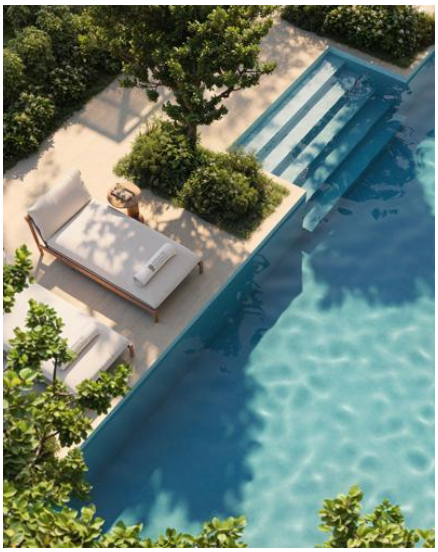
August 25, 2026
27east.com

Two Markets, One Lifestyle: An East End to Palm Beach Real Estate Pipeline

By: Michelle Trauring
Impressions: 53,968



Poolside at Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach.
Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach

August 25, 2026
27east.com



John Wilson, sales associate at sales director at Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach with Douglas Elliman
Courtesy Douglas Elliman



Dana Koch, a sales associate with Corcoran Group Palm Beach
Courtesy Corcoran Group Palm Beach.

August 25, 2026
27east.com



Michael Costello, principal agent and luxury real estate advisor at Compass Florida.
Courtesy Compass



The 26-story Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach is home to 88 residences.
Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach



Inside the great room of one of the 88 homes at Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach.
Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach

August 25, 2026
27east.com



Looking up at the 26-story Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach.
Banyan Tree Residences West Palm beach



Views from a balcony at the Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach.
Banyan Tree Residences West Palm Beach

The South Fork and Palm Beach may be worlds apart, but they are closer than they seem.

Both have become sought-after destinations for buyers drawn to luxurious lifestyles, limited inventory and a strong sense of place. And increasingly, there is a pipeline between the two markets, with buyers moving between them — and, in some cases, owning homes in both — as they seek to balance the East End's summer appeal with Palm Beach's winter season.

August 25, 2026
27east.com

In this inaugural Palm Beach roundtable, real estate professionals examine the similarities and differences between the two markets, the buyers who are driving demand, and how the two regions fit distinctive seasons and stages of life.

How would you characterize the Palm Beach real estate market right now?

John Wilson: It depends on the way you're asking the question. At this snapshot in time, it's not season, it's summer. Palm Beach is one of the most seasonal real estate markets in the country. That being said, I would characterize the Palm Beach market as still very active. Trades are going off and I am excited to see what happens as season kicks in, which is when all the buyers come. A lot of agents say season starts in October. I grew up in South Florida, and I believe it really starts Thanksgiving weekend and then kicks into full gear in January.

Dana Koch: Palm Beach is a very healthy market, but it's a more discerning market. Buyers have become more selective, while truly exceptional properties and waterfront properties remain extremely competitive. There's still a fundamental scarcity here that you simply can't manufacture more of.

Michael Costello: The Palm Beach market continues to be strong. The sales volume has certainly slowed over the past few months, but I believe this is a result of residents and future buyers traveling more for the summer months. Showings have certainly accelerated since the second week in August.

How has the Palm Beach market changed over the past year?

John Wilson: It really hasn't changed a lot. There is still such strong demand for Palm Beach and now West Palm Beach, which is a thriving city that is literally growing on a monthly basis. Properties are still being traded, as I said earlier, and I don't feel that the market has changed that much. Again, we won't be in season for another three to four months. Overall, I would say the market is still strong, with a lot of demand in both Palm Beach and West Palm Beach.

What is changing is the growth in West Palm Beach. At this time, the city is in a full-on renaissance. There is a lot of new development being built and coming to the market. Most of it is branded and there is strong demand from people throughout the Northeast.

Dana Koch: The market has become more normalized and more rational. Buyers are taking their time and sellers have to be realistic about pricing, but that hasn't diminished demand for the best properties. We're seeing more activity compared to what we have seen over the last few years. The Town of Palm Beach average price and median price are up significantly.

Michael Costello: I think buyers are accepting that maybe they cannot get 100 percent of what they want and are more willing to make some concessions. I tell most of my clients, if you can get 80 percent of what you want, you should give the property serious consideration.

What is happening with inventory and pricing? Are buyers gaining leverage, or is demand still strong enough to keep sellers firmly in control?

John Wilson: As far as inventory, when you're heading into the summer and a lot of the buyers aren't here, much of the inventory will be pulled off the market so the clock isn't ticking. Does that mean there are deals here? It depends on whether the house is overpriced. There are still off-market transactions going on.

As far as buyers gaining leverage or demand remaining strong enough to keep sellers firmly in control, again, I would say this isn't COVID anymore. It's about the price and who wants to buy it. The unique thing about Palm Beach is that if someone really wants something and has to have it, it's not like they're going to check every comparable sale because the buyers here have unlimited budgets.

Dana Koch: Buyers have gained some leverage, particularly on properties that are aggressively priced, require renovations and have been sitting, but I wouldn't confuse that with buyers being in control. At the top end, scarcity still gives the seller an enormous advantage. If you have a great house in a great location listed at a realistic price, there may be very little competition for it.

Michael Costello: Inventory continues to be a challenge in Palm Beach. Certainly prime inventory is scarce. Trophy properties and new construction continue to set new records. Properties that need work can provide buyers the opportunities to add value and get a good deal.

Who is buying in Palm Beach today? Are you seeing more full-time residents, second-home buyers, investors or people relocating from other parts of the country? Are you seeing any movement from the East End of Long Island?

John Wilson: I would say it's a very wide group of different people. A lot of my typical clients have homes in Aspen and many of them also have homes in the Hamptons. We see buyers coming here as full-time residents. We also see buyers in their 50s and 60s whose children are either going to school or getting married, so they're becoming empty nesters. They're not necessarily moving to Florida full-time, but they want to have a place down here.

You mentioned second-home buyers. In Palm Beach and throughout South Florida, we have people buying their fourth, fifth and sixth homes. I wouldn't say there are a lot of investors buying unless you're talking about new development in West Palm Beach.

Where are people relocating from right now? Honestly, from all over the place. It's not just New York, although that still represents the bulk of the buyers. We're seeing buyers from California, Boston and Washington, D.C. Outside of the United States, we have South American buyers. Believe it or not, even on Palm Beach Island, you're seeing a lot of people from outside the United States looking to be part of this amazing place during the winter.

Are we seeing movement from the East End? Yes. We did a project called Mr. C Residences in West Palm Beach and there were a lot of Long Island buyers in that mix.

Dana Koch: It's a very sophisticated buyer pool — full-time residents, second-home buyers and people relocating from major financial and business centers around the country, especially from high tax states like New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Illinois and California.

Yes, there is major crossover with the East End. The Hamptons and Palm Beach attract people who value privacy, community, outdoor living and a certain quality of life. Buyers appreciate both markets for their summer and winter homes.

Michael Costello: I think it continues to be a mixed bag of buyers. Palm Beach will always be a place that attracts people who have multiple homes. However, most buyers are spending more time here. The Northeast has been the longtime pipeline for Palm Beach, but we are seeing more and more people from other parts of the country come to Palm Beach.

What are buyers asking for now that they weren't asking for five or 10 years ago? Have expectations around outdoor space, privacy, amenities, resiliency or turnkey homes changed?

John Wilson: It really hasn't changed much in the last five to 10 years. Obviously, COVID cranked it up and increased demand dramatically, but those basic expectations around outdoor space, privacy, amenities, resiliency and turnkey homes haven't changed much.

First, outdoor space. During season, which is in the winter, all of us spend time outdoors, whether that's during the day or at night. As far as privacy, Palm Beach has always had high hedges and fences around its homes, whether that's to keep people out or to prevent them from seeing in.

The market is resilient. That's never going to change. As a matter of fact, it's stronger now than ever. Turnkey homes are always preferred. Anytime you don't have to do a lot of work, which is expensive, it's always better to purchase something that's already done. Period. However, buyers will still go in and completely redo the entire place.

One last thing on amenities: All of the new development in West Palm Beach is highly amenitized and people continue to want more and more sought-after amenities.

Dana Koch: Buyers are much more focused on how a property actually lives. They want privacy, beautiful outdoor space, wellness amenities, home offices, excellent entertaining areas and, increasingly, turnkey condition. They don't have the bandwidth to oversee major renovation projects. Also, they're asking smarter questions about insurance, flood elevation, storm protection, generators, hurricane windows/doors, roofs and resiliency.

Michael Costello: Palm Beach has always attracted discerning buyers. These are seasoned home buyers who know what they want and are willing to pay for quality. I think more and more buyers want properties that are new or have been recently renovated. Less and less buyers want to take on a project.

At the luxury end of the market, what separates a property that sells quickly from one that sits?

John Wilson: Well, that's pretty easy — and it's been true in real estate since the beginning of time. Properties that are in great shape and priced right sell very quickly. A lot of the time, if you see a residence that has been on the market for a long time, it usually boils down to either a material defect or the price. More often than not, it's the price.

Dana Koch: Three things: location, quality and pricing, not necessarily in that order. The best properties have a story that is immediately understandable. They're beautiful, they're special and the buyer knows exactly why they should own that spectacular property. Buyers are savvy. They know an amazing property when they see it. At the ultra-luxury level, buyers aren't buying square footage, they're buying scarcity.

Michael Costello: This always comes down to one thing: price. If a property is priced correctly, it will sell quickly.

We're seeing very high-end sales on the East End, as well. What similarities and differences do you see between the ultra-luxury markets in Palm Beach and the Hamptons?

John Wilson: There's not much of a difference. I have many associates and people I have relationships with on the East End, as well as throughout the Hamptons, and the market is absolutely booming right now. Palm Beach and the Hamptons are an easy trek. A lot of our clients go to the Hamptons in the summer and come to Palm Beach in the winter. Both markets are strong. Both markets have buyers who know what they want and have the money to get whatever they want.

Dana Koch: Both are highly constrained coastal luxury markets with high-net-worth buyers and an extraordinary sense of place and lifestyle. The Hamptons have a wonderful summer culture and much more land. We talk about land in Palm Beach in terms of square feet, not acres. Palm Beach is much more concentrated, with an incredibly established year-round infrastructure of restaurants, clubs, culture and services. In addition, Palm Beach is far smaller than the Hamptons. We have only 2,200 single-family homes. Compare that to the Hamptons where, for example, the Village of Southampton has over 3,000 homes.

I tell my buyers, imagine buyers from all over the Hamptons converging on the island of Palm Beach. Think about the level of competition. That's part of the reason we have had urban sprawl and buyers looking further west, increased demand. West Palm Beach has exploded to a point where people are referring to it as "Palm Beach West" with all of the new development. Buyers who used to be able to afford Palm Beach have been priced out of the market and are purchasing on the eastern half of West Palm Beach near or overlooking the Intracoastal.

Michael Costello: The ultra luxury market is red hot. The problem is, the $100M+ homes rarely become available. As brokers, we are trying to get homeowners to sell

and in many cases, there is no amount of money they will accept to sell. I hear the same thing all the time: “Sure, that is a lot of money, but where do I go if I sell? What then?”

How much overlap is there between the buyers in these two markets? Are you seeing people who own in the Hamptons also buying in Palm Beach — or vice versa?

John Wilson: Right now, the two main corridors out of Palm Beach are people going to Aspen for the summer and people going to the Hamptons. I follow a lot of my clients on Instagram and I either see them in the Hamptons, which is the bulk of them, or in Aspen. Both markets have become very similar. People from the Hamptons are buying homes in Palm Beach and, believe it or not, people from Palm Beach are also buying homes in the Hamptons.

Dana Koch: Quite a bit. I absolutely see people who own in one market looking at the other. There is a triangle between Palm Beach, the Hamptons and New York City. For the wealthiest buyers, it isn’t necessarily a choice between Palm Beach and the Hamptons. They can be complementary. One gives you a very special summer lifestyle; the other gives you a warm winter and a place where you can live comfortably for six to nine months a year.

Michael Costello: Palm Beach and the Hamptons have shared this synergy for a long time and should continue for a long time. I think the two markets have a lot in common. I personally can’t see this ever changing.

Are Palm Beach and the Hamptons increasingly becoming complementary markets rather than competing ones? In other words, are some buyers thinking of them as two parts of the same lifestyle?

John Wilson: Yes, they are increasingly becoming complementary markets. They both attract the same people who are looking for the same lifestyle. One happens to be in Palm Beach, Florida, and the other happens to be on Long Island in the Hamptons.

Dana Koch: They have always been complementary markets based on seasonality. Who wouldn’t want to live in the Hamptons for the summer and Palm Beach in the winter? You can have the best of all worlds. We’re seeing a broader evolution in the way people think about real estate. They’re not necessarily asking, “Where do I live?” They’re asking, “Where do I want to spend my time?” Palm Beach and the Hamptons aren’t competing addresses — they’re complementary lifestyles.

Michael Costello: The two markets definitely complement each other and do it well. They have very similar lifestyles, they have completely opposite seasons, and so many of their friends and neighbors own properties in both locations.

On the East End, water is becoming an increasingly important real estate issue — from groundwater quality and septic systems to flooding, erosion and sea-level rise. What are the comparable water issues in Palm Beach and are buyers beginning to factor those issues into what they're willing to pay for waterfront property?

John Wilson: My clients on the East End remember Superstorm Sandy, which created a lot of havoc. We really don't have a lot of septic systems in Palm Beach. There may be a neighborhood or two that has them, but most buyers are simply going to want to have those systems inspected.

As far as beach erosion, that has been a common problem in Florida forever. Usually, the cities dredge and bring more sand back onto the beach. I don't think it has much of an impact on someone who is looking to buy on the water. It's just part of being on the water and dealing with some of the issues that come with it.

One thing about waterfront property in Florida, in general, is the seawall. It's one of the most expensive parts of the home. During inspections, buyers purchasing on the Intracoastal or canals will have the seawall inspected, and that could become a negotiating point.

Dana Koch: Water is obviously a very important consideration here because Palm Beach is a barrier island. Buyers are increasingly asking about flooding, storm exposure, elevation, drainage, seawalls, dockage, insurance and the physical resilience of a property, but I think it's important to distinguish between properties. Every waterfront property is different. Oceanfront and Intracoastal don't always carry identical considerations. The sophisticated buyer isn't running away from waterfront; they're becoming much more educated about it. Owning a trophy property on the water in Palm Beach is the gold standard. We only have so much of it.

Michael Costello: The Town of Palm Beach runs on city sewer, so we don't have the septic issues that challenge the Hamptons. Being a barrier island, flooding is always a concern. With the king tides and constant threat of hurricanes, more people are wanting homes with a higher elevation.

Do you think climate resilience is becoming part of the definition of a luxury property — meaning buyers are increasingly asking not just how beautiful a waterfront house is, but how well protected it is?

John Wilson: Resilience has a lot to do with it. Buyers want beautiful waterfront homes, but they also want to make sure that everything has been inspected, including the seawall and things like that. In Florida, we have hurricanes, but we haven't had a major hurricane directly hit South Florida in a long time. Hurricane Andrew was 34 years ago and caused significant property damage, particularly in areas south and west of Miami. Hurricane Wilma was in 2005, but Andrew remains the storm that people remember most.

Dana Koch: Absolutely, resiliency is becoming another component of quality. A beautiful waterfront house is one thing. A beautiful waterfront house that is well engineered, built and maintained is another. Buyers increasingly want to know: What's the elevation? How old is the roof? What are the windows? What's the insurance situation? How has the property performed in storms? Is the house structurally sound? People don't have the time and energy to deal with headaches; they want their homes to be perfect, or as close to perfect as they can get it.

Michael Costello: Every waterfront buyer wants to know what the elevation is. The higher the elevation, the safer they feel. Believe it or not, some of the highest elevations on the island are waterfront properties.

On the East End, traffic and summer congestion can affect how people think about where they want to live and how much time they're willing to spend getting there. Does traffic play a similar role in Palm Beach real estate? Are buyers considering access to the bridges, commute times and congestion when choosing a property?

John Wilson: I agree about the traffic on the East End. I'm in it during the summer. It affects the market and it doesn't. I grew up in a real estate family. I can remember when Florida was booming. It was nothing like it is now, but back then, it seemed like a lot and people still complained about the traffic. My dad would always say, "Where would you rather live: somewhere with no traffic or somewhere a lot of people want to be?"

Traffic plays a similar role in both markets. The one thing about Palm Beach Island is that if you're on the island, you can pretty much use a golf cart or walk to get around. Obviously, during peak times, when a lot of people are here, the traffic is a little

heavier. However, I wouldn't say it completely deters people from wanting a home, either waterfront or on dry land, on Palm Beach Island or even in West Palm Beach.

Dana Koch: It plays a little bit of a different role. The traffic situation is a bit more civilized. We do have the "trade parade" during rush hour in the morning and afternoon during the week, but on weekends we don't really have any traffic. Buyers do think about where they want to live (Estate Section, North End, In-town, South End), access to the three bridges and how easily they can get on and off the island.

One of Palm Beach's great advantages is that once you're here, your life is incredibly convenient. You are 10 to 15 minutes from anywhere you need to be. Depending on where you live, you can walk or bike to the beach, restaurants, shopping and clubs. We have a great sense of community.

Michael Costello: Congestion and traffic have certainly been a major concern over the past couple of years. Although our traffic is much better than the East End, we are battling our own version of the "trade parade." Landscapers and trades are only allowed to work during a short time frame, so they are all coming on and off the island at the same time. When you pair this with drawbridges and major construction in West Palm Beach, traffic in season can be challenging.

What can East End real estate professionals learn from Palm Beach right now — and is there anything Palm Beach could learn from what's happening in the Hamptons?

John Wilson: I'm not trying to be coy, but the East End and Palm Beach are very similar markets. The only thing I would say is that there is an appetite to live in both places and wealthy people have no problem satisfying that appetite by spending a lot of money on amazing properties.

Dana Koch: Palm Beach is a good reminder that relationships and local knowledge become even more valuable as the market gets more sophisticated. At the highest level, a broker needs to know the properties, the nuances of the different neighborhoods and streets, the history and the people — not just what's on the MLS. You need to know who lives where, the history of the island and insight into what's going on currently in the town. We moved to Palm Beach in 1978, so I have seen it all! There is no substitute for decades of local real estate experience.

Palm Beach can certainly learn from the Hamptons' emphasis on outdoor living, design and the broader lifestyle surrounding the property. Both markets understand

something important: You're selling a lifestyle and community. The pipeline between the two markets is incredible.

Michael Costello: I think Palm Beach and East End brokers are some of the best in the country. We both share many of the same strengths and traits. I think many of the top agents in both markets share information all the time. I would say that every good broker in both markets should have a counterpart in the other market that they can share ideas and collaborate with them.

Looking ahead 12 to 24 months, what is the biggest opportunity and the biggest threat facing the Palm Beach real estate market? And how do you think the East End market will compare?

John Wilson: Well, 12 to 24 months seems a little far out into the future. I would say the biggest opportunity is really the same in both markets. It's the opportunity to live in a very unique place that is also very safe. As far as threats facing the Palm Beach real estate market, I can't think of a specific threat facing either market. The only thing I would say is that as demand continues, prices will continue to go higher. As long as people want to be in these two markets and are in a financial position to be there, they will be there.

Dana Koch: The biggest opportunity is the continued demand for a place like Palm Beach. The supply of truly irreplaceable properties is finite and that's not changing. Scarcity of supply will be a challenge for us in our market. The biggest threat is sellers becoming unrealistic about value. The market will reward exceptional properties, but it won't reward simply putting an extraordinary number on an ordinary property. You have to be able to justify an asking price. The market isn't going to reward everything. It's going to reward what's genuinely irreplaceable.

Michael Costello: Both markets are incredibly similar. We share the same type of residents — people who enjoy beauty, quality, outdoors, shopping, golf, tennis, boating, et cetera. I think the high-end real estate market will continue to thrive and accelerate. Both markets have a finite amount of land. Most of the East End is built out and all of Palm Beach is built out. If you want something new, you have to buy something on spec, or buy an existing home and raze it and build from scratch. This scenario continues to be some of the best opportunities, in my opinion.