



NEW **SHOU SUGI BAN HOUSE**
LONG ISLAND, USA

JAPANESE-INSPIRED HAMPTONS ARRIVAL FOR JADED CITY FOLK

The philosophy at the Hamptons' first proper retreat is thrillingly simple. 'We have no interest in counting out your six almonds a day, before timing you on a 10-mile hike,' says owner Amy Cherry-Abitbol, a former Tokyo-based corporate lawyer who dramatically changed her career path five years ago. 'Our metrics are not scientific.' Instead, she and her team of Olympic-level fitness instructors, yoga coaches trained in Thailand and India and design-savvy creative directors focus on what Cherry-Abitbol calls intuitive wellness. The belief is that engagement with other guests, exercise, healing treatments and access to the outdoors can work wonders. That is not to say there isn't a structure. The property, a cedarwood-clad beauty two hours outside New York City in the village of Water Mill, runs three-day programmes that may start at dawn with tea and breathing ceremonies before easing into yoga, followed by a beach hike on empty dunes, a reiki session or muscle-burning circuit training. Cherry-Abitbol is careful, however, never to make the day-to-day too rigid, which she sees as an issue plaguing the bigger spas in the USA. The communal nature of the

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place helps Shou Sugi's approach feel more social than technical. There are 13 cabins on the three-acre grounds, each a soothing studio of blond-wood beds, white linens, fireplaces and a deep *hinoki ofuro* bathtub, with views out to the sleek saltwater lap pool. At mealtimes everyone sits together in front of the open-plan kitchen to feast on dishes dreamt up by Noma co-founder Mads Refslund. His locavore philosophy here could mean roasted Long Island duck and Brussels sprouts, fried eggs over bitter greens grown on site and aubergine glazed with miso. There's no alcohol but dinners stretch on as guests share restaurant tips for Lower Manhattan while scooping one more portion of cucumber salad onto their wabi-sabi ceramic plates. Afterwards a hypnotic sound bath is held in the meditation hall where the symphony reverberates through the floorboards and the body, resettling muscles and regulating blood flow. It tees you up for one of the deepest sleeps you've had in years. This is not a medical-style clinic where you're stripped down and built back up. Rather, it's a place that focuses on the basics of self-care, prioritising long walks in fresh air, eating extremely well and perhaps fitting in a stint on the custom-made vibro-acoustic table to resolve everything from chronic back pain to inflammation. This may all seem straightforward, basic even. But the most rewarding part of Shou Sugi is how it makes people realise just how easily they have let these basics slip.

INSIDER TIP Request a session at the hydrotherapy circuit before treatments to have plenty of time to warm up in the three plunge pools, steam room and thermal suite with infrared sauna.

BOOK IT Doubles from about £1,180 per night (minimum two nights), full board, including the complete wellness programme (shousugibanhouse.com).

