

Summertime Dilemma — Montauk or Mykonos?

If Montauk-goers fear the Hamptons-ization of their beloved spot, Mykonos fans worry about creeping Ibiza-ism.



By Erik Maza WWD.COM

Montauk, New York, a beach hamlet on the eastern tip of Long Island, lies about 120 miles from Manhattan. It was not much of a vacation spot in 1971, when Andy Warhol and his friend, filmmaker Paul Morrissey, paid \$225,000 for a twenty-acre estate near one of its rugged beaches. Writer Bob Colacello, a Warhol friend, describes the Montauk of those days as “our own little summer camp.” But, soon enough, socialite Lee Radziwill rented the Warhol place—her sister, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, came along sometimes—and Montauk was on the map.

Today, summer residents and recent visitors include Gwyneth Paltrow, Bono, Steven Spielberg, Ralph Lauren, Toots Thielemans, Rufus Wainwright, Bruce Weber, Shaun White, and the Winklevoss twins. “It’s not slick,” Colacello says. “It’s not overly rich. It’s offhandedly rich.”

Mykonos is a windy island in the Aegean Sea, about 100 miles southeast of Athens. Hercules vanquished the Titans here, according to myth. Known for its white granite and clear waters, it was once popular among working-class Greeks and vacationing Europeans. Then, in 1961, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis went on a tour of the Greek islands—her baby sister, Lee Radziwill, came along—and Mykonos was on the map.

Recent guests include designers Jean Paul Gaultier, Olivier Rousteing, Brian Atwood, and the brothers Caten (Dean and Dan) of the Dsquared2 label; models Naomi Campbell, Alessandra Ambrosio, and R. J. King; various Kardashians and Himself (Kanye West).

“You meet a rich lady who arrives with two bodyguards,” says photographer Giampaolo Sgura, who has been going to Mykonos for eighteen years. “And then you see Valentino arriving, with a boat. And then Giorgio Armani. And Dolce and Gabbana, in their boat. Then you can also go where it’s empty, and it’s just you and the wind.”

While Montauk and Mykonos attract similar crowds, and each is once-remote vacation spot now in danger of being overrun, they have significant cultural differences. To wit:

- **Montauk is lobster rolls and beer. Mykonos is grilled octopus and Prosecco.**
- **Montauk is a pair of Hurley boardshorts. Mykonos is a miniature Speedo.**
- **Montauk is an Uber Chopper and the Hampton Jitney. Mykonos is a superyacht belonging to a friend of a friend.**
- **Montauk is Jimmy Buffett. Mykonos is Tiësto.**
- **Montauk is a joint behind the Surf Lodge. Mykonos is molly at Cavo Paradiso.**
- **Montauk is Twitter. Mykonos is Instagram.**

Not long after Radziwill stayed at Warhol's estate, Truman Capote and Elizabeth Taylor showed up. The Rolling Stones rented the main house (which was designed by Stanford White) in 1975, during their tour of the Americas, and Colacello was present when Mick Jagger stopped in at the Shagwong Restaurant, where someone kept playing the Stones on the jukebox. "Mick finally got up and put on 'Shame, Shame, Shame,' by Shirley & Company," Colacello says. "He sang a cappella, and the whole bar stopped." Not much later, Jagger wrote "Memory Motel," after an actual Montauk motel.

The mix of bohemians, their moneyed friends, and old-time residents continued until 2008, when Jayma Cardoso, a Brazilian by way of Newark, New Jersey, set her sights on a weather-beaten twenty-room roadhouse near the beach. After renovations, Cardoso and her partners christened it the Surf Lodge. In addition to an influx of celebrities, the place attracted fist-pumping types for whom Montauk had been a rumor. "I used to go out there and have bonfires on the beach at night," says designer Rogan Gregory, who has been going to Montauk for seventeen years. "Now I go to the beach and I feel like I can see half of Williamsburg."

"A lot of the locals don't like us," Cardoso says. "I get it. I come from a little town. But it wasn't my intention to make Montauk a crazy place." The Surf Lodge tried to make peace with the town in 2012, after tech investor Michael Walrath bought out the hotel. Cardoso, who stayed on as a partner, tries to keep things low-key. "Even with the deejays," she says, "I give them a playlist: You cannot play top forty. You cannot play hip-hop. You cannot play house music. You can only play oldies or rock 'n' roll. I like Jay Z, but I don't know if Jay Z would fit so great in Montauk." Colacello stopped going in 1983, but occasionally he will drive to Montauk Point from his home in East Hampton. "It still hasn't lost its basic appeal, which is the un-Hamptons," he says.

If Montauk-goers fear the Hamptons-ization of their beloved spot, Mykonos fans worry about creeping Ibiza-ism. "I don't want to sound old-school," says Sgura. "I'm a house kid. But if you go to one of those new clubs, there's some deejay playing music that's too strong for this kind of island. When I go to Ibiza, I go clubbing. When I go to Mykonos, I want to go to the beach. I want to go to a nice restaurant. It's more grown-up."

For Sgura, the island was in its full glory in 1996. "There was just one club," he says, "and it was perched on a mountain peak overlooking the ocean. And it was all the trendiest deejays coming to play for one night. David Morales. Frankie Knuckles. You came out midday with your sunglasses on."

Jean Paul Gaultier's love for Mykonos started in 1978. "'Stayin' Alive' was playing everywhere," he says. "I fell in love with the island, with the scenery, with the people, and have been going ever since."

Olivier Rousteing, the creative director of the French house Balmain, is the new Mykonos archetype: Age 28 and gay, he looks like Tony Curtis in *Spartacus*, and he speaks as if addressing his Instagram followers. "What happens in Mykonos stays in Mykonos," he says. "Hashtag, secrets."

A secret vacation spot is even better when you introduce it to a friend or two, if only to demonstrate your superior taste. The problem arises when your friends tell their friends, and the hordes fill the bars and beaches and the once-charming villagers get grumpy. In the coming years, those who are forever in search of the next place will doubtless break away from the crowd, and an article like this one will be headlined "A Summertime Dilemma: Bali or Block Island?"

wwd.com June 2, 2014