

NETJETS

An aerial satellite-style map of Europe is the background. The landmasses are filled with various satellite images of different regions, including forests, fields, and urban areas. The map is set against a solid blue background.

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CAUSE CÉLÈBRE

Amsterdam's glittering dinner with a heart

SUMMER CHIC

Culture and couture mix in dresses to impress

PRIVATE ART PARTY

Individual collections, very personal museums

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The revolutionary Laver Cup in focus

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Matthew Day Jackson's remarkable work

THE SMART GUIDE

A timely round-up of the latest travel news and destinations, gear and gadgets, plus a handbook of noteworthy happenings around the globe



HAMPTONS HIDEAWAY

Shou Sugi Ban House is a one-of-a-kind wellness retreat that almost never came to be. Brian Noone with the tale of this Long Island Phoenix

For more than a century, New York's smart set has defied America's westward logic every summer by going east to the Hamptons. There's now less natural splendour here on the fringes of Long Island than there once was, but its appeals remain largely

intact: stunning beaches, head-clearing fresh breezes and expansive holiday homes filled with charm – and charming people.

In May, lawyer-turned-entrepreneur Amy Cherry-Abitbol opened a very modern attraction in the heart

of the Hamptons that might well prove to be the most alluring destination of all. Shou Sugi Ban House is a wellness sanctuary with just 13 suites, a standalone spa, two barns, multiple pavilions, a pool and a seasonal menu designed with chef Mads Refslund, co-founder of Noma, using ingredients grown in the on-site organic garden.

It's a heady combination, especially for such a small property, but Cherry-Abitbol is prouder still of the house's underlying philosophy: personalised wellness.

Combining elements of Japanese and Western healing, as well as up-to-date science, the ever-evolving programme is tailored to each individual guest. Perhaps an early-morning tea ceremony or a late-night fire ceremony; a treatment in the chromotherapy shower or a microneedling facial; a guided beach walk or vibrational sound healing. Bringing together both resident and visiting practitioners, all-inclusive stays merge physical, mental and spiritual aspects in a setting that combines both natural and manmade beauty.

"We've created an experience that brings people back to a simple appreciation for their natural surroundings," says Cherry-Abitbol. It also, she continues, "allows for quiet contemplation and introspection, and fosters meaningful human connection in a tranquil setting." In short, Shou Sugi Ban aims to do what the Hamptons have done for generations of urbanites: to remind people of the pleasures of simplicity.

The grounds are wonderfully suited to envelope guests in a state of delightful peace. Guided by wabi-sabi principles – the Japanese aesthetic that accepts, and even encourages, transience and imperfection – the minimalist design of the suites is heavy on natural materials and is restricted almost entirely to a stone and biscuit colour palette. Floor-to-ceiling windows, winding paths through the 250 on-site trees and deep soaking tubs underscore the emphasis on introspection.

But conviviality is never far from anywhere in the Hamptons, and Shou Sugi Ban is no exception, with a communal dining room overlooking the property's cherry orchard, and both



cooking and exercise classes that feel just the right size, neither too big nor too small. And for those seeking a little more action, the Parrish Art Museum, founded in 1897, is across the street in a handsome edifice built by Herzog & de Meuron in 2012, and within 15 minutes – as long as traffic cooperates – you can be teeing off at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, home to last year's US Open, or wandering through the vines at the Wölffer Estate Vineyard.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the retreat is that it nearly didn't happen. Cherry-Abitbol has called the Hamptons home for 20 years and came across the perfect tract of land in 2015, when she snapped it up with her business partner, Kathleen Kapnick. A short time later, the property's main barn burnt to the ground, casting the whole project in doubt. But Cherry-Abitbol, who

spent much of the 1990s in Japan as a corporate attorney, recalled a quote from the 17th-century poet and samurai Mizuta Masahide: "Barn's burnt down – / now / I can see the moon." In addition to this literal piece of advice, she also thought of the Shou Sugi Ban technique, which involves charring and oiling a wooden surface to protect it against fire and decay. It's a technique she and her team – a group comprised almost entirely of women – used in various spots across the property during construction and which, when the time came, was the only possible name she could give it.

And so, like a phoenix, Shou Sugi Ban House has risen from the ashes of an old Hamptons farm. May it long bring renewal and revitalisation, and may it remain at just 13 rooms in perpetuity, so traffic on the Montauk Highway doesn't get even more congested. shousugibanhouse.com