

# Lihome

## BYE-BYE, HAMPTONS

FASHION DESIGNER BETSEY JOHNSON IS SELLING HER COUNTRY COTTAGE

E10

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# Betsey XOX the Hamptons goodbye

Your LI Home



**FLOWERS AND FLOW** Johnson gutted the 1986 house after she bought it 15 years ago and made the kitchen more open to the dining and living spaces.



**LIGHT AND BRIGHT** Johnson had the dark ceiling beams painted white.

The designer is ready to leave her country cottage behind

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**B**ETSEY JOHNSON, the over-the-top women's fashion designer, has put her East Hampton home on the market for nearly \$2 million — a place she has loved but once thought she'd never buy in a million years.

The two-story, four-bedroom house, listed with Sotheby's International Realty for \$1,995,000, reflects nothing of the icon's bold, playful and punk rock style. It's more quaint English country cottage, with walls painted in pastels or covered in floral fabric and wallpaper — a look Johnson says her now-40-year-old daughter, Lulu, wanted after Lulu fell in love with the Hamptons while visiting the East End as a teenager.

"Lulu wanted it simple, and I agreed," Johnson says of the decor at her 2,900-square-foot home. Johnson, who says she is downsizing, will continue to live in her Manhattan apartment but will spend more time in California's Malibu, where Lulu and Johnson's two grandchildren live.

The home, built in 1986 on 1.65 acres, features 3½ baths, stainless steel appliances in the kitchen, a finished basement, a detached two-car garage, electronic entry gates, a heated gunite pool surrounded by a stone terrace and a marble living room fireplace.

#### In the Hamptons with Warhol

"I came out to the Hamptons with Andy Warhol in the '60s with The Velvet Underground," the 73-year-old Johnson recalls of her trip with the artist and the glam rock band. Her career as an avant-garde designer who created looks such as see-through plastic shifts and metal micro minis skyrocketed during that decade's London-based "Youthquake" movement. It was marked by teenagers dominating the music and fashion scene.

"Except for Andy, we were



#### EAST HAMPTON | ASKING \$1,995 MILLION

**THE BASICS** Four bedrooms, three full bathrooms, one half-bathroom  
**SQUARE FOOTAGE** About 2,900  
**PROPERTY SIZE** About 1.65 acres

**PROPERTY TAXES** \$14,177  
**LISTING AGENTS** Marilyn Clark (516-695-6590) and Lawrence Ingolia (516-607-8800), Sotheby's International Realty

like outcasts," says Johnson, showing off the house dressed in silver sequined harem pants, a black tank top and necklaces festooned with large metal hearts and colorful pompoms, her hair with platinum, yellow and black stripes. "Everyone here was very rich, and we had just come out here for some sort of happening somewhere."

She says they stayed for a weekend and hated it. "So I never ever considered living here," Johnson says.

That began to change when Lulu got her mother to rent a summer house nearby. "By the end of the summer, I was like, 'Yeah, I could live here,'" Johnson says.

Johnson decided to purchase this home 15 years ago as a weekend and summer place.

"It was so adorable," Johnson says. "It became a wonderful decorating endeavor."

The endeavor lasted 10 years.

until a mishap led to paint and another floral wallpaper replacing the original florals upstairs.

"Before it was discontinued, the last I checked the fabric was \$250 a yard," Johnson says, noting that 27 different colors were used to make the print. "There was a miscommunication after it was put on the walls upstairs and the contractors ripped it all out."

There are other very special Johnson touches. The front door with glass panels and a knocker in the shape of a fist was taken from another home she owned.

"It came from my first little funky house in upstate New York," Johnson says.

#### Reality show filmed here

And the door leading to the basement has scribbles marking Johnson's 5-foot-2-inch height, and those of family members and the crew from Johnson's Style Network reality show, "XOX Betsey Johnson," which aired in 2013 and was filmed at the house.

But other than opening her doors for the television show, Johnson says she enjoyed having the house, nestled in the woods, as a place where she could be reclusive.

"I would go out and do things in the Hamptons, but I didn't really have anything here," Johnson says. The one exception was a bash for her 60th birthday.

"I had an all-day fashion show and had three buses filled with people here," Johnson says. "The show was called, 'My Blue Heaven,' and there were models inside the house and outside the house by the pool. It was like a Versace extravaganza."

Lawrence Ingolia, a broker with Sotheby's International Realty, says the house is truly special because Johnson lived there, but he said it can be a special place for anyone.

"Hopefully the person who buys it will be someone who falls in love with the wallpaper first," Johnson says. "I'd hate to see it go."



**BETSEY'S SCRIBBLES** The door leading to the basement is marked with the heights of friends, family and the crew of "XOX Betsey Johnson."

RANDEE DADDONA