

Living on the grounds of the Westchester Country Club



Bill Cary, wcary@lohud.com 5:11 p.m. EDT June 7, 2015

Well beyond the steady value of their homes, people who live on the grounds of Westchester Country Club rave about the neighborliness, walkability and the strong sense of community among homeowners.



(Photo: Seth Harrison/The Journal News)

Not only will attendees at this week's KPMG Women's PGA Championship get a shot at seeing the absolute best golfers in the game, they'll get a glimpse of some pretty swell real estate as they follow their favorite players around the famed West Course of Westchester Country Club.

The 125 or so private homes on the gracious, bucolic grounds of the 583-acre Harrison club "majestic stone Tudors, sprawling Mediterraneans, classic 1920s center-hall Colonials" are among the finest you're likely to see in a single neighborhood anywhere in the county. And they have pretty consistently held their value through the vagaries of the local real estate market.

"Sales have remained consistent this past year and there are currently six homes on the market ranging in price from \$2,550,000 to \$3,995,000," says Coldwell Banker agent Ken Boucher, who grew up on the club grounds and now lives there, in a different house, with his wife, Liz, also a Coldwell Banker agent. "The very prestigious homes on the grounds can sell for over \$5 million."

Well beyond the steady value of their homes, people who live on the grounds, especially families with school-age children, rave about the neighborliness, walkable access to all parts of the club, and the strong, friendly sense of community among the homeowners.

"In actuality, the value of my real estate is my neighbors the rest of it is shelter," says Connie Deutmeyer, who has lived on the grounds since 2000 with her husband, Dennis, and their three boys, now teenagers. "I think having the ability to raise your family in a community like this is incredible."

Her neighbor, Katy Pagnani, who lives in a lovely home across from the driving range with her husband, Keith, and their four children, agrees.

"The whole concept of, 'It takes a village' really comes to life here at Westchester Country Club," Pagnani says. "If your child is sick or you've had a death in the family, they're right at your door to help."

"All of our kids have grown up here, playing golf and tennis, using the indoor pool in winter," Pagnani says. "They've all been on the swim team."

Yes, the Pagnanis find an occasional golf ball in their lawn. "Maybe if it was me playing," Katy says with a laugh. "You have to be a pretty bad shot."

Any problems with traffic or errant shots are "outweighed by the excitement of seeing the tournaments," she says. "We've looked out and seen Tiger Woods on the driving range. Tiger Woods, Fred Couples, Ernie Els our kids have met them all."

"My husband, Keith, grew up here," Pagnani adds. "This is where he wanted to live. This is really home for him."

Most of the homes on the grounds are owned by members of the country club. "I would say that 60 percent or more are members of Westchester," says club historian Sheilah Enos, who has lived on the grounds with her husband, Tim, for 41 years.

"What I like about it is the fact that I can walk out late at night and feel very safe here," Enos says. "The club does provide security and we're always being patrolled here."

Homeowners retain full ownership of their properties. The club takes care of the private roads and stylish streetlamps, and the town of Harrison provides police and fire protection. All of the homes are part of the Harrison school district, with a Rye postal address, yet many homeowners send their children to private schools in Rye.

The sense of "it being quiet but not remote" on the club grounds appeals to many buyers, says Julia B. Fee agent Fran Buckley, who has a \$2.55 million listing at 70 Park Drive North overlooking the driving range. "You have these beautiful vistas, the manicured lawns it's all very aesthetically pleasing."

"From a marketing standpoint, we always put it in there because it translates for the buyer the tranquility, the beauty," she adds.

"The houses there maintain their value," Buckley says. "They stand the test of good competition and very often they will sell before another house at a

similar price point."

Houses that back up to the country club's greens and fairways have a particular cachet and usually command a higher price than ones on the grounds but not abutting the course.

Nick Wolff, an agent with Better Homes & Garden Rand Realty, has such a listing at 535 Polly Park Road, with a backyard that almost merges into the course. It's listed for \$3.295 million. "You can see all the way to the clubhouse," Wolff says.

The house "has a tee near the property and they landscaped with bushes, so that if a ball is hit their way, it gets caught in the bushes, not in the pool."

"A few balls here and there are insignificant when compared to the openness and privacy you get," Wolff says.

This year, as in past major tournaments, the Deutmeyers are hosting two of the players in their home for a week.

"I think that hosting these young golfers sends an important message to the LPGA that we support these aspiring golfers and want to help them try to minimize their costs," Deutmeyer says. "Sort of paying it forward. It sends a good message to our boys, too."

The dining facilities are great and the club is very family friendly, Pagnani says, mentioning a corny, old-fashioned pet parade on the grounds a couple of weeks ago. There is also a popular Halloween Parade on closed-down streets.

"I can't say enough about the club," she says. "It's like living in a resort â€" I just love it."

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