

## Treasures of the Hamptons

WITH ITS ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE, STRONG MARITIME FLAVOR AND COOL BREEZES, SAG HARBOR IS A FAVORED SUMMER DESTINATION FOR AFFLUENT NEW YORK CITY DWELLERS

The first European settlers of New York's "Sagg" Harbor knew they'd struck gold. With its deep water anchorage providing a crucial edge over neighboring North Sea Harbor, roads were quickly cut across Long Island's dense woodlands and the rest, as they say, is history. Sagg Harbor dropped the extra *g* and by 1707 had sailed into first place as a whaling capital. Industrious West Indies trade swelled its freewheeling prosperity and, but for a brief downswing under British occupation during the American Revolution, Sag Harbor has rarely known hard times.

Today's Sag Harbor is a favorite port-of-call for yachtsmen, celebrities, and daytrippers of all kinds who value its discreet, authentic ambiance. The home of literary lights from James Fenimore Cooper to John Steinbeck and EL Doctorow, Sag Harbor is also renowned for its cutting-edge galleries and performance spaces.

Historic architecture and landmarks abound, with strict preservation and zoning laws to ensure their survival.

Begin your tour of Sag Harbor with the American hotel, the beloved 1846 hostelry on Main street. Charming, elegant and intimate, the hotel has only eight guestrooms. Its fabled restaurant, specializing in American-French cuisine, is adored by local residents and visitors from around the world. Diners enjoy Zagat top-rated meals amid romantic candlelit tables, fireplaces and cozy Victorian décor. Summer regulars include Sir Paul McCartney, Billy Joel and Renée Zellweger, so be sure to make a reservation. Of course, the simpler option of a barstool offers a cheaper version of the same experience.

Off season, the American hotel relaxes with the arrival of autumn winds. This can be the best time to experience the village, and discover its soul. However, for sheer exuberance, the summer reigns supreme. Main street's colorful awnings roll out a welcome wherein a host of delightful surprises await: antique shops, clothing stores, galleries, pizza, ice cream and imported cheese. You can spend an entire day happily exploring the village.

Phoebe Collins

### Favorite retail ports of call

- The Wharf Shop: dollhouses, scrimshaw, Native American jewelry and highly original greeting cards. 69A Main St., tel. 1.631.725.0420.
- Young Blood: unique modern and vintage antiques. 26 Madison St., tel. 1.631.725.6260.
- Andrew & Company: adorable outfits of all kinds for children. 83 Main St., tel. 1.631.725.3236.

- Ruby Beets: decorative antiques, vintage and contemporary furniture, lighting, accessories, art and photography. 25 Washington St., tel. 1.631.899.3275.
- Urban Zen: understated luxury, created by Donna Karan. 4 Bay St., tel. 1.631.725.6176.
- The Grenning Gallery: exhibition space for local artists. 90 Main St., tel. 1.631.725.8467.



©Paul Clemence