

Real Estate

C1 | Westport News | Friday, October 14, 2016



The converted chestnut wood barn at 279 North Ave. was originally built in Weston in 1832. It was modernized and expanded on its current site on the Aspetuck River by renowned local architect Michael Greenberg in 2000. Contributed photos

Converted barn an architectural masterpiece

By Meg Barone

WESTPORT — Rustic was never so elegant as in the converted and expanded barn at 279 North Avenue.

This 13-acre estate, one of the largest in Westport, was the home of late billionaire Edgar Bronfman Sr., who was chairman of liquor industry giant The Seagram Company Ltd. and president of the World Jewish Congress. In 1999, Bronfman was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, by President Bill Clinton.

Bronfman's estate is a private enclave in the Coleytown section of town adjacent to the Aspetuck River with 750 feet of river frontage. The property has a wealth of luxury features inside and out, including a Har-Tru tennis court, Gunite in-ground swimming pool and spa, pool house, guest house — which is currently used as an art studio, and terraced granite patios.

The immaculately groomed grounds resemble a botanical park and are dotted with lush lawns, specimen plantings, an orchard with four varieties of apple tree, and attractive perennial gardens, and the property has a sophisticated outdoor lighting system. Virtually every room on the

ABOUT THIS HOUSE

STYLE: Converted barn, farm house

ADDRESS: 279 North Avenue

PRICE: \$7,995,000

ROOMS: 18

FEATURES: 13-acre level and gently sloping estate, generator, fully fenced property, guest house/artist studio with full bath, Har-Tru tennis court, Gunite in-ground swimming pool and spa, pool house, terraced granite patios, stone sitting walls, deck, water frontage on the Aspetuck River, walking distance to the 59-acre Newman-Popes Nature Preserve, two wine cellars, gym, seven fireplaces, deer fencing, front and rear staircases, circular driveway, outdoor lighting system, three-car garage, six bedrooms, eight full and three half baths

SCHOOLS: Coleytown Elementary, Coleytown Middle, Staples High

ASSESSMENT: \$4,645,300

MILL RATE: 18.09 mills

TAXES: \$78,320

The main level of the house provides access to the outdoors. Even the guest house has an outdoor meditation garden.

The main house was *See Barn on C2*



Above, throughout the house there are exposed beams, wide-plank chestnut flooring, and many of the rooms have fireplaces, including the family room. Left, the gourmet kitchen has a red brick and stone fireplace, large center island, granite counters, an eat-in area, and a six-burner GE Monogram range.

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BARN

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originally built in 1832 as a chestnut barn that was relocated from the neighboring town of Weston to its present location, where in 2000 it was modernized and expanded to create an architectural masterpiece.

The work was done by renowned local architect Michael Greenberg. It contains 9,353 square feet of living space on the main living levels plus another 2,129 square feet on the finished lower level — which houses two climate-controlled wine cellars, a wet bar, game room and gym, for a total of 11,482 square feet.

The wine cellars can hold about 5,000 bottles and both have slate floors. The wet bar has cabinetry with glass-front doors and counter space.

To access this compound drive down the long, tree-lined driveway to the house, where the circular driveway opens to a forecourt of honed granite.

Inside, there are exposed beams in most rooms, wide-planked chestnut flooring, and seven fireplaces, including a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace in the 2 ½ story living room, stone fireplaces in the dining and family rooms, and a red brick and stone fireplace in the spacious gourmet kitchen.

The living and dining rooms have built-in shelving, as does the library in the same wing as the first floor master suite.

The library has a bay/



The rear of the property features honed granite terraces and a pool.

Contributed photos

bow window, walls of built-in shelving, coffered ceiling, and two separate doors to a private patio.

The master and one of the bedrooms on the second floor have fireplaces, and while the rest of the house retains its rustic charm the master suite is elegantly rustic. It has a vaulted ceiling of bleached wood and suede walls.

There are his and hers walk-in closets and his and hers master baths with honed limestone tile floors, a dressing room

and French doors to the side yard.

In the kitchen features include a large center island, granite counters, an eat-in area, walk-in pantry, and a six-burner GE Monogram range.

On the second floor there are four bedrooms, all with walk-in closets.

For more information or to make an appointment to see the house contact Todd Gibbons of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty at 203-858-8525 or tgibbons@wpsir.com.



The living room features a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace, one of seven in the rustic house, which was constructed from a vintage chestnut barn.