



## Real Estate Roundtable: Inside the World of Open Houses



GRASSY HOLLOW. PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY JOHN P. LAFFEY AIA ARCHITECT  
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Here in the midst of a fall season filled with enjoying the myriad wonders of life on the East End—wineries and beaches, apples and pumpkins—it is also the ideal season for exploring incredible properties at one of the many open houses dotting the calendar. An opportunity for buyers to get up close and personal with properties and for sellers to showcase their listings, open houses can be a fun and fruitful way to explore the local markets...but only if you are prepared. Our panel of experts and insiders shares their thoughts on what both buyers and sellers need to do in order to get the most out of the open-house experience here on the East End.

“For buyers to get the most out of the open house, they need to have the answers to the questions they are asking right then and there, and they need the listing agent to have a good, solid knowledge and history of the property they are representing. The listing agent may not have all the answers right at that moment, but they had better know their product, because today’s buyers have already done their homework. As far as sellers go, pricing the home correctly in the market place first is key, if that is done and the house is sitting correctly in the marketplace than the open house should be packed with ready, willing and able buyers! All else will fall into place fairly easily and good things will happen!” —Robert James Canberg, Licensed Real Estate Salesperson, Nest Seekers International

“If you are a buyer or seller in the Hamptons, open houses are a must. The sellers have an opportunity to show their homes to a variety of people—some more serious than others. It’s all about numbers. Show your home to enough potential buyers and you will receive offers. If the house is properly priced, it will sell in this market. From a buyer’s point of view, there is no better way to learn the market in the area you are interested in. To this day, with all my experience, it’s hard for me to pass an open house sign without seeing what’s inside.” —Alan Schnurman, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Saunders & Associates

“Open houses are like wild cards—you never truly know the impact. It could be great, resulting in a sale, or small and not well attended. But because they do, at times, yield desired results, sellers should be open to them. A qualified agent will help sellers navigate times, days and frequencies. For buyers, it may be a lark to visit an open house, or you may be visiting friends or family and an open house leads to the opportunity to expand your quality time with them. But if you are a serious buyer who knows what you want and where you want to be, it is not an efficient way to research homes that are available. Again, there’s nothing more valuable to your time, energy and money than to find a seasoned, knowledgeable agent to zero in on.” —Judi Desiderio, CEO, Town & Country Real Estate

“Timely information in today’s market is key. Technology is doing a good job in keeping buyers up-to-date as to when and where they should be, but there is no substitute for a walk-through tour. If you are new to the market and getting to learn the area, open houses are a great resource for you. Checking out open houses in the neighborhood you want to live in can really help you understand the value of a neighborhood. As you become more informed, you will be able to quickly spot a good deal and move on it appropriately. Another benefit to attending open houses is that it can help you subtly interview brokers. By striking up a conversation and asking for their expertise, you can not only gain important local knowledge but perhaps you may identify someone who you would be comfortable working with to help you find your perfect home.”—Denise Rosko, Principal Broker/Owner, Hamptons Realty Associates

“I’m honestly not a big advocate of open houses. People’s lives are busy. Therefore, in the limited time a buyer has during a day trip or weekend on the East End, they are best served to be more strategic about their home search than to wander about at whatever open houses may happen be scheduled for that particular day. People who stop in at an open house are usually not quite ready to buy, and are still in the stage of window shopping and curiosity. Once someone is ready to find a home, it is a much more effective and efficient use of time and effort to review a listing with the buyer’s agent online and have the agent schedule showings for that day the buyer is planning to be here, to see those specific homes that best fit their personal criteria.”—Donielle Cardinale, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker, Daniel Gale Sotheby’s International Realty

“Open houses on the East End need to deliver a synergy of house and lifestyle appeal. Sellers should have as much information as possible available for savvy Hamptons buyers—attractive informational flyers, brochures, surveys and details—to allow for a tactile reference to the property during and even after buyers have visited it. Buyers must get past the ‘dazzle and glitz’ of Hamptons home ownership and ask real questions, and open houses allow a casual forum to do so. Buyers, take your time at an open house. Sellers, never allow a buyer to feel rushed—this is valuable leisure time for them and an open house should feel enjoyable! Add a ‘lifestyle’ element to the open house: soothing music, refreshments, a cold bottle of water on a warm summer day—even a glass of Pinot Grigio poolside allows for a comfort zone to be developed and the ability to bond with a home. Lastly, many buyers work with realtors. Buyers, stipulate if you are working with a realtor—in fairness to both your professional and to the seller—but still remember, you’re not buying the home your realtor wants, you’re buying it for you, so enjoy!” —Jim Rooney, Principal FLEXdevelopment/KP Property Group Inc.