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	<p>December 13, 2012</p>		

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POST TRAVEL

Bernadette Castro Loves Lloyd Harbor

Posted: 12/12/2012 7:00 am



Bernadette Castro, CEO of [Castro Convertibles](#), has been at the center of her family's furniture company since she was a child and [starred in the brand's iconic television commercials](#). Bernadette went on to serve as Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for New York from 1995 to 2006. She and her family have called Lloyd Harbor, New York home for more almost 45 years.

Dear Lloyd Harbor,

Here you are, serene and tranquil, tucked into the lively Town of Huntington. I still remember that day almost 45 years ago, when I propped up my first born child on the bottom step of the huge main staircase of Albert G. Milbank's Lloyd Harbor estate. My parents, Bernard and Theresa Castro, founders of Castro Convertibles, had joined me for a car ride in the country. We were supposed to be looking for a lovely little home for me, my husband and my little chubby-cheeked 9-month-old daughter. That took a historic turn when my father spotted "Panfield" in the real estate broker's file. "What's that?" Dad asked. Within minutes, the little house idea for a family of three was over. Instead, Dad bought this grand manor house without ever even seeing the second floor.

We all moved into a family compound. Three generations under one roof, European style. If there had been reality TV in those days we would have been perfect.

It was the elegant yet quaint character of Lloyd Harbor that explained Mr. Milbank's and my father's instant affinity for the land, the harbor, the village and the town. But for me it was never about the beautiful physical characteristics of the Harbor itself, complete with a wonderful Lighthouse in clear view, or the huge Caumsett State Park on Lloyd Neck. It was about the memories made in this quiet village.

It's where I retreat to find peace and to reflect and think.

When I was State Parks Commissioner I was fascinated with the life of Hudson Valley painter Fredrick Church and how he retreated to Olana, his home away from the madness of Manhattan. He removed himself from the world outside. Sometimes, I think that's what I do. Email makes it hard to retreat from today's world, but when I start to wind down the narrow village roads leading home, I turn off the radio, put down my car windows and listen to the birds.

Looking at Lloyd Harbor and Huntington, more times than not, is like looking at a Norman Rockwell painting. Small town parades, bicycles, lemonade stands, lost puppy posters tacked on to telephone poles, the tag sales, soccer games; these things are all happily connected to the visions of my four children growing into young adults.

I also love Lloyd Harbor because I feel that it loves me back. I'm not sure I would be doing everything I'm doing to hang on to this big ol' house, with all of the issues a 100-year-old structure has, if I didn't feel so darn happy here. There is no rational reason to live in a house this large after the nest empties. I live here because I'm living among special treasures, from breathtaking landscapes to classic architecture and old world craftsmanship.

I've stopped thinking I will be here forever. But while I am here, I will cherish every moment, every day, every season, every Christmas Eve dinner, every summer barbeque, every wave to a neighbor.

Love,
Bernadette

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