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COASTAL LIVING

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So You Want to Live in... Blue Hill, Maine

Out of the way but not out of the loop, this Maine village has a mind of its own. | *Text by Susan C. Kim*



Credit: Sara Gray

Don't let Blue Hill's sole, flashing traffic light fool you. While this compact seaside village hugging the western shore of Maine's Blue Hill Bay exudes a perfect small-town image, its residents are anything but provincial.

A diverse group of people "from away" have escaped to Blue Hill for generations, says Dr. John Roberts, president of the historical society. "It began in the 1900s with famous New York and Philadelphia musicians," he explains. The area has since become a magnet for artists and writers attracted to both the peninsula's scenic beauty and the company of other creative souls.

They've joined quite a few residents who trace their lineage back to the earliest settlers in 1762 and who—like all Mainers—are proud of their past. If distant ancestors once built wooden boats in the yards that flourished nearby, or fished the surrounding waters for lobster, some modern-day descendants still practice the same demanding professions. "In keeping with the town's self-sufficient, stoic history, no whiners are allowed in Blue Hill," John says. Adds 88-year-old Elvira Bass, historical society curator, "From the guy who plows your driveway to the country club set, we all respect one another, as well as each other's privacy and property."

Town hall meetings heat up with development-related conflicts, but everyone agrees on the sheer beauty of Blue Hill's setting. Prime waterfront property overlooks rocky outcroppings and glassy green coves. A sprinkling of luxury homes, clapboard cottages, farmhouses, and mobile homes can be found throughout the area, often interspersed. "It's a strange mix," says real estate agent Melone Madix-Jackson, "but it works."

While lobstering survives, the town's economy increasingly relies on seasonal tourism. "But there are no tacky T-shirt shops," says Sue Walsh, who moved here with her Coast Guardsman husband. Visitors can, however, find locally made pottery and hand-loomed



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Blue Hill

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blankets, plus sculptures and paintings by area artists.

Telecommuters have high-speed Internet access only in town. Otherwise, folks settle for snail-paced dial-up—a reminder that Blue Hill prefers to remain the village with one flashing traffic light.

Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce; 207/374-3242 or bluehillpeninsula.org

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