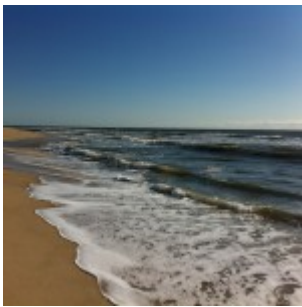


The East End Bucolic Life

I've always been a city girl having spent most of my adult life in Los Angeles. Whenever my husband, Howie, mentioned maybe moving to some place less crazy I would silently panic. LA was my home and I couldn't imagine living any other place. I told him it would take a stick of dynamite to blow me out of Los Angeles – and then he took me on vacation to the East End of Long Island, aka The Hamptons. It was love at first sight and the fuse was lit – let's get the hell out of LA! That was 6 years ago and now we are making our permanent move out to Amagansett where my soul now lives.



Living in the East End through all the four seasons has been a real awakening for me. After living in Los Angeles for so long, the seasons never really mattered. It is always sunny and beautiful, with some occasional (far to infrequent) rain and an earthquake here or there. My first summer in Amagansett I was stunned by how people were obsessed with going to the beach. I couldn't really understand the intense fever of it all. However, after going through a few long and cold winters, I finally understood that summer was the reward for enduring the bitter cold, snow and grey days – which I kind of like to be honest. It is almost like people are wringing every last drop of sun and fun out of summer before the cool days of autumn descend.



The other thing that became clear is that the clothes I wore in LA were always the same since the weather was usually the same throughout the year – no winter coats, hats and gloves required! Not so in Long Island. But, I love that too. I really enjoy the autumn and even winter when all the NYC people leave and the East End resumes its sleepy life with no traffic and, let's say, many fewer crazy people.

Long Island has long been an important agricultural community. When I first moved here I was amazed at all of the local farms and how the seasons brought such a bounty of different vegetables at stands all along the road sides. It was kind of a cultural transition for me. I've always shopped in grocery stores for everything I needed. I never really thought about what was in season since the produce aisle had anything you could want because it is in season somewhere. However, living in the East End is such a treat because of all the organic farming that is done just a mile or two from our house. My favorite farm is Balsam Farms on the corner of Windmill Lane and Town Lane in Amagansett. It is impressive how committed the people at Balsam Farms are to organic farming. Their loving care and commitment shows in the amazing vegetables their land produces. It is incredible to think of this, but from May through November, most of the produce that Howie and I eat is grown less than 5 miles from where we live.



Even the eggs we eat are raised on a small farm, Iacono Farm, less than 5 miles from our house. There is an intense discussion about the humanity of egg production in America. When you drive up to the small building to buy eggs at Iacono, you can see the chickens running around outside in the fresh air eating the bugs and worms which are important to their diet. An excellent environment for egg production and humane treatment of the chickens. I've confessed on my blog here before that I don't like egg yolks. Our vet raises special chickens, Araucana and Ameraucana, which lay colored eggs!! When he gave us a dozen to try I finally said to

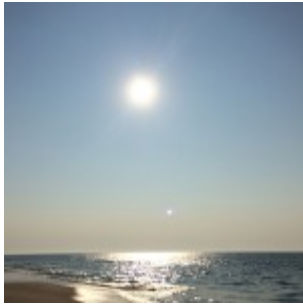




myself it's time to try a egg yolk. To be honest, I was curious to see what an egg yolk tasted like. I made my first over easy egg. I was expecting to hate it, but it was the most rich and delicious thing I had ever eaten – buttery and creamy, not slimey like I always thought it would be like. Just to be fair, I tried the same over easy egg from an egg purchased at the grocery store. The yolk had absolutely no taste. I'm now a born again egg eater. I can't wait to fry one for breakfast a couple of times each week. After a lot of research, it makes sense that the eggs where chickens are allowed to roam free and eat their natural diet in addition to organic feed is the reason the eggs have a richer taste. Also, at Iacono where I buy our eggs they are usually collected that day – they don't get much fresher than that. I learned also that a lot of the local people raise their own chickens! I thought that was a great idea, but Howie didn't think so. No chickens for me☐

When most people think about the East End or the Hamptons, they think of it in the context of it being a resort area. That is true from Memorial Day through Labor Day, but the real attraction for me is the community of people whose families have lived here for generations as either farmers or fishermen. These are the people who truly love the land and sea which has sustained them and their ancestors for hundreds of years. Most people don't realize that the majority of the Fire Departments from Middle Island to the East End are 100% volunteer departments. Last April while we were away, the house next to ours burned to the ground in the middle of the night. 75 volunteer firefighters arrived at 1:00 a.m. and worked to save the houses around the burning house. They miraculously saved our home which was less than 50 feet from the fire. We are so grateful for what these brave people did not only for us, but for the entire community they serve. Last summer the Amagansett Fire Department celebrated its 100th Anniversary with a parade down the Main Street. Howie and I

expected that it would be a few fire trucks and would take maybe 10 minutes. We had never seen anything like it in our lives. An amazing display of the rich history of the East End and the sense of community and support with the participation of over 10 other Fire Departments from all over Long Island. The parade was almost an hour long, so this slide show will take a few minutes of your time, but it will be well worth it. I am glad I was there to capture and share the experience.



The most powerful force of living on the East End is the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Living within a 5 minute walk to the ocean is such a luxury to have it has a part of our environment. The sounds of the ocean are sometimes peaceful and sometimes angry, but they are so wonderful to listen to. Sometimes at night if the tide is high and a storm is coming in, I sit outside on our front porch and enjoy the sound of the crashing waves on the beach. We take walks on the beach no matter what season it is. The ocean is as bright and beautiful in the winter as it is in the summer. Published in "Remarks in Newport at the Australian Ambassador's Dinner for the America's Cup Crews (383)," September 14, 1962, Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1962, President Kennedy is quoted as saying "I really don't know why it is that all of us are so committed to the sea, except I think it's because in addition to the fact that the sea changes, and the light changes, and ships change, it's because we all came from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have, in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea – whether it is to sail or to watch it – we are going back from whence we came."

I am tied to the East End.