



Real Estate Roundtable: Finding the Best Rental for Hamptons Summer



COURTESY JOHN LAFFEY ARCHITECT

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Summer on the East End of Long Island. The phrase itself is filled with sunshine, images of glistening beaches and chic soirées, lounging poolside and embracing the local air of laid-back elegance. All you need to complete the scene is the perfect summer rental. From what prospective renters should be looking for and the questions they should be asking, to the essentials that homeowners need to know when renting out their homes, we've brought together the insights of this esteemed group of real estate experts and insiders sharing the keys to finding and securing the best summer property in the Hamptons or on the North Fork.

"The key has always been and continues to be having a good real estate agent who is knowledgeable about the particular area a renter is interested in and who can readily spot the special features that make a property a great summer rental and who can also spot the potential problems with a rental property. Renters should be straightforward about who they anticipate their guests and visiting family members will be and what their own usage will be like—for example, will the property only be used on weekends throughout the summer or will the house be fully occupied by family and friends throughout the summer who all like to spend their days at the beach? Usage and likely occupancy is most helpful to an agent in selecting properties." —Aspasia G. Comnas, Executive Managing Director, Brown Harris Stevens of the Hamptons, LLC

"The best rentals, especially waterfront and Dune Road, go fast and often get rented year after year by the same tenants—so start your search early. You can often find good rentals in March and even April, but the prime rentals are long gone. Some renters choose to wait until the last minute in hope of finding the best deals, but that strategy can backfire." —Enzo Morabito, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Douglas Elliman Real Estate

"I have always said summer rentals in the Hamptons are inversely related to home sales—2014 was a very good year for sales. In fact home sales have been improving for the past several years. To that end, rentals have taken a back seat. That said, we now have a new dynamic in the equation—we have a surge in young, successful professionals in their 20s and 30s who want to spend weekends out east but are not yet in the market to purchase. This demographic does business very differently from the last generation." —Judi Desiderio, CEO, Town & Country Real Estate

"It's important to start the search early, work with one broker—you will save time and get to see more listings, especially the ones that meet your criteria. Many make the mistake of working with multiple brokers, which ends up being frustrating to all involved. Building a relationship with one broker will definitely improve the result and just makes the whole process more efficient. That one broker can show you every rental you want to see." —Geoff Gifkins, Hamptons Regional Manager, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Nest Seekers International

"Establish at least one good working relationship with a broker or agent you trust. Depend on them to help you market the property thoroughly and correctly, and call them to discuss potential tenants—even if they're not the ones bringing the tenants. Have a conversation and tell them your concerns. Listen as they tell you what you need to do to ensure the best rental experience. And if they don't have time for you, then they don't deserve yours. There are a million brokers out here. The key is finding one you trust and making friends with them. When you find someone you like and trust, stick with them." —Kieran Brew, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson, Jennifer Brew, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Brown Harris Stevens of the Hamptons LLC

"The first question they should ask is how big a house do I really need? The bigger the house, the more bedrooms, the bigger the price. If most weekends you need a four-bedroom house for a couple, two children and an occasional guest, don't look for a six/seven bedroom house because you're planning one big weekend in the summer with more guests. Next question is location. If all your friends are in East Hampton and your kids go to camp there, don't look in Southampton, which will add an hour of commuting each day for camp and long drives to see friends at night. If the focus of your weekends is not the beach, then it shouldn't matter if you're south of the highway or not. Why pay south-of-highway prices if you want to hang out at your pool and tennis court all day with only occasional trips to the beach?" —Gary DePersia, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, The Corcoran Group

"Most potential renters begin their search for a summer rental on the internet. After the initial search, it is important to contact the right agent that can translate needs into the perfect summer rental. Timing is also a key factor in securing a summer rental. The earlier the better. Many renters came out east after the holidays to select their rental for summer 2015. Each year we rent more and more homes in December and January." —Ernest Cervi, Executive Managing Director, Licensed Real Estate Broker, The Corcoran Group

"If renters wait too long, the available inventory will be far less than if they'd started in January/February. It is also beneficial to know what your budget is and where you want to focus your search." —Mary Slattery, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, The Corcoran Group

"Communication is the ultimate key to finding the perfect Hamptons home for the summer. Think about what you are looking for and discuss your needs with your broker. Tell them as much as you can: who will be with you, where they hang out—camps/tennis/surfing/kiteboarding, bay or ocean beaches—do you cook outside and have guests every night or do you need to be close to more restaurants. This info can assist a broker who knows the rental homes and can find great listings so you have choices to view. If you haven't worked with the broker before, letting them know where you rented before and what you did or didn't like about that home can help." —Maz Crotty, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Nest Seekers International

"The keys to finding a great summer tenant or great summer rental are clarity and transparency. Let's talk about renters first. The more specific information you can provide a seasoned broker about your needs, budget and your target neighborhood, the better. Be clear about how you envision your Hamptons summer lifestyle, and what the priorities are for you. Is it important to be biking distance from the bay or the ocean? Do you want privacy? Easy access to town, the Jitney or train station? Make sure that the broker you choose is very familiar with the area that you're targeting and remember, this is the Hamptons—so do be realistic with needs versus budget." —Elizabeth Troy, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson, Brown Harris Stevens of the Hamptons LLC

"It is never too early to look for the summer rental of your dreams. When there is snow on the ground you should be looking forward to the warm days of summer. The best listings tend to go first. The internet is always the best way to get started. Search for the homes that meet your goals. Once you find those listings, I suggest you contact an experienced broker to set up the appointments and perhaps suggest to you other homes that you may like." —Alan Schnurman, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Saunders & Associates

"Renting sight unseen is always a risk, although it can be done successfully. Give your agent some leeway. The internet does not have all the answers!" —Carol Abady, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson, Brown Harris Stevens of the Hamptons LLC

"The key to finding a great summer rental is to start by using the best broker and one that is thorough. Looking fairly early, February or March, is fine. Some people call and try to look in summer for the following summer, but nothing is updated and it's very difficult to get access since there are tenants in place, while others will wait until last minute, trying to get bargains, but most of the nicely furnished ones and better rentals are taken much earlier." —Susan Breitenbach, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, The Corcoran Group

"A key to success in securing a great summer rental is to try to be amenable to taking the whole season. Landlords are reluctant to break up the season early on in the year, so try to be as flexible as you can. And by all means, if you liked the last rental you had, grab it before your tenancy is up or right after! Offer money up front in full or make the payments simple, like two payments—one now, one a month prior to." —Sheri Winter Clarry, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, The Corcoran Group