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If you want a condo on the North Fork

Originally published: May 7, 2014 3:56 PM

Updated: May 8, 2014 2:10 PM

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Seth and Linda Smith of Westchester were introduced to the North Fork when one of their children married at Corey Creek Winery in Southold. Two years later, the couple purchased a condo at Pheasant Run Estates in Greenport. "It's peaceful and there's a lot to do," says Seth, 65, an attorney, who, with Linda, has been living there since 2010. "We didn't buy an old captain's house because they go for a lot of money, and they need a lot of attention."

Amenities at their 60-unit complex include a community pool and club house. "You come and take your shoes off and do whatever you want," Seth adds.

There are at least a dozen condo and homeowner's association communities on the North Fork for those, like the Smiths, who are in search of Long Island's ultimate chill-out lifestyle. The idea is that amenities trump chores at these complexes, which are already located in a place known for its slower pace and off-the-beaten-path charm. Prices range from under \$150,000 to almost \$1 million.

Roof repairs, pool maintenance and landscaping are taken care of at the developments, says Vicky Germaise of Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "People don't have to waste their whole weekend mowing or raking," Germaise adds, noting the desire to avoid weekend chores is especially true for part-timers. (The North Fork has long been a second-home market.)

The notion appealed to Manhattanites Tim Tattam and his wife, Katherine Evans, who initially searched the North Fork for a waterfront house. "One of the issues of waterfront is, if it comes with a dock, it needs upkeep," says Tattam, 55, a bond analyst, noting that he is not a boater. "We looked at a bunch of houses and we stumbled upon The Cove. . . . We didn't even realize there were such places on the North Fork."

He's referring to The Cove at Southold, which overlooks Corey Creek, Hogs Neck Bay and Peconic Bay. The 33-unit luxury town house community offers a heated pool, docks, tennis courts and a private beach, says Francine Coppola of Douglas Elliman Real Estate, who is marketing a few listings there. Boat slips are optional, which pleased Tattam and Evans, who purchased a unit there almost two years ago. "Everything is taken care of," says Tattam. "When we get there, all we do is turn the key. It fits our lifestyle perfectly."

Perhaps the easy life is a trend that's catching on. Year over year, condo and homeowner's association sales were up throughout Long Island, according to Multiple Listing Service of Long Island data. Comparing April 2012 through March 2013 to April 2013 through March 2014, sales in Nassau County rose 26.9 percent while Suffolk County saw a 20.5 percent increase.

During the same time period, condo sales were up in North Fork's Baiting Hollow (220 percent), Southold (14.3 percent) and Aquebogue (66.7 percent) while Jamesport stayed even and Greenport dipped 50 percent. The North Fork on the whole had a banner year in 2013, says Joan "John" Bischoff van Heemskerck, a broker of Town & Country Real Estate, noting sales last year totaled \$264,490,844, compared to the last record high of \$240,284,400 in 2007.

Eileen Fox, 78, purchased her unit at The Cove in 1989. "I love it," she says. "Everything is taken care of." When she wants to go away on vacation, she adds, "I shut my door and don't worry about it." Driveways and walkways are shoveled, making it look like someone is always home.

Real estate agent Steve Mandresh was living in Manhattan when he purchased a condo in 2000 at The Bluffs -- a 126-unit building in Baiting Hollow. At the time, he says, he didn't care that his city apartment faced a brick wall. "It didn't faze me. It wasn't about the view," Mandresh says, adding, "When I got here, I thought, it is all about the view."

Mandresh, who works at Douglas Elliman Real Estate, became a full-timer in 2005. "I haven't looked back. . . . I love everything the city has to offer, but I can make it there in under two hours," he says.

Currently on the North Fork, there are 36 condo and homeowner's association units for sale on Multiple Listing. The properties include the adult communities of Founders Village for residents 55 and older. Here's a sampling of what's for sale.

GREENPORT

Stirling Cove

\$675,000

Common charges. \$496 a month

Taxes. \$3,104

Amenities Pool, tennis court and marina

Listing agents. Jeanmarie Bay and Mladen Bay, Town & Country Real Estate, 917-519-4180.

This end-unit town house has water views as well as front and rear decks. With about 2,800 square feet of living space, the layout includes a living room with fireplace, an eat-in kitchen with granite countertops and a dining room, as well as a half-bath and the master suite with sliding-glass doors. The second full bathroom and another two bedrooms, plus a library, are on the second floor.

SOUTHOLD

The Cove at Southold

\$619,900

Maintenance. \$508 a month

Taxes. \$3,467 (includes village tax)

Amenities. Two HarTru tennis courts, in-ground heated gunite pool, deeded docking rights

Listing agent. John Nickles, Lewis & Nickles, 631-765-3416.

Overlooking Peconic and Gardiners bays and Greenport and Orient harbors, this renovated second-floor end unit is about 1,226 square feet. Wood floors, recessed lighting, Carrara marble and a fireplace are among the appointments. The layout includes the living room, dining room and eat-in kitchen, as well as two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

BAITING HOLLOW

The Bluffs

\$409,000

Maintenance. \$70 a month

Common charges. \$315 a month

Taxes. \$4,955

Amenities. In-ground pool, tennis courts, beach rights

Listing agent Marcia Smoller, Little Bay Realty, 631-929-8400

On the main level of a three-story building, this end-unit overlooks Long Island Sound. The layout includes an entranceway, a living room, a den, a dining room, and an eat-in kitchen. It has two bedrooms and two renovated bathrooms.