

# Downsizing, Island-style

NOT EVERYONE HEADS SOUTH WHEN THEY SELL THEIR LONG ISLAND HOME

BERNADETTE STARZEE

After Steve and Elaine Perlmutter's son and daughter moved out, they no longer needed their five-bedroom, three-bathroom house in Bellmore, with its "gardener and all the other expenses and problems associated with owning a house," according to Steve.

So the couple decided to sell the home and buy a condo in The Meridian, a new luxury building in Long Beach. Now, the Perlmutter's are enjoying their beachfront location.

"It's so calm and soothing," Steve said. "The concierge services and security are great. You close your door and you're done. If there's a problem, you call the super."

And Long Beach has a lot to offer beyond the ocean, he added, noting, "We can walk to the restaurants on Park Avenue."

## Staying put

Unlike some empty-nesters who head south or perhaps west, the Perlmutter's are among many Long Islanders who choose to downsize and stay close to the area they've called home for so long. Long Beach – with its oceanfront charm and plethora of condos, co-ops and rentals – draws empty-nesters who are done with caring for a house and property.

"They tell me, 'I don't want to mow any more lawns or lug any more firewood,'" said Joyce Coletti, a licensed sales associate in the Long Beach office of Prudential Douglas Elliman. "Many people sell their homes and buy a co-op or condo with cash."

Three units in the Meridian, ranging in price from \$769,000 to \$1.6 million, remain

unsold. At the opposite end of the scale, co-ops in Long Beach range from \$300,000 to \$600,000, said Coletti.

As the population ages, there is an increasing demand for housing for older Islanders who don't want the problems and taxes associated with a large property, and would rather not move to North Carolina or Florida. Active communities for people ages 55 and older – with amenities such as indoor pools, clubhouses and transportation to shopping centers – have become popular.

"The majority of people who are downsizing are looking for retirement communities, but in Nassau County we don't have the numbers of them that we need for the amount of people who are looking to downsize," said Bonnie Doran, director of Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty's Seniors Program.

"Moderately priced ones sell within seconds, and there's usually a waiting list. While the complex may be moderately priced when first offered, resale prices increase dramatically because the demand is so great."

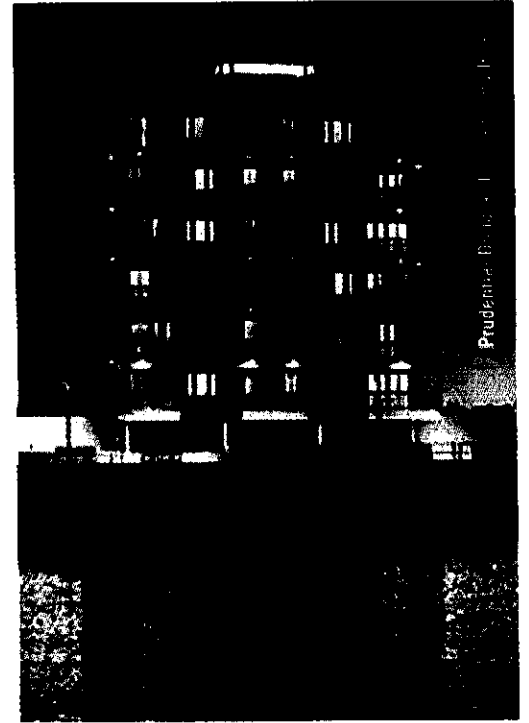
Some buyers head east to get more for their money. "Some people are going out to communities in places like Miller Place, Mt. Sinai or Middle Island," said Adelle Longo, GRI, a licensed realtor in the Smithtown office of Prudential Douglas Elliman. "They pay less and get a bigger condo."

But to some Nassau County residents, central Suffolk can seem as far away as Florida.

"Most would prefer to be close to the grandchildren and the neighborhood where they raised their families," said Doran, who works in Daniel Gale Sotheby's Manhasset office.

"People want to downsize, but they don't want to downgrade," pointed out Daniel M. Guerrier, a licensed sales associate in the Roslyn office of Prudential Douglas Elliman.

Some of his sellers are cashing out and buying a unit in the new Meadowbrook Pointe, a Garden City community that, when completed, will have 720 condos, townhouses and vil-



**MERIDIAN:** Long Beach's luxury condo.

las for people ages 55 or older. Amenities include a spa, a hairdresser, pools and a movie theatre. "Everything is at their fingertips," Guerrier said.

In Melville, The Greens is an active 55-plus community that is always in demand, said Hector P. Gavilla, a licensed broker associate in the Dix Hills office of Prudential Douglas Elliman. According to Gavilla, re-sales in The Greens range from about \$500,000 for a two-bedroom condo to more than \$1 million for a large villa. The Greens has a spacious, two-story clubhouse with several rooms, including a library, ballroom, restaurant, indoor pool and card rooms. "It's a wonderful place for seniors to socialize," said Gavilla.

Other amenities include tennis courts, an outdoor pool and a golf course.

Downsizers are attracted to newer condos and townhouses, even if they're not designated as retirement communities. For instance, the Mews at Copper Beach in Freeport, a new complex of townhouses ranging in price from the mid-\$500,000s to the high-\$600,000s, has attracted empty-nesters, said Diane Klusner, a licensed associate broker in the Merrick office of Prudential Douglas Elliman and the co-listing agent for the properties.

See **DOWNSIZING**, page 7



**LAP OF LUXURY:** With prices ranging from \$769,000 to \$1.6 million, the Meridian in Long Beach is a comfortable – if costly – option for empty-nesters looking to stay on Long Island.



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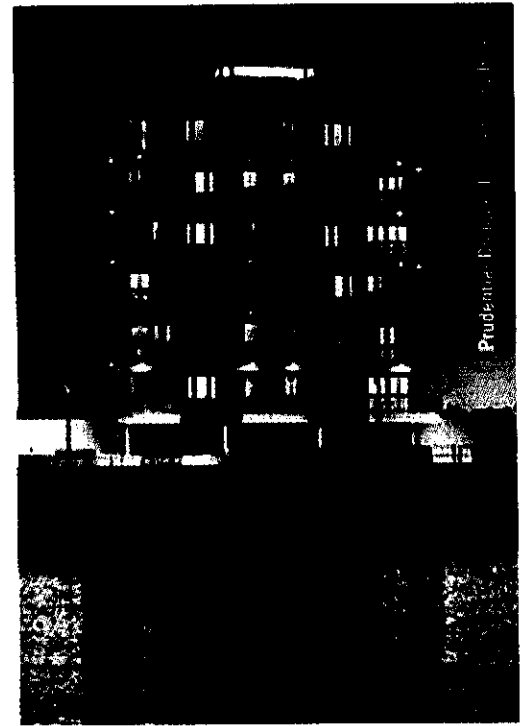
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