

A photograph of a wine glass tilted over the neck of a green wine bottle. The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping rectangular shapes in shades of red, orange, yellow, and blue. The glass and bottle are highly reflective, showing highlights and shadows.

# On The Jitney

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## An Artful Balance

-Steve Mirsky

Southampton's artful balance between small town ambiance and chic shopping and dining distinguish it from the other Hamptons. Monument Square on Jobs Lane piled high with cannonballs along with an elaborate World War II memorial in the park overlooking Agawam Lake distinctly exude hometown pride. American flags fly abundantly honoring the sacrifice and hardships former town residents endured to keep the home front safe. A block away on Meeting House Lane, indulgent boutique shopping surrounds elegantly landscaped courtyards and brick walkways. Shoppers on their way between Chico's and Ralph Lauren can eschew the champagne brunch and stop by the Sip n Soda Luncheonette, grab a swivel stool at the counter, and order up a club sandwich and their home-made ice cream, just as it was made when they opened in 1958. It's these extremes living side-by-side that give Southampton its spunky elegance.



photos by M. Coughlin



Established in 1640, Southampton is New York's first settlement and the community has preserved a good deal of its colonial architecture. Literally a tiny wooden shed built in 1686, The Pelletreau Silver Shop is surrounded by historic later period storefronts at 78 Main Street. Founded by Captain Elias Pelletreau, a famous colonial silversmith and Revolutionary War patriot, Pelletreau silver, made some 200 years ago (between 1750 and 1810) here at this very shop, is sought by collectors across the globe. Now maintained by the Southampton Historical Museums and Research Center, visitors can view the forge, ancient workbench, early tools, and examples of Pelletreau's craft in a guided tour. Admission is free and jewelry making classes are offered year-round. A few blocks away, the Greek revival-style Rogers Mansion, originally built in 1843 for whaling Captain Albert Rogers is located at 17 Meeting House Lane. Galleries inside feature collections of antique dolls and toys, photographs, along with interpretative historic exhibits. On the grounds behind the mansion is Old Southampton Village recreating post-Civil War Southampton. Dwellings include a 19th century paint store, blacksmith and carpentry shops, a one-room schoolhouse, and a colonial era barn that was seized by British soldiers to lodge their horses during the Revolutionary War.

After even a cursory walk down Jobs Lane and Main St., it's apparent that the arts flourish here. The proliferation of galleries you see today have their roots in a turn of the century art community that evolved from The Summer Art School in neighboring Shinnecock Hills founded by William Merritt Chase. Now called The Art Village, a moderate walk from

downtown, artists such as Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, and Willem de Kooning maintained studios here. Founded in 1898, The Parrish Art Museum on Jobs St., showcases many works from this period along with current artists. A magnificently ornate red brick and stone structure designed by architect Grosvenor Atterbury, a Southampton resident trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the museum's galleries are complemented by a stately sculpture garden and arboretum.

On the sand and surf front, Southampton Village boasts seven miles of unspoiled beaches including top rated Coopers and Dune Beaches. When it's time to recharge, the Village Cheese Shop, Thyme and Again, and The Golden Pear Food Shop and Café are mainstays but if you can restrain yourself, do not order dessert. Instead, save room and head over to Ristorante Sant Umbroeus at 30 Main St. for some Milanese delights. Favorites range from their Coppa Prince Edward, vanilla gelato with hot chocolate to the Forestra Nera, chocolate sponge cake, layered with ricotta cream, cherries, and dark chocolate mousse.

If you plan on staying the night in Southampton, it goes without saying that you'll be paying a hefty premium unless you're visiting in the dead of winter. This is after all the heart of the Hamptons and penny pinching really isn't in the vocabulary. So if only the best will do, that means hanging your hat at A Butler's Pantry on North Main Street. Some of the standard amenities are free in-room sherry, nightly turndown service, and beach bags stuffed with towels and a blanket. Afternoon tea along with their signature banana stuffed French toast for breakfast is served daily.

**DAVID BURKE** at *bloomingdale's*

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