Trinity College and then Columbia University), the Illinois native broke into the publishing industry, holding editorial positions at *Top Model*, *Gotham*, *Hamptons*, and *ELLE Accessories* magazines. She later authored several books, including two novels as well as Assouline's *American Style* and *In the Spirit of the Hamptons*. Two years ago, Bensimon decided to get her real estate license, first joining Dolly Lenz and then moving to Douglas Elliman Real Estate, where she currently holds both residential and commercial listings. "I initially became licensed so that I could help my father sell our family home, but I've always had a passion for architecture and interiors," says Bensimon, who works on the East End in addition to New York City, Miami, and Palm Beach. "Thanks to the fan base I gained through the show and books, I've been able to deliver real estate content to a broad audience. I feel so fortunate to do what I love." —*Alyssa Bird*



BOOK COVER: COURTESY OF ASSOULINE



**Back To The Land**  
The Shinnecock Indian Nation is fighting to stop development on burial grounds established by its ancestors. (LEFT) A photo dating from 1884.



### TURF WARS

For many years, development just east of the Shinnecock Canal has been full steam ahead. But in 2018, when human remains believed to be those of a Shinnecock ancestor were unearthed at a construction site on Hawthorne Road, the Town of Southampton began pumping the breaks on new builds. The town subsequently purchased the land, in addition to another 3.3 acres, for \$2.2 million, using money from the Community Preservation Fund. The goal, according to Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman:

"To prevent a situation like the one on Hawthorne Road from ever happening again."

Increased activism by the Shinnecock Indian Nation has been bolstered further by the 2019 documentary *Conscience Point*, which depicts the nation's efforts to preserve its ancient burial grounds. Now proposed legislation requiring an archaeological survey before

building permits are issued in certain areas of Shinnecock Hills is on the table, although hearings have been postponed due to COVID-19.

Treva Wurmfeld, who wrote, directed, and produced *Conscience Point*, says, "It's important for people to know the Shinnecock nation's history

and keep it front and center." Shinnecock activist Rebecca Hill-Genia suggests it's just the beginning for the growing coalition of area residents who are demanding that developers respect the ancient burial

grounds, not to mention the environment. "Our alliances are getting bigger and stronger," Hill-Genia says, "and we're not going anywhere." —*Lisa Chamoff*

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