

GOING out

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TRUE GRIT: BEING 'SINGLE' IN THE HAMPTONS

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neal travis

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FOR a real take on the Hamptons singles scene, check out WE: Women's Entertainment's network's five-part documentary, "Single in the Hamptons."

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Sexier than Barbara Kopple's snoozy ABC documentary, "Single" captures the many facets of Hamptons dating and mating life, from a fancy dinner party to wild dancing and (of course) a debauchorous pool party.

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First aired in London last year, "Single" chronicles the 2000 summer of Southampton nightclub owner Andrew Sasson, society shutterbug Patrick McMullan, socialite Marjorie Gubelman, actor Daniel Reton, journalist Susan Redstone and playboy Ivan Wilzig - all of whom would be interesting to watch even if they were summering in St. Louis.

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You'll attend dinner parties with such Hamptons fixtures as designer Vera Wang and socialite Anne Hearst.

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You'll meet lively characters and see the Hamptons through their eyes - and learn, perhaps, more than you want to know about their sex lives and social ambitions.

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You'll even get to peek inside banker Ivan Wilzig's castle - complete with roof turrets, a disco and a butler - where his guests sport bunny ears and tails, and really get going around 3 a.m.

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"They compare me to Hugh Hefner," says Wilzig. "He has a mansion and I have a castle."

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Not that "Single in the Hamptons" - continuing this Sunday at 10 p.m. and for two more one-hour segments on the following Sunday nights - is any tamer than Kopple's documentary.

It's down and dirty - but very, very entertaining.

"If you're going to do it, go for the grit, go for the salacious stuff," says 27-year-old screenwriter Gavin Wiesen, who's a fan of "Single."

"I think Barbara Kopple was going for something with integrity and she fell short. With all due respect to her, this show is more fun."

And there's even a hearty dose of old-money Hamptons decadence.

In "Single," Gubelman - who beats the traffic in her private seaplane - prepares for a dinner party at her Southampton home by buying a \$2,500 white dress and borrowing from Bulgari a \$450,000 sapphire necklace that appeared in "Mission Impossible."

"We like flashy," she says.

Not content just to point the camera at its specimens, the British documentary team got intimate with a few subjects - we're inside Gubelman's bedroom when she gets her hair and make-up done.

Prominently featured in both documentaries is McMullan, who says the Brits did a better job than Kopple.

"It was a little more in depth. It wasn't just somebody's point of view," he says.

"The characters were more developed and it unfolded. You really got to know who I was."

Neither documentary has turned McMullan off the East End.

This summer, he'll weekend there without a camera crew for the first time in two years.

"I love the Hamptons," he says. "There are ugly parts and beautiful parts. Fun and weird parts."