



## It Takes A Village

“Chappaqua. C-h-a-p-p-a-q-u-a. No. Not Chappaquiddick. Chappaqua — New York.” My voice got louder every time I spelled the name of my sister’s hometown. I was just trying to order a *Zoonooz* subscription for my nieces and nephew, but the operator kept trying to place them in the Martha’s Vineyard community associated with Ted Kennedy.

Coincidentally, it took other high-profile politicos to put Chappaqua on the map. Life in this charming hamlet was forever changed when Hillary and Bill Clinton bought a Dutch Colonial home on Old House Lane in 1999.

While news helicopters no longer circle overhead, sightings of the Clintons still set off a flurry of phone calls. These days, with Senator Clinton in Washington or on the campaign trail, it’s the former president that folks see most often. He’s no stranger at »

Rockefeller State Park Preserve  
Photo courtesy of NYSPP



« Lange's Deli, where the staff describe him as "one of the guys;" he's a frequent browser at Second Story Book Shop; and he can often be seen having coffee at Starbucks.

The center of Chappaqua consists of three blocks of small shops and cafes. Outside of this area, winding wooded lanes lead to colonial mansions that sprawl across large properties. Residents of the town's 4,400 households are well educated and affluent — and have learned to dodge the deer that routinely dash across the roads at night. In this rural environment, it's hard to remember that mid-town Manhattan is only 35 miles to the south.

The Clintons aren't the only Type A personalities in Chappaqua: CNN president Jon Klein told *Inside Chappaqua* magazine that he appreciates the "emotional distance from the chaos" that the community affords. *Ugly Betty* star and former Miss America Vanessa Williams grew up here and lives with her children on five acres. Like the majority of residents, Williams stays in Chappaqua because of the public schools, which are among the best in the country.

The local high school is named for Horace Greeley, founder and editor of the *New York Tribune*, candidate for president in 1872, and literary friend of Emerson, Thoreau, Dickens, and Mark Twain. Greeley bought property in Chappaqua shortly after rail service began in 1846 and was among the early commuters. Today, the train remains an integral part of life in this community — carrying residents to Grand Central in just under an hour.

Visitors would do well to start their exploration of Chappaqua at the New Castle Historical Society's museum located in Greeley's former residence on King Street. Here I learned about the



Horace Greeley House. Photo by Betsy Towl



Susan Lawrence Bakery. Photo by Joe Budd

Quakers who built homes in the area in the 1730s. This motivated me to visit their nearby meeting house, built in 1753, where services are still held every Sunday. ([www.newcastlehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.newcastlehistoricalsociety.org))

Close to Greeley House, Second Story Book Shop is the only place in the

country — other than the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock — where you can buy memorabilia, books, and CDs associated with the 42nd president. From golf balls to commemorative coins — they have it all. ([www.secondstorybookshop.com](http://www.secondstorybookshop.com))

The Chappaqua Village Market is fun to »



« explore, but for a casual meal, I can't imagine a nicer spot than Susan Lawrence on Greeley Avenue. Here, proprietor and chef Mark Kramer offers light lunches (the duck burrito is to die for), freshly baked breads, and exquisite pastries under a copper-gilded tin ceiling and in an outdoor café. Kramer's collection of antique copper, 19th century-style pine furniture, and seven sparkling chandeliers make this a great place to linger over tea and a yummy treat. The Victorian strawberry shortcake is irresistible, and I am nearly addicted to the Venetian almond torte. Kramer told me that Susan Lawrence has catered Donald Trump's Christmas party more than once. The chef was a bit more coy when I asked about the Clintons, but he did say Bill "has really changed his eating habits since his heart surgery."

After a visit to Susan Lawrence, I am ready to walk up the King Street hill to Crown House Antiques, the best of Chappaqua's places to shop for treasures old and new. I'd also like to walk to Temple Beth El, the synagogue designed by Louis Kahn (Salk Institute), but without sidewalks, the stroll down Highway 117 is not really recommended.

Instead, we park and walk around, admiring the structure's stunning simplicity and the way it is built into a hill on seven wooded acres. Temple Beth El was modeled after the ancient wooden synagogues of Poland and Russia that were destroyed in the Holocaust. It is Kahn's memorial to an Eastern European Jewish past and reflects his spiritual approach to architecture.

For safe walking, my family and I enjoy the sanctuaries of the Saw Mill River Audubon — especially in the fall, when crunchy leaves and beautiful colors surround. Pinecliff, where a wooden boardwalk stretches over and around a

red maple swamp, is a favorite. Equally enjoyable is Pruyin Sanctuary, where trails traverse woodlands, wetlands, and rocky hilltops. Both places are great for birding. ([www.sawmillriveraudubon.org](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org))

Two other favorite strolling spots are within 15 minutes of Chappaqua: at the PepsiCo World Headquarters in Purchase, The Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Gardens include more than 40 works of art by Giacometti, Calder, Rodin, Henry Moore, Joan Miró, and other major 20th-century artists. The pieces are placed among fountains, ponds, and pavilions, as well as trees, shrubs, and flowering plants in a spacious garden setting.

Rockefeller State Park Preserve — comprised of a portion of the Rockefeller family estate in Pocantico Hills — is another glorious place to walk. Here, carriage roads wind past streams, rivers, and lakes and through woodlands, meadows, and fields. They also traverse wood and stone bridges and lead to panoramic vistas of the Hudson River and surrounding hills. ([nysparks.state.ny.us](http://nysparks.state.ny.us))

I'm told that Bill and Hillary enjoy long walks in the Preserve. They also like dining at Crabtree's Kittle House in Chappaqua. In fact, they've entertained several heads of state — including Germany's Helmut Kohl — at the award-winning restaurant.

The inn's Progressive American cuisine attracts diners from across a wide area, including New York City. Many come especially for the popular magret of Long Island duck with pomegranate glaze. However, the wine list is what I find truly remarkable.

On my last visit to Chappaqua, maitre d' Gustavo Zuluaga gave me a tour of the wine cellar where I nervously held a Methuselah of 1988 Romanée-Conti worth the price of a new Lexus. Kittle



House has the second largest restaurant wine cellar in the world, based on selection. On any given day, 40 wines are available by the glass. Only the Tour d'Argent in Paris offers more choices. This would explain why the wine list is more than three inches thick and contains over 6,500 different labels. I wasn't surprised that the inn, which dates from 1790, has won more than one Wine Spectator Award. In addition to great food and wine, the property offers 12 cozy colonial rooms for overnight guests. ([www.kittlehouse.com](http://www.kittlehouse.com))

It takes a village — a very special village — to welcome high-profile travelers, cater to Type A homeowners, and provide an outstanding education for young residents — all while maintaining its small-town charm. Somehow Chappaqua — which everyone now knows isn't on Martha's Vineyard — manages to do it. — Elizabeth Hansen

The wine cellar at Kittle House has nearly 70,000 bottles of wine.

Photo by Adams/Hansen Photography