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On Fishers Island, N.Y., Summertime Style and Flavors Run in the Family

FOOD, MEN'S FASHION, TRAVEL, WOMEN'S FASHION BY KATE DONNELLY



Bronya (left) and Kate Shillo have introduced two new businesses — Fishers Island Lemonade and the Summer Shack, a beach-themed boutique — on Fishers Island, N.Y. Credit Paul Quitariano

Not much happens on Fishers Island, New York, pop. 236, a low-key, 9-mile-long stretch of sand east of Long Island's North Fork that can only be reached by ferry from New London, Conn. And that's just how residents and holiday regulars like it. This summer, however, one family is offering up several reasons to visit. Sisters Kate and Bronya Shillo — alongside their parents Greg and Debi Shillo, the proprietors of the no-frills Pequot Inn — have launched a spiked lemonade business, a chic beach boutique and a curated gourmet market.

The Shillo sisters, both over 6 feet tall, are former college basketball players who have worked in the New York media world, in Kate's case, and for Patagonia and Under Armour, in Bronya's. Inspired by a sibling sojourn to the stylish surf shops of Montauk, Kate's weekends-only Summer Shack, located off the Inn's front porch, hosts a well-chosen collection of beachwear and accessories, like colorful painted Norquay paddles, vintage-inspired sunglasses from Wonderland, versatile swimsuits from Solid and Striped and limited-edition Fishers Island market bags by the socially responsible lifestyle brand Apolis. Kate also makes her own contribution to her shop's inventory: "I snag the oyster shells that we would normally throw away, clean them, bleach them, and paint them with gold leaf."



The Summer Shack sells beach clothing and accessories. Credit Paul Quitariano

Bronya's project, Fishers Island Lemonade, is based on a decade-old recipe from the Pequot (the only public bar, and the only light-up disco floor, in town). There, she learned to blend 15-liter buckets of vodka, whiskey, lemon juice and honey-derived sweeteners. Three years ago, she decided to package her signature lemonade concoction in a can; it took two years to perfect the taste profile. The yellow-striped container was designed by Kate's good friend Camilla Benbassat, the founder of the fashion-centric design agency Avec, and inspired by the Giorgio Beverly Hills Perfume towel that "my mother had around the beach house," Bronya explains, "which always reminded me of summer." She recommends her drink served over ice "with a lemon wedge and mint from the back garden."

It might also pair nicely with something from the new market next door to the Pequot, Fishers Island Gourmet, run by Debi Shillo, which features goods from around the country, like Brooklyn Brine pickles, Salty Road Taffy and J.K. Adams slate boards.

With its unspoiled swaths of sand and historic New England charm, Fishers Island is an ideal place to spend the final weekends of the warm-weather season. If a summer trip isn't in the cards, however, Fishers Island Lemonade is available throughout Connecticut and Rhode Island and should arrive in New York City by fall.