

Exit Seven off the Long Island Sound

by Tab Hauser

For the last six years, I have featured a series of stories called "Exit ... Off the Long Island Sound". The exits off the Long Island Sound coordinated with different bays one can visit. I started with exit one being Manhasset Bay and then covered the most practical north shore places to dock or throw the anchor out for a night or two. Last season's story was about exit six featuring Port Jefferson. (These back issue stories are available by emailing me at tab@tabhauser.com.) The seventh and final exit off the Long Island Sound is the Mattuck Inlet. This is because it is the last place you can cruise to on the Sound before the end of the north shore.



Fishing boats inside the Mattuck Inlet.

The Mattuck Inlet is located near the eastern end of Long Island's north shore almost two thirds the way between the Port Jefferson entrance and Plum Glut at the end of the North Fork. To enter the narrow channel first set up with green buoy 3A to the north. Then look for the white flashing light on the western rocks or what looks like a shortened jetty. The opposite long jetty is across the narrow channel to the east. There is a seven-foot deep channel here. Watch your tide, wind and waves before entering. This is not a foul weather place to enter for first-timers. Once inside keep in the middle. Shortly you will curve around keeping the Mattuck Fishing Station to starboard. Further down to starboard is the full-service Strong's Yacht Center which gives easy access to their fuel dock. From here continue down to Strong's Water Club and Marina that will be on your port. Avoid producing a wake here as the water is flat in this narrow channel. You may also encounter a three to four-knot current depending on the tide.

For docking, consider Strong's Water Club and Marina (www.strongsmarine.com/location/water-club) which offers protected tran-



Wine in barrels being aged on the North Fork.

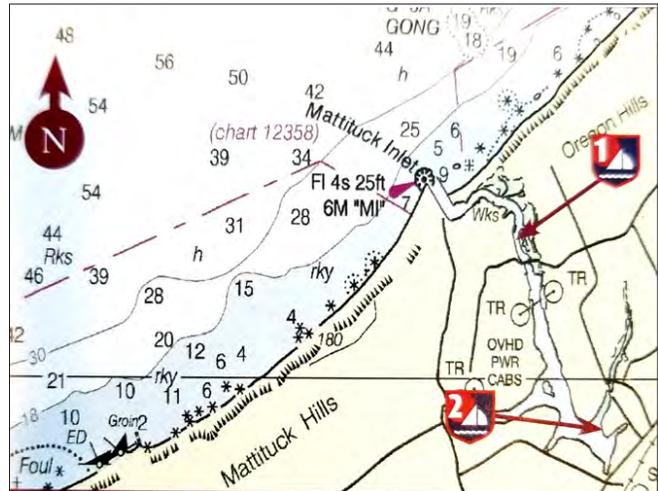
sients slips for boats up to 75 feet having a draft of no more than seven feet. Season rates are \$4.95 with an added electric charge. There is a two-night minimum stay required on weekends and holidays with reservations for weekends advised. Strong's Marine Water Club's mission statement is all about the

boating community and believes that boating enriches lives and brings people together. This shows when visiting this place. On the premises is a pool, weekend entertainment, restaurant and bar, a ships store as well as paddleboard rentals. By clicking the link above you can also see their calendar of events.

Once docked you have different options for exploring the area. The marina has a concierge to help you learn about the North Fork or you can get around easily on your own as Enterprise Car Rental in Riverside offers pick up service and has cars that average \$60 a day. To start your visit in Mattuck, walk 10 minutes to the village center on the two block long Love Lane. Love Lane has a cheese shop, wine bar and tasting room, a gourmet deli and my favorite place for lunch while here called the Love Lane Kitchen. With your rental car consider the 20-minute drive to Greenport. This old north fork town makes a pleasant stroll for a few hours. It has boutiques and restaurants on Front and Main Road. For fresh oysters and clams outdoors try the Little Creek Farm and Oyster Market. One of my favorite Mexican restaurants out east is Lucharitos. Whatever you choose for lunch or dinner, Greenport has it for any budget or taste. While driving look out for farm stands to fill the boat's pantry with fresh produce.

A big draw for docking in Mattuck is to visit the North Fork wineries. Long Island's first vineyard started in 1973 and the region produces some excellent award-winning wines. Today there are dozens of vineyards stretched all over the North Fork growing merlot, syrah, malbec, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, gewürztraminer, Viognier and a few other varieties. The grapes grow well in this region because of very good soil drainage, sunshine and light ocean breezes that keep moisture off them.

My favorite wineries include Bedell Cellars (www.bedellcellars.com) and Lenz (www.lenzwine.com) because of their quality and style. For a taste of Long Island's best sparkling wine visit Sparkling Pointe (www.sparklingpointe.com) where each bottle is produced using the "methode champenoise" or "traditional method". For an easy two-mile walk west from the dock visit the Macari Vineyard (www.macariwines.com)



you can also ask the marina concierge about a free shuttle service there. Walking east 2.5 miles you can visit Castello di Borghese, which was originally the Hargrave Vineyard where Long Island wine started. In total there are four vineyards to see an easy bike ride or an hour or less walk from the marina. Each vineyard has a different tasting policy in regards to cost and tiered levels. Some will credit the tasting cost towards a purchase. If you are unsure where to go, just follow the wine trail signs or plan in advance at www.liwines.com. For those that enjoy something stronger than wine, you should visit Long Island Spirits (www.lispirits.com) or the much smaller Twin Still Moonshine (www.lioldtymer.com). Long Island Spirits offer small-batch vodka, bourbon, whiskey, gin and infused spirits. Twin Still Moonshine is moonshine in assorted flavors. Each place has a tasting menu as well as cocktails. While visiting Long Island Spirits, do not miss one of Long Island's best pie bakeries called Briermere Farms down the road.



A friendly welcome at Lenz Wines.

For those that do not want to worry about drinking and driving there are several companies that specialize in tasting tours of wine, spirits and local beers. For information on these tours, wineries, farm stands and more, go to www.longisland.com/north-fork.html

If you are planning to visit Mattuck as part of a longer cruise consider the close proximity you are to Block Island, Mystic and Essex. All three of these destination back stories are also available upon request.

Tab Hauser is a U.S. Coast Guard Licensed Captain who writes and photographs on travel and boating. He currently boats and charters out of Glen Cove. You can find some of his cruising stories by web searching "Long Island Boating World Tab Hauser" or go to www.tabhauser.com. Email questions to tab@tabhauser.com.