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— Real Estate & Design —

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Photo by Read McKendree

The Eye Knows

Inside Mabley Handler Interior Design’s Quarter-Century On The East End

By Ty Wenzel

Back in 1999, Mabley Handler Interior Design was just two friends with a shared dream, not a byword for Hamptons chic. Jennifer Mabley and Austin Handler had just left the city after September 11th changed everything. They bought a rambling piece of Water Mill, once owned by artist Warren Brandt, hauling their hopes into his old studio and making it theirs. They weren’t chasing trends. They were building a life together — one that grew into a marriage, a family, and eventually, a design firm that took root in that century-old barn.

All these years later, the barn is still their laboratory. The look has evolved, trading in those early, traditional visions for a crisp, transitional style. Now and then, they push into modern or circle back to classic — it depends on the client, and on the house. But the heart of their work hasn’t budged. Ask either designer what luxury means, and they don’t talk stone slabs or sprawling footprints. They talk about time. Real luxury, for them, is a home that lets you feel at home — a place that fades into the background so life can fill the rooms.

That quiet conviction is starting to outgrow the East End. Their boys are off at college, and Mabley and Handler are reaching further: Manhattan, Palm Beach. They’re bringing the easy light, the gentle Hamptons vibe, and pouring it into New York apartments and bright, tropical spaces — rooms that need a different kind of calm.

We caught up with Mabley and Handler to dig into how certain projects shaped their path, which design rules they no longer follow, why the Zoom-ready home office might be here to stay, and what — after 25 years — still makes their stomachs flutter when they hand the keys back to a client.

Mabley Handler Interior Design has become synonymous with Hamptons living. How has your definition of “Hamptons style” evolved over the years?

Jennifer Mabley: After designing hun-

dreds of homes in the Hamptons over 25 years, when we look back on our work from last year to our first year, there are definitely shifts that we’ve noticed, both in our style and trends in general. When we first started here, our design aesthetic was definitely rooted in tradition, but after a few years, we felt the rise of more transitional designs, and we were attracted to it and embraced it. We’re now solidly in that transitional design style, but that’s not to say we don’t swing traditional, or even a bit more modern when the client or the home requires it.

For those who may not know the story, how did the two of you first meet and decide to build a design firm together?

Austin Handler: We met in New York City, and after September 11th, we decided to move out to the Hamptons, get married, start a business, a family, and a life together out here (roughly in that order!). At the time, Jennifer was designing a home for her mother in the estate section of Southampton Village, and we both fell in love with the area and decided that this is where we belonged. In 2002, we bought a property in Water Mill formerly owned by noted East End painter Warren Brandt, and we renovated the house to accommodate our growing family (two sons and many dogs and cats over the years), and transformed his painting studio on the property into our design studio. And almost 25 years later, creative energies still flow through the converted barn that we work out of!

More than two decades into the business, what do you think has been the key to your longevity, both professionally and personally?

AH: I think the professional attribute that we most pride ourselves on is our level of service. We work hard for our clients. We stick to budgets. We don’t miss deadlines. We get the clients in when they want to be in, and we’ll move heaven and earth (sometimes literally!) to make that happen. It requires foresight and incredible coordination,



Photo courtesy of Kravet



Photo by Read McKendree

but over the years, we really feel like that’s one of the major things that sets Mabley Handler apart. Another part of our success is that our style and taste have evolved over the years, so we’re always bringing fresh ideas and resources to our projects. It’s not the same old thing — clients and friends can often recognize our style, but it’s never cut-and-paste. Every design project is tailored to our clients’ needs and aesthetic desires. On the other hand, we love the color blue, and we’ve definitely become known for that! And in almost 25 years, we’ve only had one client say, “Yeah, I don’t really love blue, can you use other colors?” It was tough, but we made it work!

When you’re approaching a new project, where do you start: with the architecture, the client, or the lifestyle they hope to create?

JM: We take a multi-tiered approach to starting a new project. First, we meet with the client to find out exactly how they want to use their home. Then we consider the

architecture and the neighborhood to help ground our direction. Not all Hamptons homes are “beach houses,” right? Sometimes they’re country houses, sometimes they’re more modern, stylish, and minimal, sometimes they’re well-worn and comfy, like a favorite sweater. And then we look through our fabric and wallpaper libraries, and look for the design element that is going to jumpstart our creative process. We never know where it’s going to take us, but we always get there!

Your work feels deeply connected to place. How does the East End landscape influence your interiors?

AH: We are very cognizant of where we live, and how we design in the Hamptons. We don’t design like this in other areas where we work (New York City, Palm Beach). Those places have their own inspirations and aesthetics. We feel like we know the Hamptons intimately, and want the homes we create out here to respect that. And a huge part of that is the sumptuous East End landscape,

and we often consult with our clients on what the outside of their house should look like, almost as much as we do on the inside. Jennifer is especially gifted in that area, as her mother was an incredible home gardener, and the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, as the saying goes!

What is one misconception people have about luxury interior design?

AH: Probably the biggest misconception about luxury is that luxury equals fancy. It doesn’t. Sure, it can, but luxury is far more nuanced than that. To us, luxury is the value we/our clients place on what they want to get out of their home. If it’s a retreat, luxury is in the comfort of the furnishings, the privacy, and the peace of the property. If they’re entertainers, luxury is in the appropriate home elements that allow them to enjoy entertaining by making it easier for them. An outdoor kitchen, a butler’s pantry, storage for extra sets of dinnerware and glasses, and, of course, the physical space/spaces to entertain that have been thoughtfully laid



Photo by Lesley Unruh

out to maximize the enjoyment and create a sense of flow throughout the event. But most importantly, time is luxury, so we want to make sure that our clients are maximizing their enjoyment of their Hamptons Home, loving every minute of it, so to speak.

What are clients looking for today that they weren’t asking for a decade ago?

JM: I think the biggest shift that we’ve seen is more emphasis on home offices that are not just rooms to park a laptop in and crank out emails, but rooms that are functional work environments as well as Zoom-friendly spaces. This means more attention to sound-proofing, rugs, wallpaper, furnishings to absorb sound, and backdrops that are pleasant to look at, but not overly busy, so that they display well in the background of a Zoom meeting. Who could have predicted that we would be here?! And this doesn’t just go for the homeowner, as many of our clients want to make sure that there are other functional workspaces in the home for their children who may be students or young professionals.

And here’s something that we’ve definitely seen in the decline: home theaters. Two decades ago, every builder would tell you that you had to have one. I think that word finally got out that most people just don’t use them very often! What we’ve seen is the trend moving away from rooms with individual theater seats, and moving back to large sectional sofas, so that the family can make TV or movie-watching a truly family experience. And we are all for that!

How do you balance timelessness with the desire for something fresh and current?

AH: We absolutely like a balance of timelessness and current. We never want someone to walk into a home we’ve designed and say “This is sooooo 2019!” And we avoid all those “Color of the Year” trends like the plague! We, on the other hand, do always look at the new fabrics and wallcoverings that are previewed at High Point Furniture Market every year (and Maison Abject in Paris, Salone in Milan, etc.) because we are always looking for new and fresh inspiration. Once we’ve used something once or twice, we’re done. On to the next!

Are there design rules you’ve completely abandoned over the years?

JM: The one rule we’ve abandoned is following rules. It sounds like a cliché, but it’s the truth. We don’t rely on rules to guide us. Over the years, we’ve come to realize that

we can truly trust our eye. It always steers us right.

What details separate a beautifully decorated house from a truly exceptional home?

AH: It’s in the layers. Not layers of tchotchkes and junk, but layers of color, texture, and pattern. A truly exceptionally decorated home has rooms that draw you in and encourage your eyes to keep exploring and noticing all the details, but doesn’t overwhelm you.

You’ve expanded beyond the Hamptons into New York City and Palm Beach. How does designing in those markets challenge or inspire you differently?

AH: We intentionally focused solely on the Hamptons market while raising our family to make sure we weren’t constantly on the road, traveling for work. But now that they’re off to college and beyond, we are so excited to be dipping into new markets! It’s an opportunity to bring a different interpretation of our design aesthetic to each location, so after concentrating on our Hamptons look, it’s a whole new world. It’s like getting a new set of paint colors to paint with!

Palm Beach and the Hamptons share certain coastal qualities, but they have very different personalities. How do you interpret each location through design?

JM: One thing we noticed right away is that, while the Hamptons and Palm Beach are both coastal, they have very different aesthetics. Our design vibe in the Hamptons tends to be softer, more relaxing. Lots of blue, beige, and grey tones, comfortable, clean-lined furnishings. But in Palm Beach, there’s an explosion of tropical color, mural wallpapers, more antiques, and trim, tassels, and decorative details on everything! But in other areas of South Florida, the look can subtly change. Some areas swing more transitional/modern — areas like Wellington evoke horse country. There’s no formula. It’s all about having an innate sense of each community, and a feel for what works and what doesn’t.

What has surprised you most about the growth of your business?

JM: One thing that we have found interesting about the growth of our business over

the past 25 years is that, while our style has changed and evolved, we’re still getting hired! We’ve come to realize that no matter what market we’re working in, we have an understanding of the market and a vision for our clients, and we’ve come to be able to trust our eye, no matter what the market or what the project.

Looking back, is there a project that marked a turning point for the firm?

AH: We are extraordinarily fortunate that the turning point for our firm came very shortly after we launched our business in the Hamptons. A couple of years after moving to Water Mill, we were invited to participate in a designer showhouse out here, and while we were certainly not the biggest design firm participating, a large photo of the room we designed appeared on the front page of the New York Times House & Home section. After that, the phone really started ringing, and thankfully hasn’t stopped!

How do you know when a room is finished?

JM: After 25-plus years, we just know!

In an age of social media and design trends, how do you help clients create homes that feel personal rather than performative?

AH: We (often!) tell our clients to put away Instagram and trust us to create something for them that is unique to them. It’s one thing to be inspired by something you see online, but with social media (and AI), clients are more and more likely to send us complete rooms that they like. But what they don’t realize is that so many of the photos and renderings are going to feel dated within a few years. Part of what we do is get to know our clients, find out what they truly love, and build something unique around that, and around them.

What does luxury mean to you today?

JM: We recently spoke on a design panel about “What luxury means,” and it certainly can be different to different people. Some people want opulence, some people want brand names, some want unparalleled comfort. And many want a combination of all of those things (especially in the markets that we work in!). But to us, luxury is time. The time to spend with the people you love, the time to do everything you want to do, and having the perfect place to do that in. We start from the inside out, we get to know our clients, we find out what is important to



Photo by Austin Handler

them, what they want their home to be able to achieve, and how it will support the life that they want to live... And then we design around that. To us, that’s true luxury.

What are some of the most valuable lessons you’ve learned from working together as a married couple?

AH: Professionally: We each have something to contribute, but also we each have our strengths, and it’s important to recognize that. Personally: Leave all design stress at the design studio! Home is for us, as a couple, and as a family.

After all these years, what still excites you about the work?

JM: Even after 25-plus years, there’s always a thrill when we land an amazing new project. But a feeling that’s even better than that is when we turn a project back over to

our clients, and we get to see their reaction as they move into their new home. We’re creative people, and creative people love to create, but we also love when our work is validated. Professionally speaking, to us there is no better feeling than seeing a happy client’s reaction to our design work.

Finish this sentence: Home is _____.

AH: News flash: There is no right answer! It all depends on the client. Is it a summer house, a winter retreat, or a year-round home? Is it a venue to entertain a revolving door of family, friends, and guests, for play-dates, cocktail soirées, and dinner parties? Is it a place to escape the everyday stress of work & school? Or is it simply the family home, where everyone comes and goes and lives their life? It can be any of those, or all of those things. Our job is to provide a beautiful, comfortable backdrop that supports any/all of those things.

Saunders Stewardship Impact

Sarah Minardi As The Woman Behind The Sale — And The Scholarship

By Ty Wenzel

James Lane Post has partnered with Saunders & Associates to create the series “The Saunders Stewardship Impact,” which shines a light on the organizations that are close to the hearts of its agents.

Sarah Minardi will tell you, without much prompting, that East Hampton is not for sale. Not really. What changes hands in this village — for numbers that would make a hedge fund manager blink — are structures, acreage, a certain quality of light on Georgica Pond at six in the evening. The place itself, the thing that actually makes the real estate worth anything, isn’t a line item on a listing sheet. It’s the trees someone planted 40 years ago. It’s the pond someone fought to keep public. It’s the fact that the woman who sold you your kitchen table might also be the woman who taught your kid third grade.

Minardi would know. She’s spent her career on one side of that equation, as a broker moving some of the most coveted real estate on the East End. But she’s spent nearly as much time on the other side of it — chairing the Student Awards Committee for the Ladies Village Improvement Society since 2019, an unpaid post that has quietly steered more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to upwards of 200 local kids.

You’re a lifelong East Hampton local, and your family’s roots here go back generations. What does stewardship of a place like East Hampton mean to you personally?

Because my family has been part of East Hampton for generations, I don’t think of ownership as simply possession. I have custody of a piece of this place for a while. I get to enjoy it, but I also have a responsibility to leave it better than I found it.

East Hampton is a limited commodity. We are not creating more land, and there is no expanding building on the ocean or the bay. At least not yet. That scarcity is part of what makes property here such an extraordinary long-term asset, but it also makes stewardship essential.

East Hampton is not special because the real estate is valuable. The real estate is valuable because East Hampton is special. The beaches, the light, the open spaces, the architecture, the history, and the people who have cared for all of it created that value. I feel a responsibility to protect what cannot be replaced.

What first drew you to the Ladies Village Improvement Society, and what made you want to become involved beyond simply being a member?

I grew up with LVIS as part of the landscape of East Hampton. My mother has been a member since I was born, and I would see her helping with or chairing the annual Fair, which I have always loved. Then there are the shops, the trees, the historic property and, of course, the sales. Everybody loves the sales. There is something deeply satisfying about finding a fantastic table, buying it for practically nothing and discovering that the money is helping send a local student to college. I consider that guilt-free shopping at its finest.

But what really drew me in was the women. LVIS is filled with women who do not spend a lot of time announcing that they get things done. They just get things done. They preserve buildings, plant trees, care for public spaces, raise money, and invest in local students. I admired that combination of purpose and practicality.

I am also constitutionally incapable of joining an organization and then quietly attending an occasional meeting. Once I understood the breadth of the work, I wanted to be part of doing it.

You have chaired the LVIS Student Awards Committee since 2019. What have you learned about the young people coming out of East Hampton High School through that work?

Reading the applications changed my understanding of the students coming out of East Hampton High School. They are not simply filling out forms and listing activities. They are telling us who they are, what they care about, and what they hope to do with their lives.

Some are balancing school with jobs and family responsibilities. Some already know exactly where they are headed. Others are still working it out, which is perfectly reasonable. I am still working a few things out myself.

What impresses me is their seriousness of purpose. They are not asking anyone to construct a future for them. They are asking for tools, access, and the chance to construct it themselves. My role, and the responsibility of my committee members, is not to decide what their dreams should be. It is to help make those dreams more possible.

LVIS has awarded more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to more than 200 local students over the past decade. What does that investment in the next generation mean to you, particularly as someone who grew up here?

It means we are investing in East Hampton’s most important asset, which is not the land. It is the people.

The reality is that many of the young people growing up here will have to find other places to live. If a student chooses a life of service, education, healthcare, nonprofit work, or another career that does not pay enough to buy into the community where that student was raised, home may eventually have to be somewhere else.

I don’t see that only as a sad story. It spurs me to give these students every tool in the toolbox before they go out and build their lives. They may take what they learned here into another community. They may come back differently. They may create something none of us has imagined yet.

In real estate, I understand the power of purchasing an asset that appreciates over time. Education is the ultimate legacy purchase. Its value compounds for the student, the family, and every community that student eventually touches.



Photo courtesy Saunders & Associates

Can you remember a particular student or scholarship moment that stayed with you and reminded you why this work matters?

It is difficult to choose one student because the cumulative experience is what stays with me. Every year, names on applications become real people with plans, worries, responsibilities, and enormous potential.

The most meaningful moments often are not dramatic. They come when a student explains what the scholarship will make possible: fewer hours working during the semester, books purchased without adding another financial worry, or the ability to accept an opportunity that might otherwise be out of reach.

A scholarship provides money, certainly, but it also communicates something important. It says that this community recognizes the effort, believes in the potential, and considers the dream worth backing. That matters.

LVIS is perhaps best known for its beautiful thrift shops and historic property, but its work goes far beyond that, from scholarships and historic preservation to trees, parks, ponds, and community programs. What part of LVIS’s mission do you think people may not know enough about?

I don’t think enough people realize that all the pieces connect. The shops are wonderful, and I am completely in favor of the thrill of finding something chic before someone else spots it. But the shops are also engines for the mission.

A donated chair can become part of a scholarship. A box of dishes can help support the care of a public space. A vintage coat can contribute to preserving something historic. It is an extraordinary circle: one person gives something that has had a life, someone else gives it a new life, and the proceeds help create opportunities throughout the community.

LVIS has also practiced sustainability since long before sustainability needed a marketing plan. Reuse, preservation, trees, ponds, and public spaces are all part of the same belief: what already exists has value and deserves care.

You’ve spent your career in real estate watching East Hampton change. How has your involvement with LVIS influenced the way you think about development, preservation, and what makes this community special?

LVIS has reinforced my belief that preservation and progress are not opposites. The real question is whether change adds something to the community or simply extracts value from it.

I spend a great deal of time evaluating property, but the value of a house in East Hampton is inseparable from what surrounds it. A beautifully renovated home does not exist in a vacuum. Its value is supported by the trees along the road, the historic character of the village, the schools, access to the water,

preserved open space, and a community that still has an identity.

Protecting those things is not merely sentimental. It is practical, economic, and necessary. Preservation is not about freezing East Hampton in time. It is about making certain that progress does not erase the very qualities that made this place valuable.

There’s an interesting connection between real estate and stewardship: real estate is ultimately about place, while organizations like LVIS are working to protect that place. Do you see those two worlds as naturally connected?

Completely. Real estate is not simply a structure, acreage, and a set of comparable sales. A property is part of a larger place, and that place creates a substantial portion of its value.

I think purchasing in East Hampton should be approached more like investing than shopping. I look at the quality of the asset, its history, location, long-term potential, and the elements that will protect its value. The best purchases are not simply transactions. They become legacy assets that can serve a family over time.

Like the stock market, long-term value depends upon the health of the larger environment. If East Hampton’s character is diminished, the value of every property within it is diminished as well. Stewardship is not separate from real estate. Stewardship protects the investment.

You’ve also served on the East Hampton School District Board of Education and the Town’s Community Housing Advisory Board. How do these different forms of community involvement inform one another?

My children attend these schools. During the school year, they spent more waking hours there than they did with Chris and me. I certainly wanted to know what was going on, and I wanted to influence decisions that affected not only their curriculum and learning, but also the environment in which they were spending so much of their lives.

Serving on the Board of Education made policy intensely personal. Budgets, programs, and staffing decisions can look like numbers on paper, but every one of those decisions eventually walks into a classroom and affects a child.

My work with the Community Housing Advisory Board made the connections even clearer. Housing affects whether teachers, healthcare workers, first responders, and local employees can live in the community they serve. That affects the schools, local businesses, and the strength of year-round East Hampton.

None of these issues exist alone. Education, housing, preservation, employment, and community life are all connected. Pulling one thread always moves something else.

East Hampton is experiencing enormous change, from housing pressures to

development and the increasing demands of a year-round community. What do you think we have to be especially careful not to lose?

I do not want East Hampton to lose the people who make it function as a community rather than simply a beautiful destination.

That includes families who have lived here for generations, but it also includes teachers, tradespeople, shop owners, first responders, healthcare workers, and young families trying to establish roots. Property values may be extraordinary, but property values do not coach Little League, teach children, volunteer, serve on boards, or check on a neighbor after a storm.

I also don’t want us to lose the idea that people with very different lives still belong to the same community. East Hampton has always contained wealth, work, beauty, eccentricity, ambition, and history. The mix is part of its character. Once that mix disappears, something far more valuable than a view will have been lost.

What would you like your own children, and eventually their children, to inherit from the East Hampton you grew up in?

I want them to inherit more than property. I want them to inherit a sense of belonging and responsibility.

I want them to know the beaches and back roads, recognize the buildings that tell our history, and understand that the beauty surrounding them did not remain intact by accident. Someone showed up. Someone paid attention. Someone objected when objecting was necessary. Someone planted the tree whose shade we now take for granted.

My children may not be able to build their adult lives here in exactly the way previous generations did. But I want East Hampton to remain part of their identity and part of the standard they carry with them for what a community can be.

Most of all, I want them to understand that an inheritance is not only something received. It is also something protected and passed forward.

If you could leave one message with the next generation of East Hampton residents about giving back to the community, what would you want them to understand?

I would tell them not to wait for more time, more money, or a more impressive title. Communities are sustained by people who decide something matters and then do what they can.

I would also tell them that giving back is not entirely selfless, and I think honesty about that is healthy. Every hour I have given has connected me more deeply to East Hampton. I have met people I might never have known, learned how decisions are made, and gained a much clearer understanding of the place I call home.

I was fortunate enough to inherit a connection to an extraordinary community. Gratitude is important. Participation is better.

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Beyond The Broker

The Agency’s John Caulfield On Trading Volatility, Chasing Scarcity, And Selling The Hamptons Life

By Ty Wenzel

Before John Caulfield started guiding buyers through East Hampton’s waterfront estates or showing off stretches of land in Snowmass, he was glued to a trading screen late into the night on Brexit. He watched as the markets whipped themselves into a frenzy, and he learned something simple but brutal: volatility punishes anyone who confuses a gut feeling with a real position. Caulfield spent more than 10 years swimming in those waters, even co-founding a proprietary trading firm on Wall Street. It took a few personal investments in Aspen to pull him into a different kind of market entirely.

That shift changed everything. Now, Caulfield finds himself split between two of America’s most cutthroat luxury enclaves: the Hamptons and Aspen. He brings a trader’s sharp, slightly contrarian eye to each deal, treating each negotiation almost like studying a stock chart. He’s relentless about the fundamentals: What’s the risk if everything goes south? Can anyone really justify the price? Is there anything truly rare on offer here?

He doesn’t have to run spreadsheets in an office anymore. Caulfield lives in Ditch Plains with his wife, Jen, and their two sons. Most mornings, you’ll find the boys biking down the road to Ditch Witch for breakfast sandwiches, or dropping by a neighbor’s place without warning — childhood as it used to be, and as Caulfield wants it to stay. Between coaching Little League, catching a few waves, and sneaking off to Snowmass to ski, he built a life not so different from the ones his clients are chasing.

We spoke with Caulfield to dig into the lessons Wall Street hammered into him about risk, what scarcity really means when you’re talking about second homes, and how you can tell the difference between a buyer led by heart and one guided by something deeper.

You spent more than a decade trading futures and co-founded a proprietary trading firm. What did trading teach you about the risk that you now apply to real estate?

Trading derivatives and volatility futures teaches you that the market doesn’t care about your opinion. As a trader and risk manager, I learned to strip emotion out of every position and figure out what is the actual downside. Brexit was a harsh lesson in that. The night of the vote, volatility exploded. I carry the lessons I learned from my years trading directly into real estate. When I’m working with a buyer or seller, I’m not just looking at comparable sales, I’m looking at what else justifies the value. How would this property perform as a rental? What does the carrying cost look like against the income it could generate? Is there genuine scarcity here, such as a beach, view, or specific location that protects the downside?

You came to real estate through your own investments, particularly in Aspen. What did being an investor first teach you about recognizing a property with real value?

Real estate, especially in luxury markets and second-home markets, holds its value. Investing in an area where there will always

be people wanting to break in or visit is key in making investments. Aspen has a finite amount of land and qualities that can’t be replicated. In the Hamptons, I see the same DNA. There will always be people who want to be here. The coastline isn’t growing, the villages aren’t expanding, and the lifestyle, whether you’re in East Hampton or Montauk, isn’t something you can manufacture somewhere else. Scarcity is the foundation. A home that produces strong seasonal rental income functions as a performing asset rather than purely a lifestyle one. They are making a capital allocation decision.

You work in both the Hamptons and Aspen, two very different but highly competitive luxury markets. What do they have in common, and where are they fundamentally different?

Both Aspen and the Hamptons are luxury markets that attract similar buyers. The majority of homes in these markets are the second or third homes of high net-worth individuals who are less price-sensitive and more particular about the lifestyle of the destination. These two areas also are resilient to downturns in the economy due to lack of inventory, scarceness of land, and other factors that make both ideal markets to invest in for the future.

The two fundamental differences are geographic size and the shift in seasonality. Hamptons are easily accessible from major cities and much larger geographically, with a string of distinct villages (Southampton, East Hampton, Sag Harbor, Montauk, etc.), each with its own character and price tier. Whereas Aspen is more remote, with a tightly contained core plus Snowmass Village and down-valley towns. Another considerable difference is that Aspen has become a year-round destination. While Aspen only has a couple months of shoulder season, the Hamptons remains more of a summer beach destination with some overflow in the spring and fall.

You say you have your finger on the pulse of the luxury market. What are you seeing in the Hamptons right now that you think buyers and sellers may be missing?

What I am seeing now is that buyers are willing to spend more to have a turnkey finished product where they will not need to do any work. I think a lot of people are missing out on added value and true return on investment by overlooking homes that may just need cosmetic alterations or future additions/renovations to a home to add to its value.

Are today’s Hamptons buyers still buying primarily for lifestyle, or are you seeing more people approach these properties as investments and portfolio assets?

I am seeing both. I work with clients who want to find their generational home for their families, along with investors looking to find land that allows them to build a luxury spec home. On one hand, I see families who are thinking generationally, and they want a home that becomes the place their kids come back to every summer. That’s an emotional purchase, but a smart one,



Photo, courtesy: The Agency

because that kind of attachment to a place tends to mean they hold it, care for it, and rarely sell under duress. Those properties age well. On the other side, I’m seeing investors who are approaching the Hamptons the way they’d approach any serious capital allocation. They’re looking for homes that check all the boxes to excel in the rental market or a property where value can be added.

When you’re advising an investor looking at a multi-million-dollar property, what numbers or characteristics are you looking at that an emotional buyer might overlook?

Emotional buyers walk into a property and see what’s there. An investor looks at what value can be added to the property. I look at homes that are missing the obvious amenities, such as no pool, lower bedroom count, an unfinished basement. To new buyers, those feel like dealbreakers, but a pool costs a fraction of what it adds to a sale price or what it adds to a Memorial Day to Labor Day rental. An unfinished basement is some of the cheapest square footage you’ll ever add to a property. Beyond the structure itself, I’m looking at lot size, zoning, and whether there’s room to grow. The best deals I’ve seen in this market weren’t the turnkey listings; they were the ones where someone was willing to see past the unfinished edges and recognize that the bones, the location, and the land were all there.

The Hamptons market has changed dramatically since you moved here. What do you

think has been the biggest shift in how people buy and use real estate here?

What I’m seeing now is more buyers are treating these homes as hybrid assets. As more people are not able to work remotely full-time, a lot of my clients will rent out one of the peak months of July or August, and they generate income that covers a portion of the annual carrying cost and/or use those rental proceeds to take a vacation somewhere else entirely.

Ditch Plains has a very particular culture and identity. You live in Ditch Plains with your family what do you think outsiders misunderstand about that part of the East End?

Most visit Ditch Plains for the beach and surfing. What is really special about Ditch is that our kids get to live a life similar to what my wife and I did growing up. When they wake up, they hop on their bikes and grab breakfast at Ditch Witch and then knock on a friend’s door to see them. Parents aren’t making pre-arranged playdates and coordinated plans, they are taking care of each other’s kids and kids are living like we did in the ’80s and ’90s.

You moved here from Aspen, another place where real estate, lifestyle, and scarcity intersect. What did Aspen teach you about the psychology of buyers in destination markets?

Destination and second-home buyers operate on a completely different clock than primary-home buyers. When someone is skiing or hiking in Aspen or enjoying the beach and water activities in the Hamptons, they want to lock in the feeling. However, the moment they get home, the everyday starts creeping back in, and that feeling they had standing on the mountain or on the beach starts to fade. A buyer spends a perfect weekend here in July, and they’re ready. By the time they’re back in the city on a Tuesday morning, the urgency has softened, but the scarcity of the market has not changed. Both markets have experienced high appreciation and are extremely competitive on the buy side. Keeping real buyers focused is key.

You snowboard, golf, play tennis, and coach youth sports. How important is it to you to actually participate in the lifestyle you’re selling rather than simply market it?

Authenticity is key when developing relationships with buyers and sellers. When I am selling not only a home, but the community where they will be in, I can speak from experience versus what I’ve heard.

After experiencing trading, Aspen, and now the Hamptons, what does a truly smart real estate investment look like to you today?

Buy something you’d want to live in yourself. If the numbers make sense and you’d be happy there, that’s the smart investment.



Modern Elegance. Endless Views.

29 TIANA CIRCLE, HAMPTON BAYS

4 BR | 3.5 BA | \$4,499,000

First time to the market, this extraordinary designer waterfront estate on coveted Rampasture Point has been masterfully reimagined to deliver the finest in modern coastal luxury with sweeping views of Tiana Bay. Behind its striking architectural façade, an oversized pivot entry door opens an impeccably designed living space featuring soaring ceilings, walls of glass, and panoramic waterfront vistas. Curated by a luxury interior designer, the home showcases wide-plank white oak flooring, custom architectural millwork, Phillip Jeffrey designer wallcoverings, statement lighting, and exceptional craftsmanship throughout. The chef’s kitchen is appointed with custom inset cabinetry, honed quartz countertops, a handcrafted range hood, premium Thermador appliances, and a sophisticated coffee bar, seamlessly connecting to elegant living and dining spaces anchored by a natural gas fireplace. This smart home also features motorized shades, designer finishes, and a spectacular waterfront primary suite with a private balcony, coffee bar, and a spa-inspired bath highlighted by a freestanding soaking tub overlooking the open bay. The home offers multiple beverage stations, two built-in temperature-controlled wine refrigerators, an expansive waterfront deck with a fully equipped outdoor kitchen, elegant dining and lounge areas, and a beautiful gazebo overlooking the water. Offers a private beach and just minutes from Dune Road’s renowned ocean beaches, premier marinas, waterfront dining, and boutique shopping. [elliman.com](https://www.elliman.com) | Web# 1029440



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Real Estate Confab

Bidding Wars, Hamptons Style

Insider’s View

A Look Behind Some Of Southampton’s Most Famous Hedges

For a single afternoon each September, some of Southampton’s most admired private residences quietly open their gates to visitors. The Southampton History Museum’s annual Insider’s View returns Saturday, September 12, inviting guests beyond the hedges to explore a curated collection of exceptional houses and gardens that reflect the village’s rich architectural legacy and enduring tradition of stewardship. The event has become one of the East End’s signature cultural experiences, blending history, architecture, and landscape design with the stories that continue to shape one of America’s most historic communities.

The self-guided afternoon tour will conclude with a reception by Sant Ambroeus on the grounds of the museum’s historic Rogers Mansion, where guests will gather to celebrate Southampton’s architectural heritage while supporting the museum’s ongoing preservation, educational programming, and stewardship of its historic sites, collections, and archives. The event continues the museum’s long-standing commitment to bringing local history to life.

True to the Insider’s View tradition, the tour

locations will remain a secret until the day itself. Ticket holders will receive an exclusive map and parking passes upon check-in.

“The element of surprise and discovery is what makes this tour so special,” said Sarah Kautz, Executive Director of the Southampton History Museum. “Each property tells part of the story of this remarkable community, while the event itself helps ensure that the Museum can continue preserving and sharing Southampton’s history for future generations.”

Board President and event chair Averitt Buttry added, “We curate an exclusive collection of sites, allowing our guests to discover Southampton’s architectural history one beautiful surprise at a time.”

The annual event celebrates not only exceptional architecture and design, but also the people and preservation efforts that have protected Southampton’s historic identity for generations.

For ticket and sponsorship information, visit southamptonhistory.org/iv.

As mortgage rates hold stubbornly above historic norms, the calculus of East End real estate has quietly shifted. For buyers who can sidestep the bank altogether, the advantage has rarely been sharper — and out here, where trophy properties routinely draw multiple offers, that edge is reshaping negotiations across the East End.

We asked a panel of top Hamptons agents to weigh in on how all-cash offers are altering bidding wars, pricing strategy, and the very definition of a “competitive” deal in today’s market.

Noble Black, The Corcoran Group

In the Hamptons, cash has always played an outsized role, especially at the top of the market, and today’s rates are only reinforcing that. Our buyer pool skews toward second-home and lifestyle purchasers who are less sensitive to where the 10-year sits, so a jump in mortgage rates doesn’t sideline them the way it does elsewhere. What it does change is leverage at the table. A seller facing one all-cash offer and one financed offer at a similar price is taking the cash nearly every

time, because there is no appraisal risk and no 30-day wait on a lender. That is pushing financed buyers to sharpen their offers just to stay competitive, whether that means waiving contingencies or coming in above ask.

Sarah Minardi, Saunders & Associates

Cash versus financing has become much less meaningful in deciding among serious offers in this market. A well-qualified financed offer is no longer necessarily at a meaningful disadvantage to cash. Other elements of the offer can matter just as much, if not more.

Stacy Cohen, The Agency

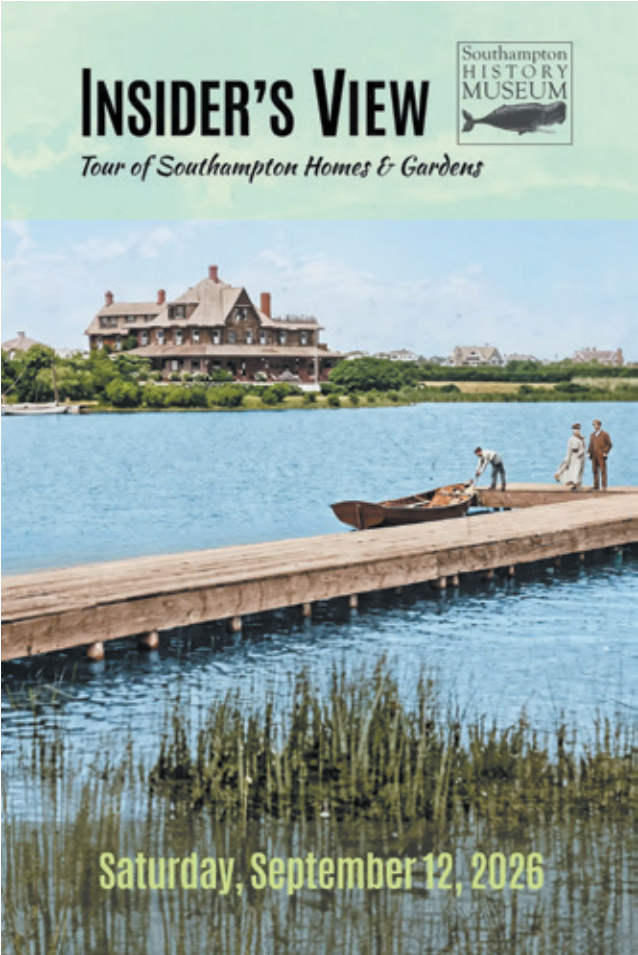
I think high interest rates are making it difficult for financed buyers, basically removing them from the competition, which will make the cash buyer more dominant. Not every listing goes into a bidding war. It just means that the right house can get an even more intense bidding war amongst smaller groups of buyers.

For the \$15 million-plus market, I think this is particularly relevant. A strong cash offer may be worth more to a seller than a slightly higher financed offer. So the buyer might not only be competing on price but on terms as well.

Cynthia Kolbenheyer, The Corcoran Group

I have worked primarily with cash buyers over the past year, and in my experience, sellers are often more inclined to accept a cash offer because it provides greater certainty and typically allows for a faster, more straightforward closing. Without the financing contingencies and potential delays that can come with a mortgage, there are simply fewer variables that could derail the transaction.

That can be especially meaningful in a competitive bidding situation. A cash offer may give a buyer a real advantage because, for many sellers, the certainty of closing quickly and with less risk can outweigh a slightly higher financed offer.





Dering Harbor Regal Waterfront Estate

6 HARBOR LANE, SHELTER ISLAND HEIGHTS

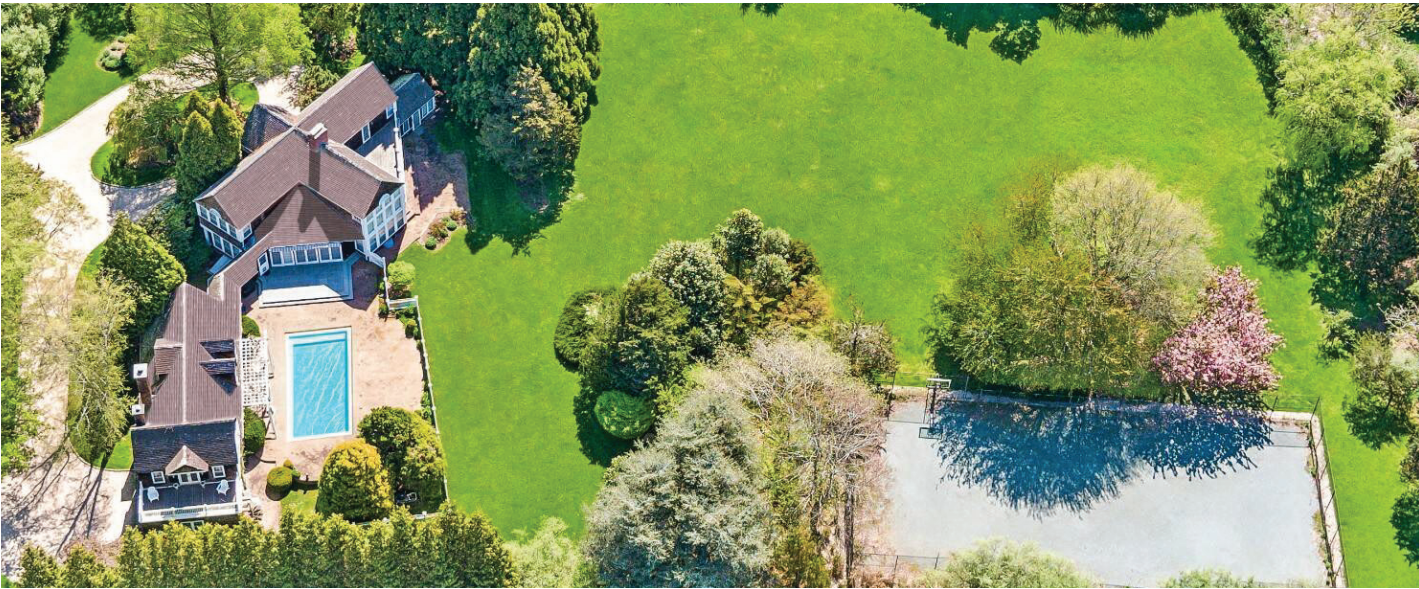
7 BR | 5.5 BA | \$17,995,000

Set along the serene waterfront of Dering Harbor, with about 245f of water frontage, this exceptional offering presents a rare and compelling opportunity to own a true Hamptons compound—three distinct parcels thoughtfully combined to create an expansive estate experience. At the heart of the property lies a beautifully appointed, approx. 4,500sf residence, gracefully sited on 1.5 acres and framed by sweeping water views. A separate .12-acre waterfront parcel features a private dock, offering direct access to the harbor, while an additional 3.2-acre parcel provides the ideal opportunity for a multi-generational compound that balances recreation, privacy, and natural beauty. A long, landscaped approach sets a stately tone, guiding you beneath a covered carport and toward the main residence, with a detached garage thoughtfully positioned nearby. Outdoors, the estate is enveloped in mature, meticulously curated landscaping that enhances both privacy and beauty. A gunite pool provides a luxurious setting. [elliman.com](https://www.elliman.com) | Web# 423154



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BRIDGEHAMPTON, NY

19 & 33 Bridgefield Road

6BD | 6.0BA | 6,000 SQ. FT. | \$17,500,000
19and33bridgefield.com

Bridgehampton South | 2.5 Acres, Two Properties.
Less than one mile from the ocean, this rare Bridgehampton South offering comprises two already-subdivided parcels totaling 2.5 acres. Anchored by an approximately 6,000 SF residence with 6+ bedrooms,



5 full and 2 half baths, three fireplaces and a heated pool, the property offers exceptional scale. The adjoining buildable parcel provides the opportunity to create an additional substantial residence, all close to Bridgehampton Village, shops, restaurants and ocean beaches.



WATER MILL, NY

652 Noyac Path

7BD | 6.0BA | 5,400 SQ. FT. | \$5,499,000
652noyac.com

Set beyond a private gate, this exceptional Water Mill estate offers expansive acreage, sweeping farm field vistas, and exceptional privacy. The six-bedroom, six-bath home features a double-height foyer, great room with fireplace, gourmet Wolf and Sub-Zero kitchen, private primary



suite, and a finished lower level with entertainment space, gym, wine storage, and guest quarters. Outdoors, a heated pool, English-style gardens, outdoor kitchen with imported Italian pizza oven, firepit, and multiple entertaining areas create a true Hamptons retreat.



WAINSCOTT, NY

5 Cowhill Lane

3BD | 3.0BA | 2,500 SQ. FT. | \$2,995,000
5cowhill.com

Experience serene Hamptons living in this turnkey Wainscott retreat, offering approximately 2,500 square feet on 0.52 acres. The sun-filled home features soaring ceilings, expansive windows, hardwood floors, a fireplace, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow. Three bedrooms include a



private upper-level primary suite with a spa-like bath, while the finished lower level offers flexible additional space. Outdoors, a 20' x 40' heated pool and expansive deck create the perfect setting for relaxing and entertaining, just moments from ocean beaches, dining, golf, and nearby villages.



SAG HARBOR, NY

21 Lily Pond Drive

7BD | 6.5BA | 4,050 SQ. FT. | \$5,495,000
21lilyponddrive.com

Recently constructed by renowned builder Farrell, this Sag Harbor home offers 7 bedrooms and 6.5 baths across three finished levels. The first-floor primary suite includes a private office and pool access, while the open great room and gourmet kitchen flow to a resort-style backyard



with a heated gunite pool, outdoor shower, grilling station, and patios. The finished lower level adds a gym, media lounge, recreation space, two bedrooms, and a full bath. Ideally located just moments from Sag Harbor Village, marinas, and Bridgehampton ocean beaches.



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