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Talbot dubbed 'new Hamptons' by Forbes writer

By JOSH BOLLINGER jbollinger@stardem.com Jul 15, 2017



In his article titled "Welcome to the new Hamptons (crabs and politics included)," contributing writer Peter Lane Taylor describes the prime waterfront real estate of Talbot County, like this home along the Miles River. While the area has many waterfront and expensive properties, the article also mentions the cheaper cottages people can find and don't have to be millionaires to own.

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK

EASTON — Talbot County and the Eastern Shore have been dubbed "the new Hamptons" by *Forbes*, in a July 12 article that focuses mainly on Talbot County and the many fruits the area has to offer for those looking for a summer getaway from the hubbub of city life.

In a *Forbes* article titled "Welcome to the new Hamptons (crabs and politics included)," contributing writer Peter Lane Taylor discusses the proximity to "international financial and power centers like New York, D.C., Miami, and San Francisco" and the airport in Easton, the "iconic, Gatsby-esque summer enclave" that also has a thriving foodie scene and "a parade of celebs from New York, Philadelphia, and D.C. quietly shopping in shades and Fedoras."

He writes that Talbot County's many annual festivals "keep the buzz going year round," while real estate in the area can be had for a cheaper price per square foot, and you might find yourself rubbing shoulders with or neighbors of someone famous. The article also mentions the many shops, art galleries and museums in Easton and St. Michaels.

Taylor and his wife Meggen have written about Easton before. Their primary home is in Easton, although they both travel a lot for work. Originally from Philadelphia, the two "put a pin in the map" and found Easton, started vacationing here and "fell in love with the landscape of the area," he said.

From their first visit, it took them "probably no more than an hour to realize that this is such a hidden gem," Peter Taylor said.

Another big selling point was the reasonable commute to several surrounding cities.

What stood out to the Taylors was the small-town vibe with amenities of a larger city, and the countryside driveways you don't realize are a mile and a half long and lead to hidden waterfront estates.

"There's sort of a level of culture and refinement that Easton has, whether from a music standpoint, art and food, that you really just don't get in a lot of small towns," Peter Taylor said.

It's not the first time St. Michaels, at least, has been compared to the Hamptons, said Jaime Windon, co-owner of Lyon Distilling Company and St. Michaels commissioner.

Windon sees the general correlation between the two areas, acting as a getaway for the corporate elite and politicians.

"The big difference is, while Talbot County and particularly St. Michaels, offers that sense of, yes, we are a beautiful, relaxing, pristine getaway for the D.C. crowd, but St. Michaels lacks any pretension whatsoever," Windon said. "St. Michaels is genuine, it is authentic, it is affordable. I have a business here. I cater to everyday people, not just millionaires."

"For every million-dollar vacation home, there's a \$200,000 tiny cottage that people live in," Windon said.

The biggest difference, Windon said after conferring with her business partner Ben Lyon, who grew up in New York and spent time in the Hamptons, is "people go to the Hamptons to show off, and they come to St. Michaels and Talbot County just to relax."

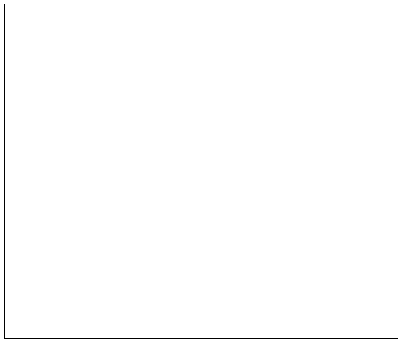
Easton Town Council President John Ford, who also works at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, offered a similar view on the comparison.

Ford wrote that, while it is an interesting article, "it focuses on the upper class amenities to the point where, to me, it misses the real charm of Easton."

"For those of us who live and work and play here, have raised our families here and hope to watch our children's families grow up here, Easton is a real town with all the accompanying problems and possibilities, culturally and economically diverse, with a small town feel I hope we never lose," Ford wrote.

"All the wonderful things the author pointed to in his article are wonderful, but come to an outdoor concert on Harrison St., with the XPD's or Mule Train playing, and watch hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds dancing in the street on a summer evening, and then you'll know how special Easton really is; the sense of community is palpable and priceless," he wrote.

That sense of "distinct humility" is something Peter Taylor said he purposefully mentioned in his piece. People in Talbot County "don't want Main Street Easton becoming South Street Miami."



Martha Witte Suss, Mid-Shore Board of Realtors president and realtor with Long & Foster (her associate was quoted in the article), said while there are second home buyers and jets flying in and out of Easton, "it's a fabulous place to live," and a secret that's becoming increasingly known.

"My husband, who has lived in New York and used to go to the Hamptons all the time, always said that Oxford was what the Hamptons could have been if they just kept Gucci and all that craziness out of there," Suss said.

Beyond the millionaires and the million-dollar homes, there's a middle class and there are blighted areas in Talbot County — "it's actually a real place," she said.

Young professionals can find a home to buy and not have to spend millions of dollars to do it, Meggen Taylor said. The area is good for a lot of age and price ranges, and the low real estate taxes, compared to the rest of Maryland, and the good restaurants and shopping are a bonus.

People in big cities who are "tired of the grind" and are looking for a quieter lifestyle that doesn't sacrifice on big city amenities might find haven in Talbot County, Meggen Taylor said.

"Talbot County is interesting, where you want the secret to get out and yet you don't at the same time," Peter Taylor said.

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"You can't keep a good secret," Meggen Taylor said.

The original article by Taylor, "Welcome to the new Hamptons (crabs and politics included)," can be found online at www.forbes.com.

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