
GOLD COAST

MOTORCYCLING:



RIDING THE NORTH SHORE OF LONG ISLAND

MAJESTIC AND PROSPEROUS LONG Island presents visitors with a rich history and spectacular sights. In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald referred to the land mass as “that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York.” The south shore of the island faces the Atlantic Ocean, whereas the Gold Coast is separated from Manhattan Island and the Bronx by “the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound,” according to Nick Carraway, Fitzgerald’s narrator for the 1925 novel.

With its visually pleasing boundary, the historic North Shore is dotted with

picturesque waterside villages and charming towns. It was a natural choice for industrial giants and their families to establish their turn-of-the-century mansions. These magnificent estates were veritable stages for high society to showcase trendy fashion, elegance and luxury amidst a backdrop of lavish parties, yachting and other extravagance.

Long Island is home to people of dreams and inspiration—Charles Lindbergh’s flight to Paris originated at the site of Roosevelt Field. It is currently home to many leaders, artists, musicians, sports figures, and actors.

By Richard J. Atkins, Ed.D. #93162

Long Island serves as an “annex” to the largest city in the United States.

To experience a taste of the Gold Coast, begin in Suffolk County. Getting there from the mainland is easy, as ferries run daily from Bridgeport, Connecticut to the landing in Port Jefferson. A one-time ship-building community, Port Jefferson is 56 miles east of New York City. “Port Jeff” received its appellation because the third President of the United States helped fund the lower village’s flood prevention. The town was the site of land owned by P.T. Barnum, who wanted to house his circus there, an idea that the residents swiftly quashed. Once off the ferry, drive west on 25A (this

road, also called Northern Boulevard, will be the main thoroughfare for this ride), taking note of Barnum Avenue at the first traffic light. Travel a little more than seven miles through Setauket, East Setauket, and Stony Brook, the site of a campus of the State University of New York.

At St. James, turn right onto Moriches Road to pass by the St. James General Store, the oldest continuously operating general store in the United States. St. James' popularity increased in the early twentieth century as the vacation spot-of-choice for, among others, numerous Barrymores, Buster Keaton, and Irving Berlin.

From Moriches Road, past the old school house and fire department on the right, the thrilling River Road follows the course of the river that empties into Long Island Sound. At its end, after a few turns, end up on St. Johnsland Road, ultimately leading to Nissequogue River State Park, home to tidal and fresh water wetlands, as well as birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Farther west on 25A is Fort Salonga, site of a Revolutionary War fort. The clay deposits of this area spawned successful brick companies, including Brown's Best Bricks. An optional turn onto Main Street will bring you through Northport. Follow the old trolley rails for Long Island Rail Road commuters who traveled between the town and the East Northport station to get back to Northern Boulevard. Northport boasts a rich history of farming, ship building and fishing.

Headed into Centerport, stop at the intersection of Stony Hollow Road and take a quick lunch at The Shack. In operation since 1926, The Shack offers "Clams and Chaos." It's a fun roadside dining experience. After lunch, take a right on Little Neck Road and visit the Vanderbilt Estate, Museum, and Planetarium. William K. Vanderbilt II's Spanish Mediterranean revival mansion now serves as an informal educational facility. Completed in 1936, the 24-room mansion was designed by the same firm responsible for Grand Central Station. Much of Vanderbilt's possessions and collections have remained with the estate.



Opposite: Long Island Sound from Sands Point, with view of Throgs Neck Bridge (and Paul "Saddlebag" Cunningham)

Top to Bottom: Oheka Castle – Otto Hermann Kahn's French-style chateau, Oheka Castle is the second-largest private residence ever built in the United States

Vanderbilt Estate – Eagle's Nest, the Vanderbilt Estate in Centerport, now a museum for his marine, natural history, and ethnographic collections

Coindre Hall – Pharmaceutical magnate George McKesson Brown's 1912 medieval French chateau-style estate, later called Coindre Hall.



Continue west on 25A into Huntington, where Nathan Hale worked as a spy against the British and a young Walt Whitman founded *The Long-Islander* newspaper. Toward the end of town, turn right on West Neck Road for a mile until you come to a right turn on John Daves Lane. Work your way over to Browns Road. Here is pharmaceutical magnate George McKesson Brown's mansion, Coindre Hall, alongside Huntington Harbor. The 40-room estate is owned by Lessing's Hospitality Group and is used for private functions. Another three miles north on West Neck Road brings you to Caumsett State Park, the site of Marshall Field III's Georgian-style estate.

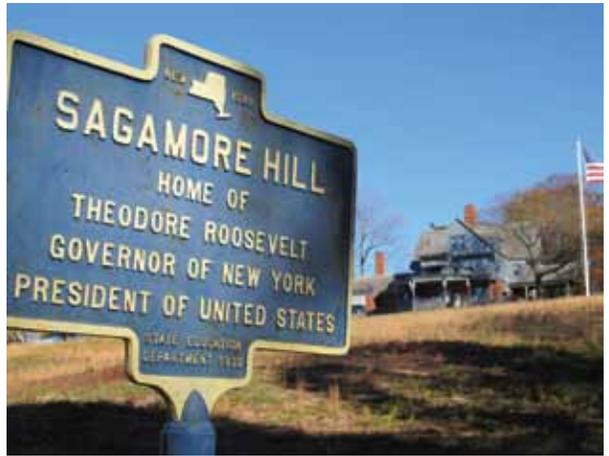
Caumsett is a Matinecock Indian name, meaning "place by a sharp rock." This Chicago department-store heir's 1925 compound was a self-sufficient community that included a dairy farm, stables, docks, cabanas, a power plant and 25 miles of internal roads. The main house's first floor is open to the public on weekends.

Head back on West Neck Road, where you'll rejoin 25A headed west through Cold Spring Harbor. As you pass through the old whaling village, admire the harbor on your right and remember the Billy Joel album that paid homage to this town that is home to a Whaling Museum, Fish Hatchery/Aquarium, and Research Laboratory. At the end of town, across Northern Boulevard

about 2 ½ miles south, is Jericho Turnpike. Here, a sharp left onto West Gate Drive will bring you to Oheka Castle, the estate of financier, philanthropist, and Metropolitan Opera board head Otto Hermann Kahn. Oheka is the second largest private residence ever built in the United States. For two years, Kahn had workers construct an artificial hill to have his castle on the highest point on Long Island! In the 1970s, the estate fell into the hands of

vandals, having seen over 100 fires in only 5 years. In 1984, Gary Melius purchased Oheka and has restored the Castle to its original grandeur. Even the gardens were recreated using the original drawings. This 109,000 square foot palace, where Enrico Caruso sang and Arturo Toscanini conducted, can be toured by appointment only.

Getting back to 25A west, look for a right onto Cove Road and follow signs for Sagamore Hill, the estate home of President Theodore Roosevelt, now a National Park Service museum. In 1887, Roosevelt and his second wife, Edith, became permanent residents here, raising six children. Sagamore Hill served as the "Summer White House" from 1902 until 1908. Continue on Cove Road, as it changes name to Main Street in Oyster Bay.



Continue straight onto Audrey Avenue, and stop at 20th Century Cycles, Billy Joel's newest exhibit. Joel leased a space in the town to showcase his motorcycle (and more) collection. The showroom is used as a "vehicle" to drive traffic into the town, in an effort to help revitalize the local economy. You'll see some of the two-wheel machines that would have been used when many of these Gold Coast mansions were in their height. Oysters have been farmed here since 1887 by Frank M. Flower & Sons.

Outside of town from Main Street, turn left on Mill Hill/Oyster Bay Road to get to the Planting Fields Arboretum, site of the William Coe estate. Coe worked his way up as an insurance adjuster to be president, and ultimately chairman of the board, of Johnson & Higgins. Be sure to admire the 1921 grounds, as well as the 65-room Tudor revival mansion.

Head back to Main Street and follow West Shore Road along the water. At the light, turn left onto Cleft Road in Mill Neck and admire the properties as you pass. Passing over Beaver Lake, the road changes name to Feeks Lane into Lattingtown. Take Bayville Road to the end, then Horse Hollow Road (also to the end), and continue on Lattingtown Road as it turns left onto Dosoris Lane. At this corner, you'll be passing the Glen Cove Mansion Conference Center. Turn right onto School Street and stay on this road until you turn right onto Sea Cliff Avenue. Trace your way through the quaint town of Sea Cliff down to the water on Prospect Avenue/Shore Road.

Continue along the water (Roslyn Harbor) through to Bryant Avenue. Farther up



on the right, you will find Cedarmere, home of the nineteenth century poet, William Cullen Bryant. Originally a Massachusetts and New York lawyer, Bryant purchased Cedarmere in 1843 to escape Manhattan's congestion. From 1829 and for the rest of his life, this major artistic and political contributor was the editor of the New York Evening Post, a position he used to assert his liberal views against slavery and in favor of the Republican Party.

For a quick diversion, continue on the Avenue and take 25A (Northern Boulevard) east to the first traffic light, then make a left onto Museum Drive to experience Clayton, the Georgian revival mansion given to Childs Frick by his father as a wedding gift. Childs Frick was a vertebrate paleontologist and a trustee, major benefactor and partner of the American Museum of Natural History. Past the gatehouse lies the 165-acre property, now the home of the Nassau County Museum of Art.

Back onto Bryant Avenue, the path changes name to East Broadway as it winds along Gerry Park, the idyllic setting of the village of Old Roslyn. Structures here date from the 1600s, including the old church and almost all of the homes along the park. Turn right on Main Street until you get to the 1895 clock tower. Across the street is the George Washington Manor. Take Old Northern Boulevard until you make a left onto Searingtown Road. Half a mile up on the right is St. Ignatius Retreat House, the site of the Brady Estate. Completed in 1920 as a summer home for the Bradys, this 87-room Tudor/Elizabethan-style mansion was donated to a religious order in 1937. Admire the 33 chimneys and intricate limestone carvings on the façade. Although the estate is not open to the public, announced visitors are welcomed.

Exiting the property, turn left on Searingtown Road and take it a few miles through Port Washington to the tip of the peninsula into Sands Point, or "West Egg," as Fitzgerald called it. On the way, you will pass by the Sands Point Preserve, home to Howard Gould's 1904 Castle Gould. Based on Kilkenny Castle in Ireland, the limestone stable was intended to be the main house, but Mr. Gould's wife didn't like it. Thus, Gould was spurred on to have the 40-room Tudor-style Hempstead House finished in



Opposite Top to Bottom: Theodore Roosevelt's Home – Sagamore Hill

Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth president of the United States, used Sagamore Hill as the center of his political life as well as the home where he and his wife raised six children.

The Chimneys – The Chimneys, a 42-room Tudor mansion Built for Bettie Fleischmann Holmes in 1929.

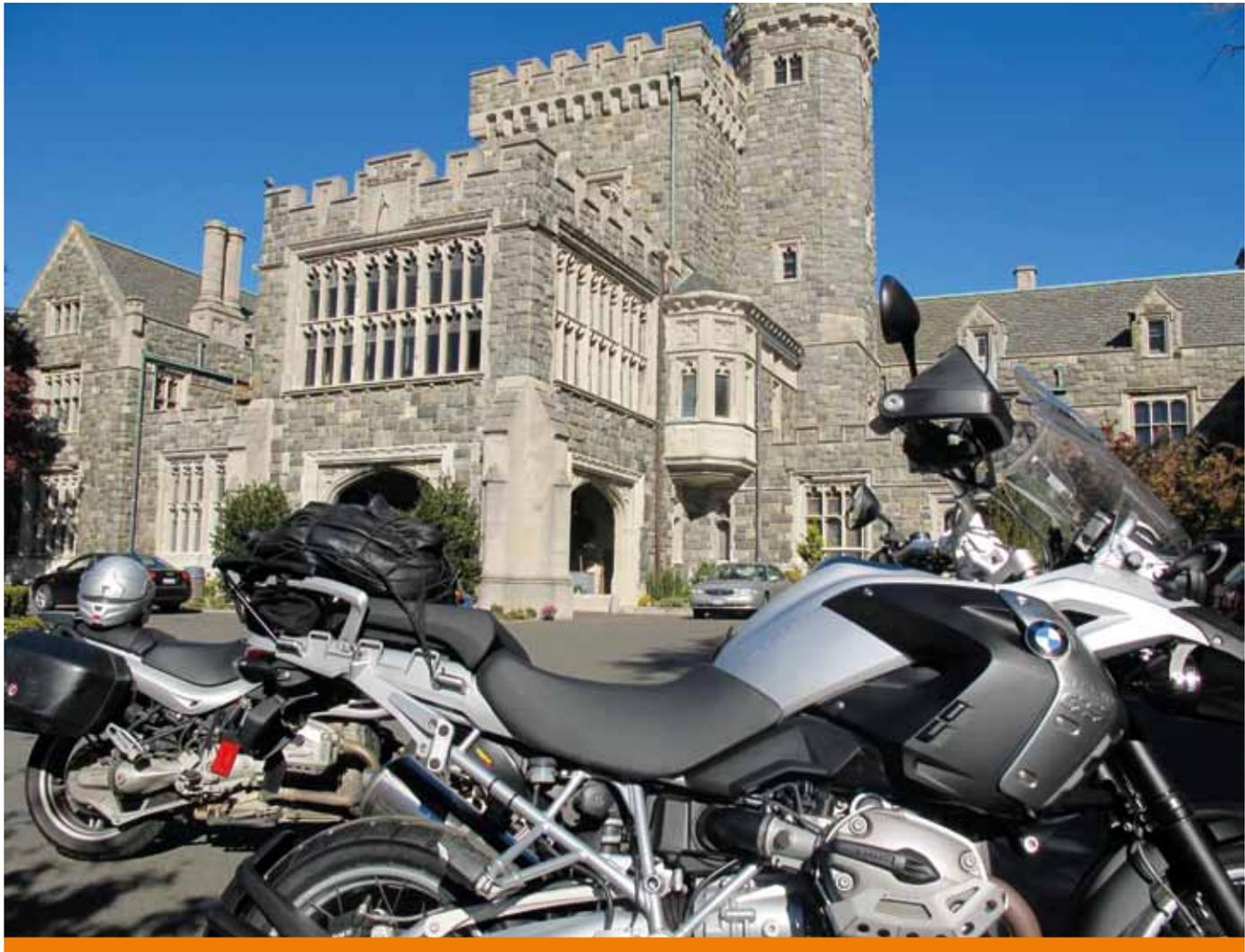
Above Top to Bottom: Childs Frick Estate – Clayton, the Childs Frick estate is now home to the Nassau County Museum of Art.

The Kings Point home that may have inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald's description of Gatsby's home.



1912, but the couple separated prior to its completion. Daniel Guggenheim bought the estate in 1917. His son Harry Guggenheim's Normandy-style manor house, Falaise, is on the grounds as well.

Diagonally, across the street is The Chimneys, the Christian Holmes estate, built in 1930. Much of this mansion's structure was transported from England and then rebuilt. Today the mansion is used as a community synagogue. At the end of Middle Neck Road is the Sands Light neighborhood. The private street ahead is the site of the Sands Lighthouse. Admire the colossal and sprawling properties along the way, and then turn left, following Lighthouse Road back to Middle Neck Road. Take Sands Point Road past more gorgeous waterside properties, heading back into lower Port Washington. With Manhasset Bay on your right, you'll come to the intersection of Main Street. Going west on Main Street will



keep you along the water, past the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club and into Manhasset, home to “Miracle Mile” on Northern Boulevard and Lord & Taylor, the first branch of a Fifth Avenue department store to open anywhere (1941). Bayview Avenue and Shore Road along the water will lead to Great Neck.

Shore Road turns into Hicks Lane as it heads toward Kings Point, or “West Egg” as referred to in *The Great Gatsby*. Riding north and west on the peninsula, you’ll come to Kings Point Road. As you go farther north, the estates accelerate in extravagance. In fact, personalities such as Sid Caesar and the Marx Brothers bought homes here. On the way to Gatsby Lane, there’s a house that may have been Fitzgerald’s inspiration for his description of the protagonist’s house, used in the novel:

The house on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby’s mansion. Or, rather, as I didn’t know Mr. Gatsby, it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name.

Heading back toward town, a right on Steamboat Lane will take you to the last of the Gold Coast mansions, the Chrysler Estate (Wiley Hall), now home to the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Built in 1916, the estate was bought by Walter Chrysler in 1923. Traveling south from here would get the rider to Gateway Drive, where Fitzgerald composed much of *The Great Gatsby*.

The North Shore of Long Island—the Gold Coast—grew in fame in the early twentieth century as a haven for the rich and famous. Names like Vanderbilt, Roosevelt, Whitney, Morgan, Woolworth, Astor, Phipps, and Frick rounded out the Who’s Who of that day’s society. Some of these estates remain privately owned. Others have taken on new purpose—museums, religious centers, reception facilities, and more. These were some of the most magnificent private homes ever created, and they’re here still, waiting for your rediscovery.

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Opposite Top to Bottom: Inisfada – Nicholas and Genevieve Brady’s 87-room summer home, built between 1916-20. Inisfada, in Gaelic, means Long Island.

Hempstead House – The 1912 Tudor manor-house style Hempstead House, the “other” Gould estate, is located on what is now called Sands Point Preserve. The Preserve is also home to Harry F. Guggenheim’s Normandy manor, Falaise.

Above Top to Bottom: Chrysler Estate – Wiley Hall, The Walter P. Chrysler estate was built around 1916 as the home of Henri Bendel. It is now part of the United States Merchant Marine Academy. A Sands Point mansion, always a private home.