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Is the North Fork the new Brooklyn?

A rustic vibe and farm-to-table eateries are drawing hipster buyers from Kings County

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North Fork, New York

It has been a cold spring but the hunt for second homes on Long Island's North Fork is hardly chilled.

The low-key alternative to the Hamptons — which is dotted with small vineyards, farm-to-table restaurants and microbreweries — is going through a “Brooklynification.”

“The same things that attracted people to Brooklyn are present in the North Fork,” said Kristopher Pilles, managing partner of East End Luxury, a residential brokerage based in Riverhead.

And that is translating into big business. Last year, the number of home sales in the North Fork surpassed 2005 levels — the height of the real estate bubble — according to a decade-long survey by the brokerage Douglas Elliman. And real estate pros working in the area agree that some of these buyers have a common origin: Brooklyn.

“Brooklyn has become much more desirable, so naturally our more affluent buyers are coming from that area, as well as everywhere else,” Pilles said.

Just as bourgeois-bohemian Manhattanites colonized Brooklyn's spacious brownstones, educated urban professionals are shunning the glitzy Hamptons for the North Fork's small-town atmosphere, where they enjoy local produce served up at farm-to-table restaurants like Noah's in Greenport and the North Fork Table & Inn in Southold.

The trend was even parodied in HBO's “Girls.” Last season's infamous “Beach House” episode helped cement the North Fork's connection to privileged Brooklynites in the minds of many.

“I can't believe we're in the Hamptons,” says Shoshanna, played by Zosia Mamet, as she steps off a bus in the episode's opening.

“Oh no, this is the North Fork. It's very different than the Hamptons,” Marnie, played by Allison Williams, fires back. “It's, you know, for people who think the Hamptons are tacky, and don't want to be on a beach that's near a J. Crew.”

At least in this case, life imitates art. Sheri Clarry, a North Fork-based broker with Corcoran, said her Brooklyn clients regularly bring up the episode. And while she doesn't think Brooklyn residents are buying second homes because of a TV show, the episode has drummed up interest.

“There are tons of Brooklynites on the North Fork. I call it Brooklyn-on-the-sea,” Clarry said.

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