

## American Beauty

Cruising the waters surrounding Sag Harbor and nearby areas is a lovely afternoon activity, and boat operator Don Heckman offers just that with his tour boat business, American Beauty. Heckman came to the East End in 1977 to attend Southampton College. He started his life on the sea as a commercial fisherman but in 1988, a brain tumor and subsequent surgery to remove

it left him too weak to continue the profession. During his recovery, he studied for his captain's license and with a friend came up with the idea of offering tours around Sag Harbor's waterfront. American Beauty was born in 1992.

Heckman and a crewmember take passengers out of the harbor up to the Cedar Point Lighthouse and over to Shelter Island. He circles the Mashomack Nature Preserve and returns to the Long Wharf, where his boat is based in the summer.

The ride comes complete with a 30-minute recording on the history of the area, which was written by Heckman and gleaned from local historians and library records. These 90-minute cruises leave at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. everyday. Heckman also offers two-hour sunset cruises each night and private charters. There is a bathroom on board but patrons are advised to bring their own food and drink.

Heckman has a new boat this year, a 44-foot powerboat, aptly named American Beauty II. It was previously used as a party fishing boat and can take up to 39 people onboard.

Heckman has a table and umbrella set up at the Long Wharf and patrons can usually just walk on. For sunset cruises, they are encouraged to call in advance. For more information, call 725-0397.