

ENTERTAINING
STYLE

For Max (left) and
Eli Sussman,
summer means iced
tea spiced with
cardamom (p. 66).



Party in The Magic Garden

DURING A CHEF RESIDENCY IN THE HAMPTONS, ELI AND MAX SUSSMAN HOST A BARBECUE THAT'S AS FUN AS A SUMMER-CAMP COOKOUT.

BY LAURA BEGLEY BLOOM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIAN GAUT

IT WAS A PERFECT JULY AFTERNOON, and the chefs Eli and Max Sussman were facing off in a heated round of Ping-Pong that suggested a long family history with the sport. The two brothers were taking a break from barbecue duty at Ruschmeyer's, the hotel and restaurant in Montauk where they did a cooking residency last summer. Founded in the '50s at the tip of New York's Long Island and stylishly revamped a few years ago, Ruschmeyer's is like a summer camp for adults: Cedar cabins surround a lawn (a.k.a. The Magic Garden) dotted with grills, fire pits, hammocks and an oversize tepee. The place could be straight out of *Dirty Dancing*—only the crowd is a cross section of tattooed surfers and social butterflies.

Ever the hosts, the Sussman brothers were flipping paprika-spiked veggie burgers for their guests at an impromptu afternoon party. Also on the menu: a version of the Middle Eastern kebabs called kofta, made

FOOD STYLIST: VIVIAN LUI; PROP STYLIST: RICHARD VASSILATOS



Eli shows off his Ping-Pong skills while friends watch from a hammock in the so-called Magic Garden of Ruschmeyer's hotel in Montauk. Party refreshments include tequila-watermelon aguas frescas, margarita-like drinks spiked with Prosecco for a bit of fizz (p. 60).

from local cod and served on a brioche hot dog bun. Iced tea spiked with cardamom and rosewater fit into the Middle Eastern theme. “It’s the perfect summery drink,” says Eli, “with a lot of character”—just like the Sussmans themselves. They’ve been shaking up the food world ever since they started cooking at Brooklyn’s Mile End deli (Eli) and Roberta’s (Max) and began publishing irreverent cookbooks with deadpan titles like *This Is a Cookbook* and *Best Cookbook Ever*.

Welcome to paradise, Sussman style. Ruschmeyer’s has become a Hamptons hot spot thanks to its playful atmosphere, gorgeous views of Fort Pond and farm-to-table philosophy—an ethos the Sussmans share. The brothers’ party in The Magic Garden turned out to be the ideal showcase for their unique take on Middle Eastern cuisine, which is on year-round display at Samesa, their stand at the Berg’n beer hall in Brooklyn’s emerging Crown Heights neighborhood.

“We used the bounty of Montauk and did a really cool menu with it, taking a Mediterranean- and Middle Eastern-themed inspiration but being superlocal with ingredients,” explains

“The place could be straight out of *Dirty Dancing*—only with tattooed surfers and social butterflies.”

Max. The duo forged direct relationships with area farmers and fishermen, who provided everything from stripers fresh off the dock to candy-colored heirloom tomatoes.

SPENDING THE SEASON at Ruschmeyer’s was a flashback for the Sussmans, who grew up going to summer camp in Three Rivers, Michigan. As adults they were hired to work in the camp kitchen, with then 22-year-old Max in charge and 20-year-old Eli as his trusty sous-chef. The culinary ideology they carved out there endures today. “The kids were used to chicken nuggets and peanut butter sandwiches,” says Eli. “We tried to make real food and get them excited about it. We were baking breads, making Indian feasts, roasting chickens.”

Cooking in the increasingly (and sometimes deafeningly) buzzy beach town of Montauk was a bit of a change from rural Michigan, but the experiences have their parallels. “Summer comes around, you sort of shed your city skin and can reinvent yourself out in the woods,” says Eli.

For the Sussmans, great food should have the same elemental appeal, whether prepared in Brooklyn or by the beach. Explains Max, “Going out to eat shouldn’t be superserious or intellectual—it should be fun.”

Laura Begley Bloom is a writer and editor based in Brooklyn and the Hamptons. Follow her on Twitter @laurabegley.

Hamptons Insider's Guide

Writer **Laura Begley Bloom**, who lives part-time in the Hamptons town of Amagansett, shares her essential addresses. The list covers everything from her favorite clam and lobster shacks to the reservations-only places where one might spot Jerry Seinfeld having dinner.

BREAKFAST SPOTS

Estia's Little Kitchen, Sag Harbor

It's worth the wait at this roadside cabin for Latin-inspired egg dishes. 1615 Bridgehampton–Sag Harbor Tpke.; estias.com.

Grindstone Coffee and Donuts, Sag Harbor

Kyle Shanahan, stepson of *The Chew* chef Michael Symon (p. 102), bakes brioche-style doughnuts. 7A Main St.; grindstonecoffeeanddonuts.com.

Joni's Kitchen, Montauk

Where surfers and celebrities—like Gwyneth Paltrow—go for organic breakfast wraps. 28 S. Etna Ave. #9; jonismontauk.com.

Market Sagg Main, Sagaponack

A dashing Frenchman is transforming an old general store into a terrific place to get café au lait and croissants. 542 Sagg Main St.; pierresbridgehampton.com.

MARKETS AND FARM STANDS

Cavaniola's Gourmet, Sag Harbor

Michael Cavaniola left the architecture business to build this impressive house of cheese—plus, delicious prepared foods next door. 89 Division St.; cavaniolas.com.

Balsam Farm Stand, Amagansett

A charming stand that sells produce grown right out back and other provisions. 284 Town Ln.; balsamfarms.com.

North Sea Farms, Southampton

Hidden away between Sag Harbor and Southampton, this family-owned spot is worth the detour for farm-fresh eggs and just-cut flowers. 1060 Noyac Rd.; 631-283-0735.

SEAFOOD SHACKS

Clam Bar, Amagansett

This open-air shack by the side of the highway specializes in just-harvested clams and simple seafood dishes. 2025 Montauk Hwy.; clambarhamptons.com.

The Lobster Roll, Amagansett

Clam Bar's competition across the road is the place for (you guessed it) lobster rolls, hot or cold. 1980 Montauk Hwy.; lobsterroll.com.

DRINKS

The American Hotel, Sag Harbor

A drink here is a must—the bar feels like it's been transported from another era, full of eccentric Hamptons characters. 49 Main St.; theamericanhotel.com.

Montauket, Montauk

This waterfront bar is a dive, but the sunsets are otherworldly. 88 Firestone Rd.; 631-668-5992.

Wölffer Kitchen, Sag Harbor

This new wine bar from Wölffer Estate Vineyard focuses on wine-friendly food pairings. 29 Main St.; woefferkitchen.com.

DINNER BY THE SEA

Navy Beach, Montauk

A former saloon turned nautical-chic restaurant opens onto a pebbly crescent beach. 16 Navy Rd.; navybeach.com.

Scarpetta Beach, Montauk

This outpost of the Manhattan spot specializes in Italian dishes like fluke crudo. 290 Old Montauk Hwy.; scarpettarestaurants.com.

Sunset Beach, Shelter Island

Hotelier André Balazs's sceney St. Tropez–style restaurant. 35 Shore Rd.; sunsetbeachli.com.



Montauk's waves are famous among East Coast surfers.

CLASSICS

Nick & Toni's, East Hampton

The most exclusive and elusive reservation in the Hamptons, with a Northern Italian meets Mediterranean menu. 136 N. Main St.; nickandtonis.com.

The 1770 House, East Hampton

The tavern at this historic inn serves great meatloaf; the dining room upstairs is for more ambitious New American cooking. 143 Main St.; 1770house.com.

Meeting House, Amagansett

Reinvented country classics in a friendly neighborhood setting. 4 Amagansett Sq.; meetinghouseamagansett.com.

Harbor Hall, Shelter Island

The new lounge and bar at the Ram's Head Inn has a fantastic raw bar and locally sourced menu. 108 Ram Island Dr.; theramsheadinn.com.

Tutto il Giorno, Southampton

Designer Donna Karan's daughter Gabby runs the rustic Italian, celebrity-filled spot (there's also a location in Sag Harbor). 56 Nugent St.; tuttoilgiorno.com.

HOTELS

The Chequit, Shelter Island

The recently renovated Victorian has been converted into a stylish hideaway for those in the know. 23 Grand Ave.; thechequit.com.

c/o The Maidstone, East Hampton

This grande dame was given a Scandinavian-chic overhaul a few years back. The restaurant specializes in Swedish-modern cooking; the small bar serves great cocktails. 207 Main St.; themairstone.com.

Ruschmeyer's, Montauk

At this summer-camp-style hotel by the sea, most of the rooms have an individual grill out front, and nights end with s'mores around a fire pit. 161 2nd House Rd.; chelseahotels.com/us/montauk/ruschmeyer-s.

Topping Rose House, Bridgehampton

Big news: Star chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten has replaced Tom Colicchio in the kitchen at this luxurious Greek Revival inn. 1 Bridgehampton–Sag Harbor Tpke.; toppingrosehouse.com.