

Why racy European supercars are moving American high society up a gear

One of the lesser-known stretches of The Hamptons, the US billionaire's enclave, has snagged a key spot on the social calendar

By Daisy Prince

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Vintage Porsches were among the rare vehicles at Bridgehampton this weekend



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COMMUNICATIONS FOR ULTRA-LUXURY BRANDS

When people talk about The Hamptons, they tend to write or think about it as one continuous resort.

In fact, “The Hamptons” doesn’t really exist at all. It’s made up of an array of tiny hamlets all of which have their own distinct character. Most renowned is Southampton, for its giant white latticed palaces and socialites seen wafting in and out of the Beach Club clutching tennis racquets or zipping off for a round of golf.



The main beach at Bridgehampton, a “scruffier” village in The Hamptons, NY | CREDIT: Getty

East Hampton was always considered nouveau riche, if a little bit Hollywood and rock n’ roll. (Lee Radziwill famously caused major social waves when she moved into Dune Lane with her then husband, the actor Herb Ross.) Now, East Hampton is by far the poshest Hampton with high-end design stores jostling for space with art galleries. Even further along, the once low-key surfing village of Montauk exploded in recent years to grab the title of a St. Tropez-like party town.



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Bridgehampton, however, has always been a scruffier, shaggier village. It was a town composed of lawyers, doctors and band managers (but never the band) and you might find the occasional free-thinking celebrity there.



Supercars on show at The Bridge this month

For many years, the one grand social event that Bridgehampton could lay to claim to was the Hampton Classic Horse Show. For a week at the end of summer, the entire equestrian world and all its hoopla descends on Bridgehampton and anyone (who wants to brave the traffic) can see some world class show jumping and dressage.

That was Bridgehampton's solo glory moment, until five years ago when three enterprising - and supremely well-connected - motoring enthusiasts got together and decided to create the Hampton Classic of Cars at the Bridge Golf Club.



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Membership of The Bridge Golf Club - where the show is held - costs \$1m

The Bridge Golf Club lies on 500 acres of prime property near the ocean. It used to be the Bridgehampton Road Races Corporation, the last racing track in the Hamptons, built in 1957 by Grumman engineers as a way for racing enthusiasts to continue their sport once it had been banned on public roads in New York.

Then in 1992 the Wall Street tycoon Bob Rubin bought it, transformed it into a billionaire's golf club with just 180 members and fees allegedly as high as \$950,000 to join. To retain some of the cachet of the race track, Rubin partnered up with a lawyer and car enthusiast Jeffrey Einhorn, Shamin Abas - a Welsh PR executive - and the ritziest Hamptons event of the season was born.



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Supercars in attendance included Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Bugattis | CREDIT: Getty

Started in 2016 with just 60 cars, today the show comprises over 320 automobiles and rarely showcases the same car twice. Past attendees to the event have included Jay-Z and Beyonce, Emily Ratajkowski, Donna Karen and Candace Bushnell. But usually, as it is held after the summer crowds have departed, the event draws a very local crowd.

2021 was a little different to years past, perhaps because the spectre of Covid. This year the clubhouse was closed, but the main attraction, the vehicles themselves, were in full effect. The entire golf course was carpeted with hundreds of rare cars, a petrol head's dream. Over one hill were all the cars from the Ferrari Challenge series; over another, a large grouping of Jaguar XJ220s and one of each of the great vintage Jaguars (C and D types).





Founders of The Bridge car show, Shamin Abas, Bob Rubin, Jeffrey Einhorn | CREDIT: Getty

There was a smattering of supercars, rare post-war sports and racing cars: Porsche, Ferrari, McLaren F1, Pagani, Bugatti, Bentley, Lamborghini and Aston Martin... the list goes on. There was the US debut of the Calder BMW Art Car, an exact replica of the design by artist Alexander Calder which had been driven at Le Mans in 1975. Add to that American muscle cars, a Ford Bronco, James Hunt's F1 race car and even a tiny pink Meyers Manx.

But even more entertaining than the cars are the people. There are BMW motorcycles and models in bandage-dresses bending over and revving them loudly. A girl in a ruffled mini skirt took pictures draped over every model she could find. Some ladies wore hats, a la Ascot, while other wore orange jumpsuits which looked like an homage to the classic pit girl fashion.



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The Lamborghini parade

Alcohol flowed so generously that despite the myriad number of bars, lines were long and bartenders soon ran dry. It was like the Hamptons equivalent of Cartier Polo with a smattering of Ladies Day and Glorious Goodwood, all rolled into one. The names in attendance might not be globally familiar but this was the Hamptons glamour squad out in full force: Christie Brinkley's son Jack and his new squeeze, the Danish model Nina Agdal, posed in front of a blue sports car. Dress designer Nicole Miller posed with concert promoter Ron Delsener and even *Sopranos* actress, Lorraine Bracco dropped by.



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Christie Brinkley's son Jack and the Danish model Nina Agdal | CREDIT: Jared Siskin

But perhaps the single greatest thing about this ritzy gathering was the view, an unheard of sweeping vista of the Peconic Bay with not a single McMansion in sight. As Lorraine Bracco said, "It was spectacular and I'm not a car girl. But wow! The location was movie magic." Bridgehampton might just have found its niche.



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