

# southforker

southforker.com  
JULY / AUGUST 2023

**ALEX VINASH:  
GO GLAM  
OR STAY HOME!**

**MASTER THE  
MIGHTY SURF  
IN MONTAUK**

**ON SOUTH  
FORK FARMS,  
IT'S TIME TO  
DIG DEEP**

**GET SUMMER  
BY THE  
SPOONFUL AT  
THE SWEET  
SPOT**

**NURTURE THE  
NATURE WITH  
DEMAURO +  
DEMAURO**

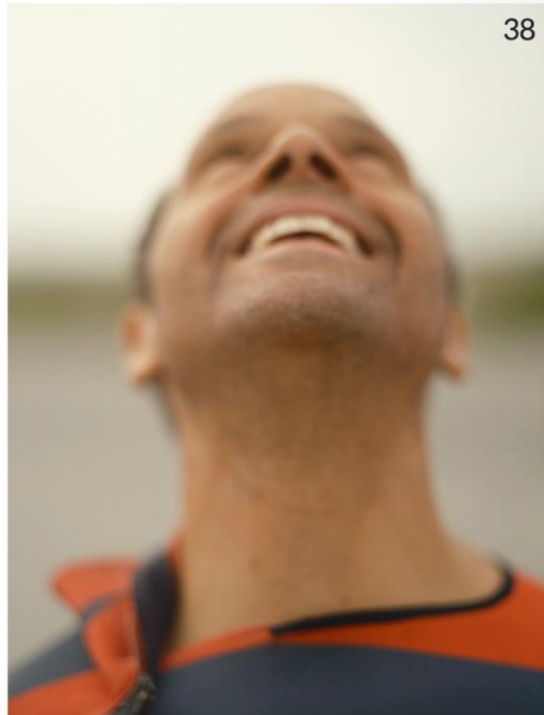
OWN SIZE



## july / august 2023



70



38

### high summer

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## sweet summer fun

It's early in the morning as I write this. Too early for cars or lawn mowers or even my squirrel-stalking dog. Just the syncopated talk-song of the birds in my yard as I sit here with a cool breeze and the early light coming in through the screen door, a hot cuppa by my side.

I can't help it. More than any other time of year, the summertime makes me want to seize the moments. All those glorious extra hours of sunlight, as the longest days of the year stretch out ahead like a long, steady swim.

I dream about how I'll fill them up — with days at the beach, chocolate dip on soft serve cones, strategic yard-sale hunting (hey, it's an art!), a cooler filled with tuna sandwiches and guacamole at the beach, cooking

meals and popping corks with friends and family, art exhibitions and new books to make me see the world through different eyes, boat rides, bike rides and nature hikes, nights filled with live music and clinking cocktails, new restaurants and favorite haunts. The constant presence of sand in my shoes and my jean-short pockets. And of course, taking way too many photos of quiet sunsets that dazzle on a nightly basis.

But isn't that the best thing about summer — asking yourself the question: What am I going to do today?

It's funny when I think about being a kid out here in the summer, and how sometimes without any structure to scaffold a day, my friends and I would become overwhelmed by the freedom of the season and wind up bemoaning how bored we were. My friend Deb's mom, the very wise Jane Ritzler, would raise an eyebrow and deadpan a phrase that has stayed with me my entire life: "You're not bored, you're boring." (Thanks, Mom R!)

Because really, there's no excuse for that behavior out here. There's so. Much. To do! But if you're a little befuddled about where to start, too, I've got a few ideas in this July/August issue to get you started.

Why not challenge yourself and take a surf lesson (p. 38)? Brian Halweil and his son took the plunge, suiting up and heading to Montauk to learn all about becoming one with the waves via the super talented (and very patient!) surf teachers at The End — and shutterbug David Benthall, immersive guy that he is, even wound up in the water to get some of these gorgeous shots (thanks, Dave!).

Of course, what's summer without ice cream? That's what 11th-generation East

Hamptoner Tom Cooper was thinking when dreaming up his new, creamy soft-serve shop, The Sweet Spot (p. 70), that needs to be on your hit-list for sweet treats. Our own Emily Toy got the scoop (ha! Ice cream puns!) on this old-timey shop, while photographer Doug Young put the cherry on top with beautiful photos that'll make you run right out for a sundae, stat!

We got to dig into local farms and all they have to offer (p. 82), got gussied up with our favorite local designer, Alex Vinash, at his new Southampton store (p. 54) and learned what it takes to make a garden look effortless (it's not!) and abundant with the talented sister landscape design duo, deMauro + deMauro (p. 92).

We planned parties with pros, set a gorgeous summer table with our friends at Il Buco Vita, made mad-delicious Sicilian-style strawberry crostata with the very talented and intuitive chef Megan Huylo, found a million and one things to do in the tiniest slice of Bridgehampton, And so much more.

Oh, and hey — happy anniversary to Chelsea Sweeney of Hampton Car Club, whose souped-up, bespoke auto service spot just turned one year old July 4th weekend (you'll love hearing about her favorite things in the Hamptons on p. 32 — it's the locals who really know what's what, after all).

Happy summer, friends. May it never be boring.

**Amy Zavatto**  
Editor-in-Chief

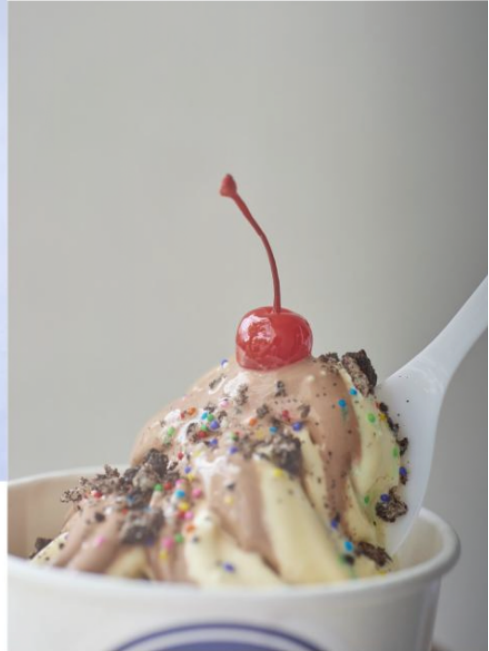
The Sweet Spot will serve at least 10 flavors of ice cream and frozen yogurt daily, plus two to three non-dairy sorbets, in flavors like cake batter, cookies and cream, mint, vanilla, peanut butter, cappuccino, strawberry, Dutch chocolate and sea salted caramel pretzel.



SAVE  
ROOM  
FOR  
ICE  
CREAM

GETTING INTO THE SWING OF SOFT SERVE AT  
THE SWEET SPOT

by **EMILY TOY**  
photography by **DOUG YOUNG**



Among the homemade treats at The Sweet Spot are both M&M and chocolate chip cookies baked daily on the premises.

# E

ating ice cream isn't just a summer season highlight; it's practically a birthright. If you're a ninth-generation, lifelong East Hampton resident like Tom Cooper, you're not too far from that.

The Sweet Spot — specializing in pull-your-own soft serve — opened this Memorial Day weekend offering cool confections sure to please kids and adults alike. Whether you keep it classic with a good ol' vanilla soft serve or venture for a cup full of cotton candy and bubblegum flavors, scooped sky high and loaded with every topping under the sun, the result is guaranteed to be the same: sheer, unadulterated joy.

For Hamptons residents, young and old, The Sweet Spot, located at 106 Newtown Lane, is the newest ice cream and frozen yogurt joint to grace the ever-bustling scene in downtown East Hampton, filling the void left by Scoop du Jour in 2020.

After purchasing the building, which had housed a dry-cleaning business for decades, Cooper has since erected a brand-new two-story structure on the property where his new mom-and-pop-style business will inhabit the first floor. Initially, his purchase was intended to provide housing for local teachers and coaches, a feat he was successful in accomplishing, as the second floor of Cooper's building is designated for apartments.

"We bought the building four years ago," he says. The owner and his wife, Maureen, are the parents of two multi-sports athletes: one son is a current student at East Hampton High School, the other is a graduate. Due to this closeness to the school activities, Cooper's vantage point offered a front-row view of the burgeoning housing crisis on the East End. It's not a secret the hamlet's Main Street appearance has changed drastically over the last couple of decades. Gone are the little business like the Stride Right shoe store that once

sold generations of kids their first Buster Browns; enter the glitzy, global brands like Prada.

"We saw the need for housing for our teachers and coaches, yes, but we also felt the need to try this whole new adventure out," says Cooper. "There aren't a lot of mom-and-pops left in this town. We want to try to bring that vibe back."

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

For more than two decades, the East Hampton resident has helmed Cooper Construction, working on nearly every aspect of renovation, new construction and remodeling of residences across the South Fork.

He's excited for The Sweet Spot's location, noting its close proximity to all three schools within the village, making it an easy, walkable destination for kids and teens, but without getting into the thick of the hectic downtown business district.

"A family place is what we wanted," Cooper says. "And we wanted it to be easy for kids to come in. There were always candy shops growing up here," he says of his beloved hometown. "We just really saw the need for creating a place where people could have fun and to have easy access to it."

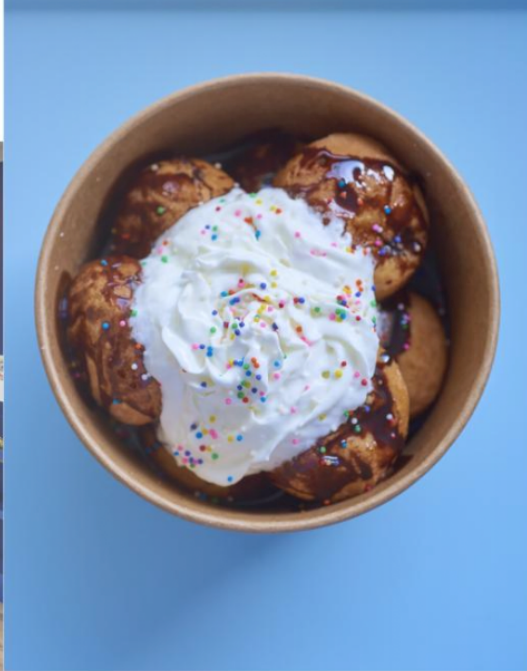
Owner and founder Tom Cooper, an 11th generation East Hamptoner, wanted to bring family fun back to the town where he was raised (and where he brought up his own children).





In addition to soft-serve sold by weight, Cooper is also offering milkshakes, nitro cold brew coffee on tap from local java haunt Jack's, and dozens candies and chocolates.





You can buy a bag of the hand-made donut holes Cooper calls “the spots” to just pop in your mouth, or combine them soft-serve style with different sauces, like traditional chocolate or warm caramel and whipped cream.

### LOVIN' SPOONFUL

Set up as a self-serve operation, The Sweet Spot is open every day beginning at 11 a.m. Consistently serving at least 10 flavors of ice cream and frozen yogurt daily, plus two to three non-dairy sorbets, all dispensed out of five newly installed machines, expect flavors like cake batter, cookies and cream, mint, vanilla, peanut butter, cappuccino, strawberry, Dutch chocolate and sea-salted caramel pretzel. As for non-dairy options, they're always offering lemon and pineapple.

Cooper and his team also do milkshakes, with nitro cold brew coffee on tap from local java haunt Jack's. Dozens of different types of candy and chocolates are available — offered in both bulk and smaller pre-packaged formats — plus homemade chocolate chip and M&M cookies. Hand-made donut holes, baked onsite and dubbed “the spots,” will round out Cooper's sweet menu, with folks able to spruce them up with different sauces, like traditional chocolate sauce and warm caramel, and whipped cream as well as candy and fresh fruit toppings.

As far as prices are concerned, since it's a build-your-own bowl of ice cream situation the cost is based on the weight. According to Cooper, prices start at around \$8 for the fro-yo, ice cream and spots bowls, while milkshakes and cold brew coffee drinks clock in at below that \$10 range as well.

Upon entering The Sweet Spot, patrons are greeted by a large white table in the center of the room, stocked with a rainbow of packaged candies, like black and red licorice, fruit leather, sour watermelon rounds and gumballs. Straight back are the soft-serve machines complete with a wall dedicated to scoopable bulk candy and chocolate. Multi-colored lights shaped like ice cream cones illuminate the ceiling. To the left, a wall of windows looks out onto the street, adorned with a long counter set with sunny yellow and sky blue metal stools, perfect for people-watching while slurping down soft serve.

If that isn't enough to satisfy your sweet tooth, to the right is the subway tile-clad counter, where one can find a dozen or so additional topping options like crushed-up Oreos and fresh pineapple chunks to add to your fro-yo, milkshakes and cold brew coffee drinks. (Hey, like the kids say: You do you.)

“We're going for two things here,” Cooper says of his new happy haunt. “We're going to be really clean,” noting him and his team's dedication to efficiency and quality, “and we're going to have fun.”

In his ice cream dream, The Sweet Spot will naturally become a fun and lively meeting place for the whole community, with more to come in the future, like live music and other interesting and unique entertainment year-round.

“It's exciting,” Cooper says. “I want this to be a welcoming place for all the people that live here and for all the people that visit here. If locals can enjoy the space, then the summer community will follow.”