

Montauk offers casual lifestyle with water views

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Surf-casters fish for striped bass near the Montauk Lighthouse in Montauk, Oct. 9, 2014. Fishing and other water sports are part of the lure of the Montauk community. (Credit: Gordon M. Grant)

Whether you call Montauk the end or the beginning of Long Island, one thing is for sure -- it's a beautiful and relaxing place. That's the popular consensus, anyway. "It's like skiing in Telluride [Colorado]. It's hard to get there, but once you do, it's the best," says Judi Desiderio, chief executive of Town & Country Real Estate.

Montauk, at the easternmost tip of the island, is popular for its beaches, fishing, camping and horseback riding. "There are many corners to discover -- some of them hidden," says resident Helen Stubbmann of the Corcoran Group.

With the Atlantic Ocean, the Long Island Sound, the bay and Lake Montauk serving as the backdrop, the water is the prominent feature, Desiderio says. "You see it, hear it, feel it." And the landscape is verdant as well. In fact, the country's oldest cattle ranch, Deep Hollow, established in 1658, is within the hamlet. "The beauty of Montauk is that it is close to 70 percent preserved," Stubbmann says.

Golf, yoga, ample dining choices, a night life and annual events are also part of the scene. And, of course, there is Montauk Point Lighthouse. The atmosphere is definitely casual, Desiderio says, noting board shorts and flip flops are typical summer attire.

Montauk's eclectic housing stock ranges from original Leisurama homes sold by Macy's in the 1960s to gracious Hampton-style manses. Ditch Hills, known for surfing, and Hither Hills, a private beach community, are among the distinct neighborhoods. The market has been hot, agents say. "We have a saying around here: Once you get the sand in your shoes, you don't leave," Stubbmann says.

SEASONAL RENTALS. (Memorial Day to Labor Day) A four-bedroom house can range from \$20,000 to \$60,000; up to \$450,000 for an oceanfront property.

SALES PRICES. According to Town & Country Real Estate's third-quarter report, there were 20 sales with a median price of \$970,000. In the third quarter in 2013, there were 17 sales with a median price of \$850,000.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS. Shadmoor State Park; boating; whale watching; hiking; biking

MORE MONTAUK STATS

Town: East Hampton

Area: 17.4 square miles

ZIP code: 11954

Population: 3,326

Median age: 49.4

Median household income: \$71,312

Median home value: \$925,000*

LIRR time to NYC: 3 hours, 3 minutes at peak

Monthly ticket: \$466

Getting there: Hampton Jitney also provides service between Manhattan and Montauk

School district: From kindergarten to eighth grade, students attend the Montauk district and then go to East Hampton High School.

Sources: 2010 Census; LIRR

*Based on sales in the second quarter, 2014, according to Town & Country Real Estate