

Real Estate

ON THE MARKET

Elegant estate reminiscent of days gone by

By Meg Barone

DARIEN — The end of the Great Depression in the late 1930s saw the rise of a mini gilded age of industrialism in Connecticut. It did not produce the cavernous and elegant mansions of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan as in the first Gilded Age, but it did see construction of many spectacular homes for Fairfield County's captains of industry.

Two of those houses are found side-by-side on Dorchester Road in the northern part of Darien. One of them was once owned by the Singer family, of sewing machine fame, according to the co-listing agents. The other one, at 52 Dorchester Road, is on the market. The Yardley Soap family commissioned the house to be built in 1938, the agents said.

The white-washed red brick colonial house with gray shutters is reminiscent of two bygone eras. It combines the elegance of the 1930s and the sophistication of the "Mad Men" era, as well as the casual indoor-outdoor living of modern times.

The agents said the house is aggressively priced for sale in "as is" condition.

While the kitchen and some other spaces could use updating, this house is poised to be brought back to its former glory, and it already has quite a head start. It has generously sized rooms, high ceilings, fumed oak wood paneling, arched doors, newly refinished floors and a freshly painted interior throughout much of the 6,220-square-foot, 11-room house.

This property is a rare find, and the home is "perfect for discerning buyers who appreciate period details and the opportunity to design their own masterpiece," the agents said. It is set on 4.5 private acres with an in-ground swimming pool and a cabana that almost seems frozen in time from the '50s. At its center is an octagonal covered area



Contributed photo

The white-washed red brick colonial house at 52 Dorchester Road was built in 1938, commissioned by the Yardley Soap family.

and two wings, each containing its own changing room, half bath and kitchenette. One kitchen has a range, stainless sink, counters and cabinetry, and is focused on cooking and food preparation. The other side has a mini refrigerator, stainless sink, counters and cabinetry.

There is a grand entrance onto the property and a grand entrance into the home itself. A very long driveway lined in Belgium block leads to a large forecourt bordered by tall manicured hedges. The driveway also leads to another large parking area behind a red brick wall. To one side is the house with an attached two-car garage, and to the other side is a detached four-car garage, which is so

large inside that it has room for at least one more car and a workshop. This area of the property also has a red brick potting shed.

The front door opens into the sizable foyer, which features a graceful elliptical staircase, large scale black and off-white patterned flooring, and a reception room and a powder room. The flooring comprises wood tile made to look like stone, which is also found in the formal dining room and the long gallery.

The reception room and several others still have their original call buttons to summon staff. The gallery leads to the formal living room at one end and the formal dining room at the other. Between the two, and just off the foyer, is the pan-

eled library containing a fireplace with a decorative mantel and built-in bookshelves, one area of which can be pushed to reveal a secret room.

Between the library and living room there is a bar room with a sink, small refrigerator, counter space, and cabinets. You step down into the living room,

which features a marble fireplace with an ornately carved mantel and French doors to a patio and backyard. A second set of French doors leads to the side yard with the pool and cabana.

You step down into the dining room as well, where there is a marble fireplace in a mirrored wall, the patterned flooring and a door

to another patio in the backyard. The kitchen, quite large, is divided into three sections: a large butler's pantry, preparation area and breakfast room. It could easily be renovated to create one large space. A small room off the kitchen has a built-in desk area and is ideal as a home command

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center.

On the second floor there are six bedrooms. The master suite has a fireplace — like the dining room, in a mirrored wall, and built-in display shelves and bureau drawers. One of the bedrooms has an entire wall of built-in storage drawers and cabinets. In the laundry room there is a kitchenette, probably because there was live-in staff when this house was first constructed.

The backyard has open lawn, tall trees and attractive landscaping with mature plantings.

For information or to make an appointment to see the house, contact Amy Barsanti and Carolyn Brook of William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, Barsanti at 203-722-1781 or abarsanti@williampitt.com, and Brook at 203-550-0821 or cbrook@williampitt.com.



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The paneled library contains a fireplace with a decorative mantel, a walk-in bay window area and built-in bookshelves, one area of which can be pushed to reveal a secret room.

ABOUT THIS HOUSE

STYLE: Brick colonial

ADDRESS: 52 Dorchester Road

PRICE: \$3,475,000

ROOMS: 11

FEATURES: 4.5-acre level property, in-ground swimming pool, cabana with kitchenette, underground utilities, generator, wet bar, multiple slate patios, four fireplaces, rear stairs, convenient to the Merritt Parkway, proximity to Talmadge Hill train station, well water, partial unfinished basement, pull-down attic stairs, two garages — a two-car attached garage and four-car detached garage, six bedrooms and five full and three half baths

SCHOOLS: Ox Ridge Elementary, Middlesex Middle, Darien High

ASSESSMENT: \$3,067,610

MILL RATE: 16.16 mills

TAXES: \$49,573