

## In Hamptons And Elsewhere, Season No Longer Ends On Labor Day

*Duration of East End stays has increased 20 percent*

Sasha Jones | August 27, 2020

Judi Desiderio calls it 'tumbleweed Tuesday.' On the day after Labor Day, renters disappear, leaving beaches and restaurants empty.

Not this year.

"No matter where you go nowadays people are saying there's going to be no tumbleweed Tuesday," said Desiderio, CEO of Town & Country Real Estate. "And there won't be."

Brokers in the tri-state area say they have run out of rentals as the pandemic has upended fall plans, leading families to trade in their New York apartments for an out-of-city escape.

At the beginning of the health crisis, agents saw an uptick in renters fleeing to the suburbs and weekend spots. Now, while some renters become buyers, others are signing long-term leases.

Online booking data from VRBO and Airbnb shared with The Real Deal show that in the Hamptons, between May and September, average duration of stay increased 20 percent.

For September, the number of reservations is up 8 percent compared to this time last year and the average nightly rate has jumped almost 21 percent. The number of nights booked has risen 26 percent.

"The demand for September is very high right now and the pricing is very similar to June and July," said Bryan Fedner, co-founder of Hamptons-focused rental business StayMarquis. "People are definitely taking advantage of that extended summer season."

Brokers find themselves coping not with empty calendars but with a decrease in supply. Between May and September, the number of bookings fell 29 percent as homeowners pulled their houses from the market for personal use.



It is not hard to see why. In New York City, indoor dining and theaters remain closed indefinitely and other venues are operating at severely reduced capacity. Schools will only partially reopen and teachers are threatening not to show up. A recent survey found offices were 92 percent empty and subway ridership is down about 80 percent.

Homes outside of the city, meanwhile, can offer beach access, more square footage and outdoor space — sometimes including swimming pools, tennis courts and basketball hoops.

Philip Scheinfeld, an agent with Compass who works both in the city and the Hamptons, said it's especially the case as more parents turn to home schooling.

"If you have a family with two kids and you have a housekeeper, a chef, or a nanny or a teacher coming in a couple days a week to teach the kids, they're going to need more space, more levels, more separation," Scheinfeld said.

Scheinfeld said he has at least three families homeschooling their children in small groups with friends. Some others are sending their children to private schools, such as Avenues, an elite academy that recently opened an outpost in the Hamptons.

Other areas are similarly seeing interest stretch past the summer as offices continue to allow working from home. Gary Hirsch, president of Elk Homes, who rents homes in Westchester and Connecticut, said his business is generally seasonal, with peaks in the summer and winter. Now he is seeing more interest in one- to two-year rentals.

"This is a whole new world and it's really been kind of constant since March or April," Hirsch said. "We've been able to have very, very little frictional vacancies from turnover."

In New Jersey, Triplemint agent Michelle Mumoli said she's seen an increase in both serious buyers and long-term renters as families decide their futures.

"I am seeing tenants that are either deciding to stay where they are, or are looking for something new and getting something that's bigger and staying there for as long as they can, because it's a wait-and-see type of mentality at the moment," Mumoli said.

While supply diminishes in the tri-state area, the city's outer boroughs are also getting in on the action. Lindsay Barton Barrett, an agent with Douglas Elliman, had a client rent a townhouse in Carroll Gardens as a summer home after failing to find anything upstate.

"As Brooklynites, we feel very much that we are in the city, but I think somebody living in a two-bedroom condo high-rise in Manhattan may come out and find a three-bedroom townhouse duplex with a yard and go, 'Okay, this solves my problem,'" Barrett said.