

James Lane

— Real Estate & Design —

June 2025

www.jameslanepost.com



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Christopher Covert.
Courtesy of The Modlin Group

The Art Of The Deal, Reinvented

Christopher Covert And The Modlin Group

By Ty Wenzel

With a background in film, television, and music, The Modlin Group’s Brokerage Director Christopher Covert takes a uniquely creative approach to the world of luxury real estate. Yet it is not just his eye for branding and storytelling that sets him apart. Covert’s profound insight into subtleties in each transaction, his personal experience working through village codes, and his reputation for combining emotional intelligence with analytical insight have established him as a counsel of choice in a marketplace that grows more complicated by the day. In this interview, we discuss how his varied career has influenced his style of handling high-stakes transactions, his idea of boutique brokerage culture, and how The Modlin Group sets the standard for understated excellence in the Hamptons.

Your background in film, television, and music is fascinating. How has that creative experience influenced your approach to branding and marketing in luxury real estate?

My previous career has provided a better foundation for my approach to real estate relationships and transactions — more than branding and marketing — though I do put serious focused energy into those aspects as well. Transactions and listings are different every time and will always require a singular and unique path toward successful completion. The cast of characters are different every time: the location, the terms of a deal, the personalities of the principals and cooperating agents. What I learned from early days in

production is that there is no one way to do things, and that being proactive and adaptive is hugely important in real estate as well.

Chris, you’re known for interpreting data with precision — how do you balance the hard numbers with the emotional side of luxury home buying in the Hamptons?

It’s sadly funny, but I am actually the least gifted analytical person I know, so working through data requires tremendous effort on my end, but it is so, so, so critical to master. Our clientele has such diverse backgrounds — creatives, finance, tech, young families, empty nesters, etc. — that there are always going to be differences in how a client views a home. Is it a passion project, a perfect home, a smart investment? As a broker, I try and help clients find the right balance of loving a home for what it is (or can be), but also making sure that they feel good knowing that their money is spent wisely. Understanding value is just as much a part of happiness as the perfect kitchen.

How has your deep understanding of village and town codes helped clients navigate complex investment opportunities in the Hamptons?

This is a critically important part of our job as real estate advisors, and it links to the above topic of data. How can we properly guide our clients without fully understanding what they are looking at? Our clients are busy;

wasting their time is never a good look, and more often than not leads to losing a client. Understanding what can or cannot be done with a property, what may or may not be to code, or understanding wetland regulation — there are so many layers — this knowledge is key, and being able to convey with confidence to both sellers and buyers before engaging is key. Nothing is worse than having a buyer fall in love with that six-bedroom home with a dock, only to find out later that it’s really only a legal four and that the dock was never permitted. You have to do the work and not take things at face value.

What do you see as the most significant shift in the Hamptons real estate market post-Covid, and how is Modlin uniquely positioned to respond?

Obviously, we have returned to a less emotion-driven and much more measured and analytical approach to transacting. That, coupled with historically low inventory, has resulted in market pacing slowing down. The quiet, private, off-market segment, which has always existed to some degree, really took off during Covid and has cemented itself as a significant part of the market. Some of this is based on clients’ need for discretion, but a lot of it also has to do with the lack of inventory. As soon as a client is ready to sell, we know through the network of agents we engage with daily that there are often multiple buyers ready to pounce, so properties frequently find deals before hitting the open market. At Modlin Group Hamptons, we are laser-focused on our clients’ needs, and it is also incredibly important to us that we maintain positive relations across the brokerage community.

Modlin is known for its distinct identity — how did you go about building a brand that feels different from other Hamptons brokerages?

This was very simple. Adam Modlin has created one of the most respected and successful boutique agencies to be found not just in New York City, but anywhere. He has spent the last 25+ years perfecting his vision of how real estate should work, and by creating a business model that is structured more like a private family office than a storefront corporate real estate. Adam has been tremendously successful in creating a business that is appreciated by some of the world’s most significant clients. Having quietly completed nearly \$1B in Hamptons deals, it made perfect sense for him to open an office Out East. I just follow his lead.

As a brokerage director, how do you foster a culture that encourages both innovation and integrity among your agents?

Again, I think this is all about following the lead that Adam has established in the city for over 25 years. We are not a firm that is about volume, but integrity. Quality, not quantity. Long-term relationships over a quick deal. That is how we view our trusted colleagues. We are not looking to fill desks, we are looking to partner with best-in-class agents that can represent the high level of intelligence and integrity that has long been established in the City office. Being a boutique firm, we can be collaborative, and everyone on the team has a voice. It’s an amazing experience to have a group meeting where our agents and support staff are welcome to share ideas about how we can grow and continue to thrive in the Hamptons marketplace. We are small and nimble and not constrained by corporate layers. In a fast-paced and always-changing market, this is a huge advantage for not only our clients but our agents.

What emerging trends in design, construction, or buyer behavior do you think will shape the next five years in luxury Hamptons real estate?

Ask me in six years.

How do you see the role of technology evolving in high-touch luxury transactions, and how is Modlin adapting to stay ahead?

Nothing will ever replace the dedicated personal relationships we foster at Modlin Group. Integrity, knowledge, discretion, and dedication.

Learn more by visiting modlingroup.com.

Hamptons Commercial Offerings

Inquire For Additional Information & to Discuss Exclusive Off-Market Opportunities.



117 Main St, Sag Harbor **FOR SALE**
Rare Village Main Street Mixed-Use Property
Featuring a Private Backyard & Pool.
Iconic Retail Storefront Plus 5 Bedroom Residence.



105-107 Newtown Ln, East Hampton **FOR SALE**
Showcase Mixed Use Compound w/ Impressive
NOI at the Gateway to East Hampton Village.



363 Beach Rd, Hampton Bays **FOR SALE / LEASE**
Waterfront Hospitality Venue With Sweeping Ocean
Views From Wraparound Decks - 525 Person Capacity.



32 Lighthouse Rd, Hampton Bays **FOR SALE**
Waterfront Restaurant (Leased) & 13-Key Resort.
Incredible Sunset Views Over Shinnecock Bay.



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East Hampton Village Shopping District.



84 S Emerson Ave, Montauk **FOR SALE**
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Hal Zwick
Licensed RE Salesperson
hal.zwick@compass.com
631.678.2460

Jeffrey Sztorc
Licensed RE Salesperson
jeffrey.sztorc@compass.com
631.903.5022

@hamptonscommercialre | hamptonscommercialre.com



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Robinson is known for his vivid imagery and has exhibited his work globally while staying connected to the contemporary art scene in London. He operates at the intersection of adventure and contemporary art. His latest series of natural motifs highlights the pleasures and beauty of nature while addressing significant emotional and social questions.

Azevedo is an award-winning landscape designer. He has a profound understanding of the region's diverse and delicate environments and creates elegant landscapes across the East End. He is renowned for his ability to blend natural design elements with color, texture, and form to create stunning outdoor spaces.

Unlimited Earth Care invites all art and nature enthusiasts to attend “Flourish and Flow” at the Garden Market. Join for an enjoyable evening filled with stunning artwork and explore a carefully curated selection of native and well-adapted plants and flowers, specifically chosen to thrive in Hamptons gardens. Additionally, you’ll find modern garden accessories, creative planters made from sustainable materials, and unique outdoor furniture designed to enhance your experience with nature at home.

To RSVP for the opening reception, email info@unlimitedearthcare.com.

Flourish & Flow

Unlimited Earth Care Features Exhibition With Renowned Multidisciplinary Artist Paul Robinson

Unlimited Earth Care in Bridgehampton and founder Frederico Azevedo will host an exhibition titled “Flourish and Flow,” featuring the recent series of paintings by renowned multidisciplinary artist Paul Robinson. This collection conveys a dynamic balance between growth and movement, celebrating transformation and the beauty of nature’s cycles.

One of the highlights of the exhibition is Robinson’s iconic figure, “The Pink Bear,” displayed in natural landscapes. The opening reception will take place on Saturday, June 28, from 4:30 to 7:30 PM, showcasing the artist’s paintings along with limited edition prints.

Professionally known as LUAP, Robinson is a British artist based in London who works in various mediums, ranging from hyper-realistic oil paintings to photography, exploring the realms of the surreal, the imagined, and the physical. “The Pink Bear” is a creative work that embodies themes of anxiety and aspiration, reflecting a desire for positive connections.

“Flourish and Flow” symbolizes growth and vitality, highlighting our connection to nature and the joy found in small pleasures, like the beauty of flowers. The concept of flow emphasizes natural rhythms and movements, reminiscent of horses in motion and the changing seasons.





Yacht Haven

Remodeled home located in secluded Silver Beach on West Neck Bay. With water on 2 sides of this lovely estate, enjoy the water views from all rooms. 5 bedrooms, 6 baths, finished lower level and open rooms, this is a wonderful home to enjoy for the summer or year round. 150' deep water dock. \$7,495,000 | WEB# 916900



Calling all Boaters

This exquisite, totally renovated waterfront home spares no expense. Beautifully designed and constructed, this 4 bedroom, 5 bath home has large floating dock and heated pool. With 113' of waterfront, a beautiful stone patio with a firepit has views of the creek and beyond. Exceptional! \$5,495,000 | WEB# 915395



Open House Waterfront Victorian

20 PROSPECT AVENUE | SAT. 5/24; 10:30-12:30 | SUN. 5/25; 10:30 - 12:30
Wonderful Shelter Island Heights home sits high on a bluff and has the feel of days gone by. Enjoy the waterfront veranda overlooking the pool and Shelter Island Sound with its marvelous sunsets. 7BR, 5BA and lovely sitting rooms with water views. A true gem! \$4,995,000 | WEB# 916469



Open House Wonderful Compound

106 SOUTH FERRY ROAD | SAT. 5/24; 1:00 - 3:00
3.25-acres and a minute to the South Ferry, this wonderful, light-filled home sits off the road with beautiful views of the rolling hills. Main house features 4 bedrooms and 4 full baths on two levels. The newly remodeled open kitchen features stainless appliances. Studio guest house with garage. \$2,595,000 | WEB# 911283



Breathtaking Water Views

Spectacular and expansive Coecles Harbor and Gardiner's Bay views from this hill top Contemporary. 3 bedroom, 4 bath home with waterside pool and deck on 1.8 acres. An open floor plan affords water views from the living room and primary bedroom suite. A must see and easy to view. \$3,250,000 | WEB# 919568



Exceptional Value

Bring the gang to this wonderful contemporary located in Hay Beach with beach access. Lounge by the pool or relax on one of the several beaches nearby. This open concept home features extremely large bedrooms located on two floors with the primary on the main level. Move right in! \$1,750,000 | WEB# 910919





Peter M. McCracken

Licensed Associate RE Broker
pmccracken@corcoran.com
m: 631.774.0107



SCAN to learn more

Aerin Lauder’s Blossoming Spring

A Season Of Style, Flowers,
And Inspired Collaborations

By Ty Wenzel



Aerin Lauder debuts this spring a lineup of activations that affirm her authority in the luxury lifestyle arena. From launching her new book to exclusive home and design partnerships, AERIN’s founder is expanding her signature formula of timeless style and modern wit across various platforms and products.

At the center of the season is “Aerin Lauder: Living with Flowers,” published by Rizzoli and now out. In the book, Lauder speaks to the role flowers play in her life and home, sharing a peek at her rooms full of flowers and her design philosophy. The book is a celebration of her grandmother, Estée Lauder, and mother, Jo Carole Lauder, both of whom taught her to love flowers. Readers are guided through ideas for flower arrangements, botanical motif decorating, and incorporating seasonal flowers into daily entertaining.

Simultaneously with the book’s publication is the launch of D. Porthault pour AERIN, a limited U.S. capsule collection created in collaboration with the French heritage brand renowned for its stunning linens. The collaboration revolves around the Fleurs du Vent pattern, reimagined in a new color palette inspired by the South of France. The capsule collection features AERIN’s signature beauty cases, sleepwear, and linens, all embody the

commonalities of both brands’ devotion to craftsmanship and sophisticated style. The line is now accessible through AERIN and D. Porthault’s e-commerce sites and boutiques.

Lauder’s creative vision also extends to her continued partnership with Williams Sonoma. The new AERIN for Williams Sonoma collection includes natural rattan serving pieces, hand-painted bakeware, embroidered linens, and flower-adorned dinnerware. The collection’s motifs are drawn from Lauder’s garden in East Hampton and personal entertaining aesthetic, offering a chic yet relaxed summer tabletop look.

For the younger generations, AERIN is taking the success of her Pottery Barn Kids collaboration to the next level with the launch of a line extension and first-time partnership with Pottery Barn Teen. Both collections are available online and in stores. The Pottery Barn Kids line features nursery furniture, fabrics, and accessories designed in a timeless, gentle style. Teen bedding collection debuts with bedding, accessories, and décor products that combine classic motifs with fresh, young design sensibilities — seasonally timed for summer and back-to-school.

The collaborations share a vision: heritage tradition, accessible luxury, and an aesthetic that is both personal and refined.





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Sand & Style Soirée

Friday, June 27, 2025 | 6:30 PM

Bridgehampton Tennis and Surf Club
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Real Estate Confab

Unrealistic Price Expectations In A Competitive Luxury Market

By Ty Wenzel

The luxury real estate market in the Hamptons has always been a universe of its own, where stunning oceanfront properties and picturesque village houses command top dollar. Yet, with a season of changing economic times, changing consumer needs, and record-breaking sales, the question is: Are there sellers asking prices that ignore reality?

As demand continues to be robust at the im-

portant price points, brokers are working in an environment where aspirational pricing confronts savvy buyers. Will ultra-high-net-worth buyers still pay top dollar, or has the market shifted to a point where sellers must relent? In this roundtable discussion, top Hamptons real estate pros share their take on the latest pricing trends, the impact of rising interest rates, and why precise pricing strategies can make or break a sale in this competitive market.

Heather Buchanan, Sotheby's International Realty

Sellers can easily have a blind spot when it comes to their property, because, of course, we all love our homes. Pricing and value opinions should be backed up by facts, and experienced agents will help with that education even beyond comparable sales. They can evaluate everything from the Certificate of Occupancy (you may think you have five bedrooms, but only three are legal) to a survey (room for a pool, lot coverage, and over-clearing greatly affect value). I also use my connections to local builders and architects to assess a potential range for renovation costs. A knowledgeable agent is key to all the local regulations that affect property value. I am probably the only person who watches Town and Village board meetings on Channel 22 instead of streaming Netflix!

Mark Greenwald, Saunders & Associates

In today's digital age, there are fewer "secrets" in real estate and far easier to show an owner comparable properties and create a reasonable price expectation. Sellers, I find, are savvy and want the best return on their investment while still realizing the benefits of pricing strategically. That being said, every property does have its own unique features and, of course, every home has intrinsic value to a seller, which may not translate directly to a higher price in the market. This is where, I think, a seasoned broker can have direct con-

versations with sellers and come to a successful pricing strategy that is successful for all.

Steve Dorn, Brown Harris Stevens

I have worked in real estate for over 30 years, and pricing is one of the most important and difficult decisions you have to make as a seller. Among other factors, pricing your property should reflect the location and condition of your home, current market conditions, and comparable recent sales. As your selling agent, I will provide you with a comparative competitive market analysis that offers an opinion of value.

Susan Harrison, Compass

It is no secret that pricing is key in the current market. Agents must come prepared with comparables and use current market data. However, using only comps can be tricky because the pandemic skewed the numbers to such an unrealistic extent. The price conversation with sellers has to be direct and focused on their goals. Also, understanding the "why" behind seller motivation for price is so important. We, as agents, need to deal with empathy for our clients to be able to advise them on the best strategy to achieve their goals. Showing actual comps is important, but showing languishing listings with high DOM can be even more useful to showcase what you want to avoid. At the end of the day, it's all about trusting you as their agent, that you are informed enough to advise them properly.

Ann Gegelys, Sotheby's International Realty

When working with sellers who may have unrealistic price expectations, I find that a balanced approach of education and empathy works best. Initially, it's critical to confirm and acknowledge the seller's goals and concerns with selling their property. This can help to determine their pricing expectations, yet also acknowledges the seller's feelings about selling their property; selling can be highly emotional.

Once I have a better sense of motivation, that's where education comes in. By sharing targeted market data and comparable sales, I can provide sellers with a realistic picture of our market trends and a reasonable price range for their home. I also like to provide examples of past home sales that were successful and unsuccessful, with their pricing strategies. Doing so highlights the risks of overpricing, such as longer market time, fewer offers, and price reductions, and the benefits of pricing to the market, shorter market time, and possible multiple offers. Walking clients through this information helps align their expectations with the market.

Ultimately, the decision on pricing sits with a seller. If they are set on a higher listing price than suggested, I recommend trying it for a brief period, such as two weeks. We then reassess based on the market's response and adjust accordingly, if needed. Our goal is to guide our sellers toward a successful sale with minimal time on the market and achieve the best possible price.

Hamptons & North Fork Home Prices

Reach New Highs Amid Tightest Inventory In Years

By Ty Wenzel

Douglas Elliman's latest market report by Jonathan Miller of Miller Samuel Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants discovered that Long Island residential prices maintained their quarterly growth in the first quarter of 2025, with top pricing benchmarks reaching all-time highs for the fourth consecutive quarter. While prices climbed, though, sales remained low and supply continued in retreat, pointing up the region's ongoing supply-and-demand disparity.

The Long Island housing market continued to surprise in the first quarter of 2025, as price direction indicators rose year-over-year to record levels for the fourth consecutive quarter, according to the report.

Despite additional price hikes, sales volume fell for the second time in a row compared to the same period last year and remains well below long-term standards. At the same time, listing inventory fell to the second-lowest level in history.

This tight supply has created intense buyer competition: bidding wars were responsible for more than half of all closings for the fourth quarter in a row, demonstrating the imbalance of supply and demand across the region.

Median Sales Price Surpasses \$2 Million For The First Time In The Hamptons

In the Hamptons, Q1 2025 was a record-breaking inflection point for the luxury segment. The median sales price increased year-over-year to an all-time high, crossing over the \$2 million threshold for the first time.

Sales posted strong year-to-year gains for the sixth time in a row and nearly doubled from this time last year. That was partly driven by a steady rise in listing inventory over the past two years, which has helped to make more deals happen.

More sales than ever happened within the "Hamptons Middle," with properties costing between \$1 million and \$5 million leading the way.

On the North Fork, Sales Continue to Climb While Inventory Falls

North Fork sales have been increasing for nearly two years, and Q1 2025 has witnessed the seventh consecutive quarter of dramatic year-over-year increases. At the same time, year-over-year listing inventory fell for the second time as the market tightened up, even with the high demand.

While price trend indicators were lower than last year's levels, a record percentage of sales occurred in the \$1 million to \$2 million range.

To see details, visit elliman.com/marketreports.



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