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Matthew McDermott

'ZO AWESOME!'

Vagrants at sprawling new NYC encampment sing praises for mayor

A massive homeless encampment near the Intrepid Museum in Manhattan has been vexing business owners and passersby for months — but instead of clearing the eyesore, the city is effectively running a valet trash service for its residents, while Mayor Mamdani's hands-off approach is earning him rave reviews from the encampment's occupants. "Mamdani is awesome," gushed one shanty dweller.

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Hudson Valley vs. Hamptons:

By MARK ELLWOOD

There's a boldfaced brouhaha bubbling up this summer — has New York's quietly elegant, ever-trendier Hudson Valley finally knocked the cash-splashing, high-falutin' Hamptons off its perch as the preferred hideout for NYC's elite?

Nick Ewing thinks so. The 46-year-old commodities exec thought he'd found his forever escape after snapping up an East Hampton pad in 2013 — until the pandemic-era hordes swooped in.

"I love the beach, to get away from the madness of the city. I thought we would live out there, in some form, until we died," he told The Post.

"Then, during COVID, 10 million people moved out to East Hampton. And they never left," he said, describing how the Memorial Day-to-Labor Day retreat became a full-time residence for many, including boldfacers like Jerry Seinfeld and Howard Stern — who has famously been broadcasting from his Southampton home since 2020.

Ewing watched helplessly as the traffic jams and overcrowded restaurants of summer became the all-season norm.

Vibe all wrong

"You can survive that for 16 weekends, but now it's all year 'round," he said, explaining that to make matters worse, the vibe of the new arrivals seemed all wrong.

"We had an influencer move in with the lady next door to us, who was basically having Kardashian-esque parties every weekend," Ewing said. "That's not the scene I went out there for." (Michael Rubin's over-the-top July 4 White Party at his $50M Watermill estate is one such culprit — Kim, Khloe and Kendall Jenner have all been clocked.)

With regret, Ewing sold his place in late 2021, with no plans to buy anywhere else — until his curiosity was piqued by a property for sale in the Hudson Valley.

"It ticked every box," he said of the home in Dutchess County he and his husband ended up buying — just a few weeks later.

"The only thing we miss about the Hamptons is the beach, but I don't even really think about it. There is just so much more to love about being up here," he raved.

Ewing isn't the only wealthy New Yorker opting to go north instead of east these days.

When members club Soho House eyed New York for the second outpost of its winning Farmhouse resort/retreat concept, which originated in the UK (and where Meghan Markle held her bachelorette party, no less), the global brand didn't pick the Hamptons — but rather a vacant estate just outside of the tony upstate town of Rhinebeck.

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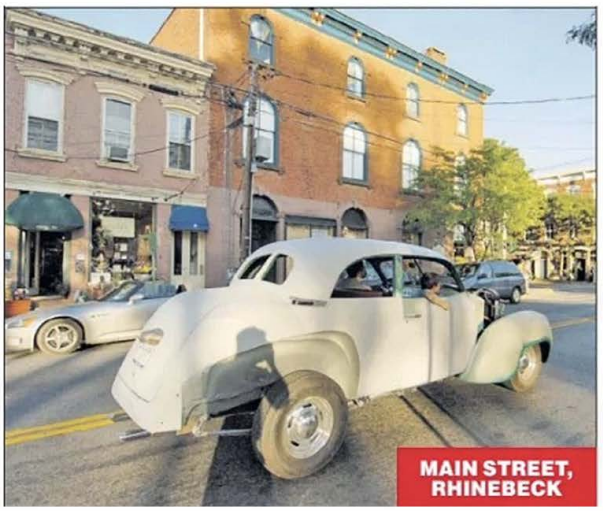

GLITZ VS. GREENERY: The influencer scene has seemed to take over the Hamptons, forcing many East End loyalists to explore other areas in the state.

Down the road in Hyde Park, near the Culinary Institute of America, uber-luxe hotel brand One & Only will also make its debut in the next two years, even selling residences on site. And rumor has it Estelle Manor, another British members' club, will materialize in the same area at some point.

'Hamptons still wins'

All these new developments are taking shape alongside a growing selection of cities, towns and villages that have become hot properties, from Rhinebeck (long jokingly described by some locals as "the missing Hampton") to unbelievably hip Hudson, plus the many wineries, organic farm stands and a rich performing arts scene that are making Hamptons refugees — not to mention a ton of New Yorkers who'd never have chosen the Jitney life — stop thinking about life on the East End at all: they're too busy loving the Hudson Valley.

Of course, the Hamptons remains a shorthand for spendy summers — a retreat with everything from designer stores to a dog-friendly beach or two, the ultimate, time-honored choice for those looking to escape New York.

The elegant area is ever-evolving, too, with new arrivals like East Hampton's reimagined Hedges Inn this summer, which socialite Sarah Wetenhall has transformed after its controversial — and temporary — attempted stint as a beachy branch of NYC A-lister magnet Zero Bond, faved by everyone from Tom Brady to Taylor Swift.

And out in ever-pricier Montauk, LDV's Barlume Beach is another newcomer, amping up the town's fashpack cred. (The biggest name spotted so far: RHONY exile Ramona Singer, who came to the opening.) The polo tournament situation chukkas on, not to mention the countless galas held in fashionable estate backyards during the warmer months.

But is the region's heavily gilded crown about to be snatched by that understated upstate upstart?

Hampton loyalist Carson Griffith is unconvinced. The veteran social chronicler who just started Rich People S--t, a newsletter focusing on the 0.1%, says it's not even a contest.

"I go to the Hamptons all the time, and it still wins: on scale, institutional prestige, the history, the ocean," she told The Post.

Look at Babe's, the brand new, Meg Ryan-luring diner in Sag Harbor, she said, for evidence of the hotspot-making power of the South Fork.

"Even the parking lot turned into a social scene — people are obsessed with it."

Members' clubs like Soho House haven't turned up in the Hamptons, Griffith insists, because the scene there is already self-sorting.

Upstate 'landgrab'

"It already has an existing social infrastructure. Upstate still feels like a landgrab," the insider snarked.

And speaking of landgrabs, there's the East End property market — which crypto money has made more buoyant than ever, according to Douglas Elliman's Enzo Morabito, a longtime realtor in the region.

This summer, the well-known doyen of waterfront manses told The Post, he's anticipating more transactions than even at the peak of the pandemic.

"The towns here become more like Fifth Avenue in the summer, and the No. 1 place to be has to be East Hampton village," he said. For bargains, especially south of the highway, you're looking farther — and farther — afield. For example, $3 million will get you a nice place all the way over in Westhampton Beach — but only if you hurry.

"Even that is going through the roof. It's going to disappear within the next two or three years," Morabito warned.

Hamptons Chronicles writer Rory Satran, an East End fixture for more than 15 years, is another local watcher who sees the momentum continuing to build.

"In the summer, the Hamptons gets extremely social with endless galas and parties," unlike in the Hudson Valley, she told The Post — and even more so lately, with the ratings-topping Bravo