

After 20 years in an old building, he was ready for a new life in a new place.



Coffee tables worthy of gathering around.

Rockaway Beach, Queens: a short stroll to the ocean.

# Real Estate

The New York Times



NICOLE BENVENUTO/THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Montauk Joins the Club

By MICHELLE HIGGINS  
Not all that long ago, before Montauk became a hot-spot for summer party-seekers, the hamlet on the easternmost tip of Long Island was defined by its laid-back motels, family-run restaurants, wide, empty beaches and a shabby charm that was anything but chic.  
But over the last decade, investors have come to see scruffy Montauk in a different light — as a place that cleans up good. And as more residents cash out and new money

flows in, the last underdeveloped portion of the East End is becoming more like, well, the developed East End.  
Old-time pancake houses and soft-serve ice cream shops along the main drag have been joined by high-end boutiques selling \$300 beach cover-ups and outposts of trendy Manhattan chains like Tacombi, the Mexican taqueria also in Nolita, Flatiron and the West Village. Formerly rundown motels have been given makeovers, installing poolside DJs and charging as much as \$750 a night on peak weekends. And real

The once-scruffy hamlet at the far end of Long Island is booming. Long-held properties are changing hands. The adjective 'cheap' no longer applies. Some say the place has been Hamptonized.

estate values have climbed. In the first quarter of 2016, the median sales price jumped 25 percent to \$1.038 million from \$831,000 a year ago, according to a report by the Corcoran Group.  
Montauk was once considered a cheaper alternative to the Hamptons, of which it is technically a part, being within the Town of East Hampton. But because it was so rough around the edges, it seemed in a different league. And being nearly three hours from

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## Deciding Whether to Buy or Rent



JAMES YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

When it's a close call, weighing these factors could help with your housing decision.

By NEIL IRWIN

Whether to buy or rent a home is among the biggest financial decisions most of us make. It is basically a complex math problem in which the reward for getting it right can be tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars — and the punishment for getting it wrong similarly enormous.  
Fortunately, there are many tools to help you work through the math, including The New York Times's excellent calculator. But

as someone who worked on that calculator and who has spent a lot of time examining the economics of homeownership, I have a confession: There are some dimensions of rent versus buy that are really important but difficult to account for in dollar terms.  
These dimensions have inherent but hard-to-calculate value. They have to do with how owning a home lets you stop worrying about rent increases, forces you to save money and gives you certain tax benefits, and on the flip side, how renting means you don't have to worry about the unpredictable costs of maintaining a home. Anyone trying to make a housing decision

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SHOPPING GUIDE | COFFEE TABLES

# A Landing Pad for Martinis and Magazines

By TIM McKEOUGH  
A coffee table isn't just a place to put down your coffee or put up your feet. It's "like the campfire of the home," said Francis D'Haene, the principal of D'Apostrophe Design.

"That's why it's important to find the right one. It's usually in the center of the room," Mr. D'Haene said, so it's one of the most noticeable pieces of furniture. "And people sit around it to have conversations."

Whether he's designing apartments in Manhattan, houses in the Hamptons or boutiques for fashion designers like Jill Stuart and Rick Owens, Mr. D'Haene, 50, favors clean-lined spaces. "I don't like the word minimal, but we want to be simple," he said. "It's modern and contemporary, but with a warm feeling."

That means including just enough sculp-

tural furniture to make those spaces inviting — so every piece counts, particularly the coffee table. Before you buy a new one, he suggests asking yourself a few questions:

- How does the height compare to that of the seats around it? "It should be at seating height or a little lower," Mr. D'Haene said.

- Should the table be square, rectangular, round or organic? "The choice depends on the shape of the room and type of seating," he said. A long, skinny table often works well in a rectangular room, while organic shapes pair nicely with curvaceous sofas and chairs.

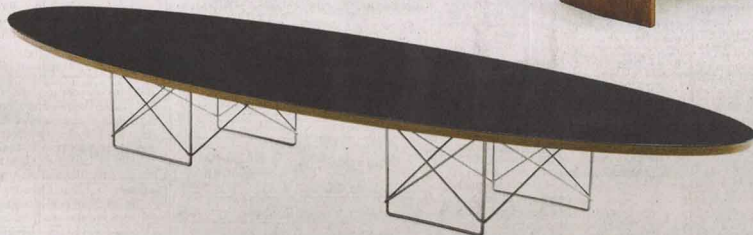
- What will you put on top? "You can do a coffee table very low to the ground, if you know you're going to stack a lot of books on it," he said. In that case, "it can become more of a display space and conversation piece."



ROBERT WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BELOW, ESPASSO; CENTER, DESIGN WITHIN REACH; BOTTOM RIGHT, MATTER

**The Quick Fix**

**Eames Elliptical Table** | \$899 at Design Within Reach; (800) 944-2233 or [dwr.com](http://dwr.com)  
Designed in 1951 by Charles and Ray Eames, this surfboard of a table from Herman Miller, which measures nearly seven and a half feet long, gets a lot right. "I love its shape, proportions, low height and simplicity," Mr. D'Haene said. The form is playful and welcoming, "not aggressive," he added. "It would be a great piece for a long seating group."



**The Object of the Moment**

**Nenuphar Coffee Table** | about \$16,300 at Galerie NegroPontes; (011) 33-1-71-18-1951 or [negropontes-galerie.com](http://negropontes-galerie.com)  
"At the moment, it's all about metals like bronze, brass and gold in combination with dark woods and surfaces," Mr. D'Haene said. This lacquer table designed by Hervé Langlais with a polished-brass insert and edge is a fine example, he noted, and "just so chic."



**The Curveball**

**Low Table and Lamp** | \$5,980 at Matter; (212) 343-2600 or [mattermatters.com](http://mattermatters.com)

Mr. D'Haene deemed this piece, designed by Muller Van Severen, "unusual and ingenious." "The thinking is out of the box. How do you combine a light and a coffee table?" This well-executed answer, he said, is both eye-catching and surprisingly functional.

**The Future Heirloom**

**Luna Coffee Table** | from \$6,000 at John Eric Byers; (607) 564-0421 or [johnericbyers.blogspot.com](http://johnericbyers.blogspot.com)

With a hand-gouged surface of tiny craters, this blackened maple table by John Eric Byers has a travertine disk at its center, so it's loaded with textural appeal. "He makes great pieces that are very simple in form," Mr. D'Haene said, but reflect top-level craftsmanship — all of which should help this table stand the test of time.

**The Classic**

**Limestone Table** | \$6,350 at Espasso; (212) 219-0017 or [espasoo.com](http://espasoo.com)

"The fact that this table was designed in 1970 is pretty remarkable," Mr. D'Haene said, because it could easily pass for something more recent. Conceived by the Polish-born, Brazil-based architect Jorge Zalszupin, with wood legs that come right through the limestone top, he said, "it's a beautiful combination of two natural materials I love."



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