



Best of the Best

This year's-end collection highlights seven striking homes on the market in some of the most sought-after communities in Westchester and western Connecticut.

Greenwich, which tops many homebuyers' wish list of most desirable communities, has several compelling options during this winter's buyer's market. At the recently reduced price of \$11,495,000, 125 Pecksland Road is a majestic midcountry stone-brick-and-slate estate with seven bedrooms and nine bathrooms that artfully blends the old and new in a style many buyers covet. The four-acre, 14,532-square-foot home features a newly expanded 60-foot-long pool, all-weather tennis court, pond with a footbridge, and three separate parking areas, including one below the main building with enough space for a dozen vehicles. One of the two separate gated entrances to the property leads to a completely renovated

stone cottage with a double-height living room area, small kitchen, bathroom and a loft bedroom upstairs, ideal for in-laws, staff or guests.

The home was built by a New York City developer for himself, with a limestone gothic double-door entrance, copious amounts of white oak paneling, and a dramatic two-story entrance hall with a regal staircase suitable for a European castle. "This is a grand English manor, and very romantic in an Old World way — although in reality it is a luxurious modern home built in 2001," said Mary Ann Heaven, sales agent with Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "It is on a four-acre lot in an area zoned for two acres, and has a very commanding presence after its long, winding driveway."



In central Weston, a 10,290-square-foot custom-built, five-bedroom home, built in 2008 and set on 22 subdividable acres at 123 Kettle Creek Road, is listing for \$7,595,000. Designed by Dinyar Wadia, an architect known for his estate designs in Fairfield County, the Hamptons and Europe, the property has a 55-foot pool and spa; a three-story, 3,600-square-foot post-and-beam party barn; and a three-bedroom cottage suitable for in-laws or a caretaker. Both geothermal energy and solar panels power much of the property, which includes a 495-square-foot banquet-sized dining room that seats 20.

"I call it 'Queen Anne meets Victorian shingle colonial,'" said David Weber, sales agent with KMS Partners at Coldwell Banker. "The current owners have done a good deal of fund-raising events in the party barn — and they have created a resort feel for relaxing and for big parties and gatherings. With a regulation Har-Tru bocce court, there is still plenty of room for tennis or stables or even a helicopter-landing pad. There is even a campsite with a stone fire-place that the boy scouts use for campouts."

New Canaan is renowned for its concentration of some 125 midcentury modern homes. One of the most unique is the John Black Lee House, at 160 Mill Road, built by Lee himself, who served as an apprentice to Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius in Chicago. The home is one of several in New Canaan that the late architect designed, this one carved into a hill and cantilevered over the Silvermine River. Built in 1990, it is technically not a midcentury modern, but Lee, an award-winning architect recognized by the American Institute of Architects, used that style to build the home for himself out of concrete, glass, wood, tile and Plexiglas.



OPPOSITE PAGE: The majestic estate at 125 Pecksland Road in Greenwich, Conn., features a newly expanded 60-foot-long pool. Photo: Douglas Elliman

TOP: The five-bedroom home at 123 Kettle Creek Road in Weston, Conn., is set on 22 subdividable acres. Photo: Granite Studios

ABOVE: The John Black Lee House, at 160 Mill Road in New Canaan, Conn., was built in 1990 in a midcentury modern style. Photo: William Pitt and Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty



ABOVE LEFT: The five-bedroom home at 654 Guard Hill Road in Bedford, N.Y., once served as a guesthouse on the property of famous Wall Street financier Bernard E. “Sell'em Ben” Smith.

ABOVE RIGHT: The European-style stucco chateau at 17 Spy Rock Road in Pound Ridge, N.Y., is within walking distance of the 4,315-acre Ward Pound Ridge Reservation. Photo: DK Solutions | REtoolz

OPPOSITE: The vintage Victorian at 65 Beach Avenue in Larchmont, N.Y., was gut renovated to the studs and expanded more than a decade ago. Photo: Houlihan Lawrence

BELOW: Built in 1900, the renovated colonial at 6 South Manursing Island Drive in Rye, N.Y., abuts the Edith Read Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo: William Pitt and Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty



The two-bedroom, two-bathroom home, built on 2.54 acres, is on the market for the reduced price of \$999,000. “Midcentury is in vogue these days, and New Canaan has quite a few,” said Inger Stringfellow, sales agent with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty. “Virtually all you see from the street is a Plexiglas A frame, and Lee himself said that this is the only house in New Canaan that you actually enter through the skylight. Then when you go downstairs, you see the river open up before you, flowing under the balcony. It is still in a raw state, and needs work — and there is an antique barn at the end of the property that might be of use, as well. He built it for himself; very experimental and very innovative.”

In Westchester, 654 Guard Hill Road in Bedford is a five-bedroom, 6,900-square-foot home that once served as a guesthouse on the sprawling property of Wall Street financier Bernard E. “Sell'em Ben” Smith. Built in 1928, it is set on 1.9 acres on a dirt road used by Bedford Riding Lanes Association, and is near the Bedford Golf and Tennis Club. The home boasts four fireplaces, wainscoting, custom moldings and wide-board floors, but its main highlight may be its kitchen fireplace, which is tall enough to walk into. The home has been updated with central air conditioning, a Sonos sound system, a master bedroom with a beamed ceiling and skylight, gated gravel driveway and a flat backyard with a gunite pool.

The property is listing for \$4,950,000. “It is not too big, which is a good thing for many buyers these days,” said Muffin Dowdle, sales agent with Ginnel Real Estate. “The scale is lovely, you can walk to Bedford Village, and the walk-in fireplace makes the kitchen the best room in the house.”





A historic center-hall colonial at 6 South Manursing Island Drive in Rye is one of six private homes behind the gate to South Manursing Island along the Long Island Sound. Built in 1900, the stately home abuts the Edith Read Wildlife Sanctuary, which has been kept as an open preserve for town residents. The six-bedroom, 6,135-square-foot home was completely renovated in 2013/2014 with all new mechanicals, a new slate roof and windows, new insulation and two full-house generators. Every bathroom was redone in white stone, with a La Cornue stove and quartzite countertops added in the kitchen. The home is on the market for \$6,750,000. "You can feel the history here — this is where the first settlers came to Westchester — and the current owners respected that history with their renovations, which were extensive," said Christy Murphy, associate broker with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty. "It still looks like a southern plantation house from the front, with six two-story white columns, all of which were replaced in the renovation. We call it the best new historic house we have ever seen."

Larchmont Manor is a seaside community known for its easy walkability to schools, shops, train, parks and the beach. 65 Beach Avenue in Larchmont is a vintage Victorian built around 1900 that was gut renovated to the studs and expanded more than a decade ago. The renovation created a kitchen/family/great room leading to the screened-in porch and rear deck — a modern layout that does not exist in most vintage homes in Larchmont Manor. The renovation also brought radiant heat and 10 zones of heating and cooling.

The home is on the market for \$5,650,000. "The



lower level adds another 1,800 square feet of walk-out space — with a recreation room, a gym with its own private bathroom, plus a double-entry wine cellar and tasting room with enough space to host 10 guests — so while the home lists at 8,000 square feet, it lives much bigger," said Pollena Forsman, associate broker with Houlihan Lawrence. "It is a blend of old and new, with character and detail from the late 1800s, including part of the original staircase, balusters and hardwood, as well as some original stained-glass windows and some of the original fireplace mantels, tiling and French doors still intact. Details like Venetian plaster, a large butler's pantry and a dining room that seats 30, with beautiful recessed lighting and great fixtures, were all very well done."

A European-style stucco chateau, on a cul-de-sac at 17 Spy Rock Road in Pound Ridge, has a deep two-story foyer flanked with two sets of stairs, four fireplaces, saltwater pool with a pool house complete with kitchen and an entertainment center, and a fully furnished guesthouse — all within walking distance of the 4,315-acre Ward Pound Ridge Reservation.

"The owners always liked the area, and they could have knocked the house down and rebuilt it for the amount of money they spent on redoing the inside and outside," said Chris Sigg, sales agent and head of the Sigg Team with William Raveis Real Estate. "They took a lot of care with the renovation, and it really shows in the interior architectural details, which took a full year. Then they added real stucco to the exterior. They made it their responsibility to see through every detail to build the house they wanted to live in for a long time — but now it is time to move on." ■