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LIKE other property-hungry renters in New York City, Janet Hicks recently decided to take advantage of the weak real estate market and buy her first home. But instead of getting an apartment in the city, she chose to become a first-time buyer in a second-home market. While keeping the one-bedroom rental she shares with her boyfriend in Park Slope, she moved last month into a historic house in Kingston, a quiet city on the west bank of the Hudson River with a growing weekender population. “You just get so much more for your money up here,” she said.

Real estate agents throughout the Hudson Valley and in other second-home markets say that sales have picked up recently, as New York City renters came shopping for homes. Many of these renters are convinced that now is the time to buy, because prices and interest rates are down. If anything, people who are second-home shopping suspect that those markets are close to hitting bottom.

Because New York City’s rental market is weak, with some landlords offering a month of free rent and paying broker fees for new tenants, most established renters are not worrying about an astronomical rent increase. Thus, some feel emboldened to buy outside Manhattan.

Ms. Hicks said she and her boyfriend, Edmund Mullins, are very happy in the one-bedroom that they share in Park Slope for less than \$2,000 a month. She said that before she started her search, she looked at apartments in the city, but all she could afford was a studio. Open houses at apartments as big as her one-bedroom rental “were strictly fantasy,” she said, so “buying something outside of Manhattan seemed like a good solution.”

Robert Kaskel is living a variation on this theme in Rockaway Park, Queens. Mr. Kaskel started looking for a weekend house upstate last summer, even though his wife, Metta, thought they should buy in the city before buying a country home.

At the time, they rented the parlor floor of a brownstone on the Upper West Side for \$3,700 a month. To be able to keep the apartment and still buy a weekend house, Mr. Kaskel set a price limit of \$150,000, but he could not find anything within two hours of the city.

Then last winter he heard about **Belle Shores, a new development in Rockaway Park, Queens.** They bought a duplex condo there in March and gave up their rental. “I didn’t even know that New York City had any oceanfront property,” Mr. Kaskel said. “This turned out to be a win-win for both of us, because I’ve been in the ocean every week since we moved in, and we can both still commute to work.”

Ms. Kaskel works as a bartender at a restaurant in Lower Manhattan and Mr. Kaskel runs an information services company in Midtown. When their subway connections work right, it takes them about an hour and 10 minutes to get to their jobs.



Photo: Robert Kaskel, wife Metta, and the couple's Couple's sons, Saravut, 17, Matthew, 12, and Ethan, 14. By Ruby Washington/The New York Times

Photos: Belle Shores Condominium. By Ruby Washington/The New York Times

