

# Southold Mainstay Elbow East Still Up for Grabs, Just Please Don't Mess With the Menu

Catherine McGrath | August 10, 2021



Courtesy of Town & Country

Elbow East, an iconic North Fork restaurant for the last 33 years, is up for sale, leaving many customers worried the mainstay's marinated steaks and mashed potatoes will be a thing of the past. However, one of the owners, Billy Berliner, says the establishment may live on, "if I sell it to the right person."

It sounds like there is a potential buyer. In an interview on Friday, Berliner said that he has "someone looking and he doesn't want to change anything."

The property at 50 Sea Drive in Southold hit the market last year for \$1.495 million, listed with Jeanmarie Bay of Town & Country Real Estate.

“This is one of the most prime pieces of commercial real estate I have seen on either fork since it is situated right across the road from the beach,” said Judi Desiderio, the CEO of Town & Country Real Estate. “North Fork commercial real estate is certainly on everyone’s radar and we are so proud to represent many of these listings.”

Berliner, who has owned Elbow East since 1999, said he loves the business but is looking forward to his retirement and spending it on the beach. Currently, he splits his time between Long Island and Florida while he waits for the right person to come along.

Cliff’s Elbow Room in Jamesport, Cliff’s Elbow Too in Laurel and Cliff’s Rendezvous in Riverhead are still owed by the Saunders family, and have nothing to do with the Elbow East business since Berliner bought it 22 years ago.

Berliner’s story resembles that of most locals in the restaurant business. He grew up right along with the franchise. Berliner’s mother worked for Cliff Saunders, the original owner, at the original Elbow Room in Jamesport. When Saunders needed a dishwasher Berliner was first in line.

Saunders and Berliner grew close leading to Berliner becoming the manager and eventually being able to purchase Elbow East with his sister Katherine Rutkowski in 1989.



Courtesy of Town & Country Real Estate

When asked why he has decided to sell the business now, Berliner says, “Well, I’m gonna be 69 years old on my next birthday and I just wanna take it easy.”

For now, he is spending every other week at his condo in Florida. Berliner explained that it may be years before a buyer is found. In the meantime, remember Elbow East the next time you wish to dine out.

The building is set on just over half an acre at the corner of Sea Drive and Kenney's Road. The 2,100-square-foot structure, where the restaurant operates, is 2,100 square feet with one bathroom and space for tables and chairs. Through the large windows, customers can watch the sunset over the Long Island Sound as it is just steps from Kenney's Beach, one of the most popular on the North Fork.

Elbow East may just be the perfect spot for anyone looking to break into the lucrative restaurant business on Long Island.

Just don't mess with the menu.