

What a clam-ity: Famed North Fork eatery Claudio's could shutter as owners put site on the market



BY KATHERINE CLARKE

Longtime owners have put the site of the restaurant on the market

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Claudio's Wharf bar and restaurant is popular among motorcyclists in Greenport Harbor along Long Island's North Fork.

For Chowder hounds, this might be a clam-ity.

America's oldest same-family run restaurant, a famous seafood eatery known as Claudio's on Long Island's North Fork, is facing an uncertain future after its longtime owners put the two-acre site that houses the restaurant on the market, the Daily News has learned.

This is the first time that the property, which has been in the same family for 145 years, has been offered for sale.

The large waterfront property, eight miles from the tip of the North Fork and 90 miles from New York City, has been controlled by the Claudio family since 1870, when the current owners' ancestor opened the iconic restaurant. The site is now home to three harbor front restaurants, a snack bar, two souvenir shops and parking.

The sale of the Greenport Village property, which has been listed with no official asking price, could mean the end for Claudio's, said listing broker Guthrie Garvin of Cushman & Wakefield, noting that the family had left their options open for the meantime.

"The family decided to explore the market and see what kind of response they get," he said. "For now, the future of Claudio's is up in the air."

The Claudio family declined to comment on the listing.

The current configuration of the waterfront site allows for major construction up to 50,000 square feet without disruption of current operations, but all plans are subject to approval by the village.

Experts said this may be the right time for owners of large commercial properties such as Claudio's to dip their toes into the local market.

"The North Fork commercial market is growing at a faster pace than the South Fork at this point," said Hal Zwick, director of commercial real estate at brokerage Town & Country. "We're seeing more demand now than we did before the recession."

But local diners aren't happy as clams about the potential closure of the famed restaurant.

"It's a grand Greenport institution," said real estate agent and long-term Greenport resident Paul Loeb of Douglas Elliman, whose fist job was washing dishes at the restaurant. "You can always count on Claudio's opening every spring. Where else can you go stand on the dock with a cold beer and watch the boats go by?"