

JUL 14, 2015

LEISURE

25 Reasons This Part of the East Coast Is Being Dubbed "The New Hamptons"

All of the beauty and old-world charm of the classic getaway without any of the crowds.



by **SAM DANGREMOND** and **EMMA RATHKEY**



In response to the *New York Post's* recent [article](#) declaring the Connecticut shore "the next 'new' Hamptons," we wanted to share a few reasons of our own as to why this the so-called Golden Triangle of Connecticut—Old Saybrook, Essex, and Old Lyme (our hometown)—is a hidden gem.

1. Located just up I-95 from New York City, the region is easily accessible by car, Amtrak, and Metro-North.

2. The [Goodspeed Opera House](#) in nearby East Haddam has produced more than 250 musicals including

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Indoah, and *Man of La*
ng productions. *La Cage*

Aux Folles is playing there now.





ROBERT BENSON

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3. The **Griswold Inn** (or the Gris, as we locals refer to it) opened in **1776** and is the oldest continuously run tavern in the country; it also has the largest privately held collection of maritime art in the world. The live music there is great—and much groovier than what you'd expect from a bar that's been around since the American Revolution!



COURTESY OF THE GRISWOLD INN



THE TAP ROOM FEATURES SEA SHANTIES EVERY MONDAY NIGHT.

COURTESY OF THE GRISWOLD INN

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4. Although these towns are on the Long Island Sound, many of the beaches are just as picturesque as the Atlantic Ocean's (and much less crowded!).



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5. The **Florence Griswold Museum** is a onetime boardinghouse and summer art colony run by Florence Griswold where American Impressionist painters like Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, and Henry Ward Ranger lived and worked. Today it's a National Historic Landmark with a new 9,500-square-foot gallery building featuring exhibitions and activities for ALL ages. The outdoor **Café Flo** is also ON POINT.





JOE STANDART





CAFÉ FLO IS ON THE BANKS OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

6. The main thoroughfares in in all these towns are the epitome of quaint New England charm.



ESSEX'S MAIN STREET.

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KATHERINE HEPBURN AT WALT'S, AN OLD SAYBROOK MARKET ON MAIN STREET.

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7. If a day at the beach isn't your thing, there are tons of adorable boutiques and galleries to explore. **The Bowerbird**, for instance, has been one of the best places to find gifts and "impulsive necessities" from more than 2,000 vendors since the shop opened in Old Lyme in 1989. Nearby is the **Cooley Gallery**, which features museum-quality American art including works by members of the Old Lyme art colony.

THE COOLEY GALLERY.

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8. **Gillette Castle** (which was home to William Hooker Gillette, an American playwright and actor known for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes) has gorgeous views of the river, not to mention a few mysteries along the tour.



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9. **Mystic Seaport** is a MUST for anyone interested in ships and boats. The largest maritime museum in the world, it boasts 17 acres of exhibits depicting coastal life in New England in the 19th century.



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10. If you're craving a lobster roll, farm-to-table food, or quality fine dining, there are LOTS of restaurants to choose from. One particularly unique option is **The Blue Oar**, a BYOB restaurant whose riverfront location allows access by both boat and automobile.



THE BLUE OAR IN HADDAM.

FLICKR

11. Boating, paddle boarding, kayaking, running, biking, sailing, golf, tennis, and swimming can be done

EVERYWHERE, so it's truly an athlete's paradise.



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12. [Mystic Aquarium](#) and [Olde Mistick Village](#) are perfect for anyone with young children (and for children at heart!).



RYAN DONNELL

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13. The [Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts](#) is a four-year college offering degrees in Drawing, Illustration, Painting, and Sculpture. For those not interested in a degree program, it offers courses for non-matriculated students, too!



LYME ACADEMY COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

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THE BEST POOLSIDE CABANAS TO RENT THIS SUMMER

14. This area has been a getaway for notable creative types like Dominick Dunne, Katherine Hepburn, Morley Safer, Childe Hassam, and Henry Ward Ranger. Albert Einstein even vacationed in Old Lyme during the summer.



KATHERINE HEPBURN'S FORMER HOUSE IN THE FENWICK NEIGHBORHOOD OF OLD SAYBROOK.

ZILLOW

15. The [Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center](#) or the Kate, as it is locally known, features jazz, dance, drama, and comedy performances. It's also on *Yankee* magazine's list of Connecticut's top attractions and the National Register of Historic Places.



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16. One of the churches on Lyme Street (aka Old Lyme's Main Street) is LITERALLY straight out of a painting.



CHILDE HASSAM'S 1895 PAINTING OF OLD LYME'S CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

GETTY

17. Musical Masterworks, an acclaimed chamber music series held in the church, is celebrating its 25th anniversary season of presenting "Lincoln Center-quality chamber music in the acoustically perfect Old Lyme Congregational Church." The *New Yorker* called its artistic director, Edward Arron, "not only one of New York 's most exciting young cellists, but also an inventive impresario."



EDWARD AARON PERFORMS AT A MUSICAL MASTERWORKS CONCERT.

18. Essex was **named** "The Perfect Small American Town" in *1000 Places to See Before You Die*. Take a ride on a vintage steam train along the Connecticut River to Deep River Landing where you can connect with an authentic riverboat, the *Becky Thatcher*, for a true blast from the past experience.



CHRISTOPHER HENNESSY

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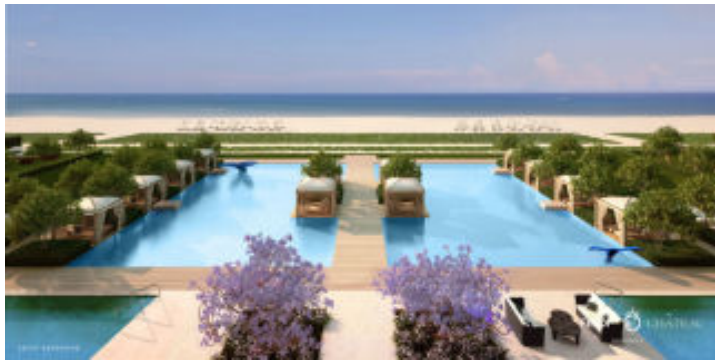
19. The Old Lyme girls AND boys rowing teams were BOTH first in the country at the national crew championships.



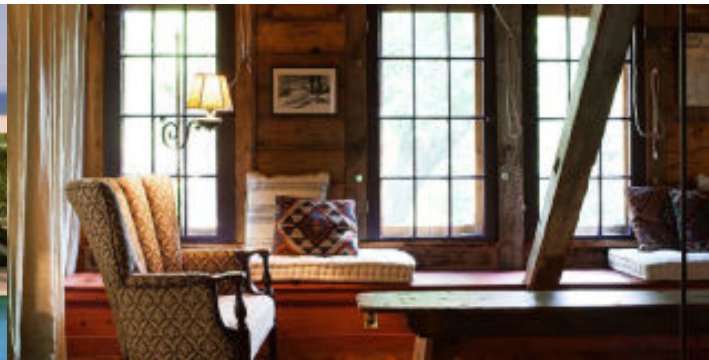
THE OLD LYME CREW.

KEVIN CONLEY

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YOU CAN NOW LIVE IN FENDI'S LUXURY CHATEAU RESIDEN...



WE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THIS CHARMING BARN IN...

20. The [Connecticut River Museum](#), located in a restored 1878 warehouse on Steamboat Dock in Essex, includes cool maritime artifacts like a full-scale replica of *Turtle*, the first American submarine. The *Turtle* was built in 1776 (in neighboring Old Saybrook) for use against the British in the American Revolution.



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21. Mystic's [Oyster Club](#) executes farm-to-table food that would make Tom Colicchio proud.



OYSTERS AT THE TREEHOUSE, THE OYSTER CLUB'S ROOFTOP RESTAURANT.

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22. [Black Hall Club](#), in Old Lyme, was established in 1965 with an 18-hole course designed by renowned architect Robert Trent Jones. Its founders were firm **that** "no facility not directly related to the enjoyment of the game by its members will be contemplated." With no formal dining facilities and a spartan clubhouse, it's heaven for golf purists.



BLACK HALL CLUB.

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23. The historic **Ivoryton Playhouse** where Katherine Hepburn got her start in summer stock, is currently featuring *South Pacific* starring Pavid Pittsinger, an Essex resident who is recreating his Broadway role to the **delight of critics**.



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24. **The Side Door Jazz Club** at the **Old Lyme Inn** hosts some of the best touring jazz musicians around on Friday and Saturday nights.



A PERFORMANCE AT THE SIDE DOOR.

25. Eagles and ospreys have returned to the region in record numbers, a testament to the success of the cleanup efforts along the entire length of the Connecticut River.



A BALD EAGLE KEEPS WATCH ON THE CONNECTICUT RIVER.

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See you soon on the Connecticut Shore!

Top photo: Photo by Tom Walsh, courtesy of the Connecticut River Museum.



COMMENT

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