

# W magazine

WEYE

## Northern Exposure

Long Island's North Fork, long seen as the sleepy stepsister to the Hamptons across the bay, is finally getting its moment in the sun.

Photographs by MARTIEN MULDER and SEAN DONNOLA

**T**here's a tradition on the North Fork of Long Island of selling leftovers from the garden. Have a bumper crop of zucchini this year? Put a few on a card table at the edge of the lawn, write the price on an index card and leave a box for money. Drive down just about any of the area's country lanes and you'll see several such setups, offering baskets of berries, heads of lettuce and bouquets of blown-out roses propped up in mason jars. In front of T.J. Wilcox's 19th-century house in Orient, you'll find jars of homemade honey.

A strapping 39-year-old with longish curls, a deep tan and a well-broken-in baseball cap, Wilcox could easily be mistaken for a beach volleyball pro. It happens that he's a film and video artist, and quite a well-known one at that, but there's something about coming here that turns him into a domestic goddess. "I'm verging on Martha Stewart at this point," he admits, as he shows off the hives from which he harvests his product. To their left are the pear trees from which he created eau-de-vie last Christmas. The process involved tying glass bottles over immature fruit, letting the pears grow inside and then filling bottles with brandy.

According to Wilcox, the area inspires him, not just to make his own liqueur and personally repane the windows of his sunroom—this particular end's project—but also to create his experimental films, which have been exhibited at the Whitney and the Tate Modern. "The water...the big ope



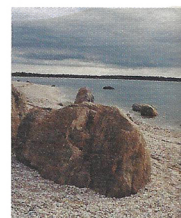
room; Michael Lynne at Bedell Winery;

"We'd tell people in the city that we were going to the North Fork and they'd look at us with blank expressions," says painter Jacqueline Humphries.



investment banker John Josephson. "It's really not about how big your house is," she says.

Not that there aren't big houses. The North Fork can't claim an estate district like those in the Hamptons—one reason, according to many, why the area will never compete when it comes to attracting billionaires—but rambling Victorians abound, and one waterfront place recently sold for more than \$5 million. "Prices have doubled in the past three years," says Suzanne Hahn, whose 20-year-old Hahn Realtv. in a sign of the times, was partly purchased



want to leave. Eldest son Kareem, 32, who is grooming to take over as winemaker, left Wall Street to join the family business six "I feel like I retired 30 years early," he likes

Less homey but equally remarkable is a property recently purchased by Michael Lynne, the co-CEO of New Line Cinema and a collector. Here, works by Cindy Sherman, Taylor-Wood and Uta Barth line the walls. The tables display \$200 magnums of 2001 Merlot with labels designed by the painter Fischl. Conceptual artist Barbara Kruger graces a just-released bottle of white. The wine, like many of its neighbors, is experiencing growth, with sales up by double digits this year.

"North Fork wines really are getting better, and as the vines continue to age, they only improve," says Julian Niccolini, who has a \$175-a-head Long Island wine-tasting at the Four Seasons restaurant, which he co-owns.

The area also has a burgeoning New York-California-esque foodie community. The