

NEWS RELEASE

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5 Things You Didn't Know About (Retro) Montauk



Once a rural hamlet known for livestock grazing, and then in the 19th century to today for fishing, Montauk, NY, was discovered as a summer vacation spot for elite travelers in the 1880's. But, the moneyed class came and went to other playgrounds after the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the classic, authentic beach town survived.

Montauk is perched on Long Island's easternmost tip, 120 miles from the city. The locals' unofficial slogans for their hometown are either "The End" or "The Beginning." You can't go any further except by boat across Long Island Sound, Block Island Sound or the Atlantic. Or, according to proud Montaukers, Montauk is where Long Island begins. Ask a Montauker and you'll find that he or she is pleased to live far from the madding crowd and in his own way.

Here are 5 things you didn't know about Montauk. They are embedded in its retro DNA. Travelers will experience them, to a large degree, today:

1. Montauk was to be the summer playground for the rich but the Crash ended that. Ten thousand acres of moorland were purchased by businessman Arthur Benson, in 1879, and Stanford White designed seven houses at Ditch Plains. Entrepreneur Carl Fisher purchased Benson's Montauk in 1926 and envisioned it as Miami of the North. He built Montauk Manor, an office building, the golf course, the yacht Club, Tudor style homes and a Tudor village for the workmen. All operate today. His grand vision of Montauk ended when he lost his fortune.

2. There are 56 places to stay, many are 1950's motels and cabins with drive up to your room parking conceived when family car vacations took hold. To be sure, they are re-outfitted and refurbished for today's traveler, some even turned into boutique enclaves, but their retro vibes resonate throughout Montauk.

3. Montauk was earmarked as the ideal vacation home destination for New York City's middle class by Leisurama homes that were sold in Macy's and built in the early 1960's. Put down \$490 and \$73 per month after and you got a 730 to 1200 sq. ft. "leisure time" home in Culloden Point with everything: sofas, rugs, tables and chairs, beds, Melmac dishes, curtains, towels, bed linen, tooth brushes for each family member, heat and insulation. Many exist today, passed down to or sold by heirs, and renovated or added-onto.

4. After 125 years, Montauk still reigns as one of the premier sport fishing capitals of the world. Home to world records for everything from flounder to great white shark (today, in Montauk shark are tagged and released), it lures sports fishermen from around the world. Catch a fish and bring it to a restaurant that will cook it to order on the spot.

5. Probe a Montauker of a certain age and he or she remembers when Andy Warhol and his posse and the Rolling Stones discovered Montauk. In 1971, Warhol and his manager/partner, Paul Morrissey, bought a compound, "Eothen," on a windswept moor above the Atlantic Ocean. In "Mick, The Memory Motel, Montauk, and Me 1975," (curbedhamptons.com 2013), Lisa Euler writes:

"In spring 1975, the Rolling Stones were planning their next American tour. They decided that quiet Montauk would be a great place to rehearse undisturbed, so Andy Warhol rented his compound, Eothen, to them. In *Exposures* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1979), Andy wrote, "'Mick Jagger really put Montauk on the map. The motels were overflowing with groupies. When Mick went into town everything stopped.'"

He wrote a song about a motel and bar that he frequented:

"Hannah honey was a peachy kind of girl
Her eyes were hazel
And her nose were slightly curved
We spent a lonely night at the Memory Motel
It's on the ocean, I guess you know it well"

("Hannah honey" reportedly being Carly Simon.)"

The motel is still there. In Montauk, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

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Photo: Eothen Estate, Montauk, courtesy Montauk Chamber of Commerce

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