

Special Advertising Feature

## Beyond NYC



PHOTO BY RHONDA CYR, COURTESY OF WILLIAM PITT/JULIE B. FEE SOTHEBY'S

If you love culture, quaint towns and great restaurants, plus quiet views of lakes and mountains, a vacation home in the Berkshires may be perfect for your family.

# Vacation Near Concerts or Climbing Walls

*Finding a second home that fits your passions*

by Julie Bennett

Is your idea of a vacation climbing rock walls, hiking trails, shooting clay pigeons, riding horses and cruising in a luxury Bentley SUV over boulders and logs, all in one day? Then a weekend getaway at The Preserve Sporting Club and Residences in Richmond, Rhode Island, may be perfect for you.

Lucas Cowan, The Preserve's real estate and membership sales executive, reports, "Our members come from a wide demographic, from age 25 to their 80s, including people from around the globe who have heard about our shooting facilities."

Founder and chairman Paul Mihailides pictured this more than 3,500-acre resort, with its indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, plus upland and tower hunting, fly-fishing ponds, swimming pool and par-three golf course, well before the pandemic, Cowan says. "But when COVID-19 struck, we had only six residences finished. We now have 60 units completed and only a handful are still for sale."

Residences include "Tiny Homes," four-story townhouses, large family homes and luxury suites in the Hilltop Lodge, with prices ranging from \$1 million to over \$10 million.

## VISITORS WELCOME

Unlike other resort-style communities, all Preserve residences are sold only when they are completed and fully furnished, Cowan reports. When homeowners are not on site, they may choose to place their units into the resort's rental pool, where they are rented out to visitors from around the world who want to try out the resort's activities. The Preserve Sporting Club currently offers Play & Stay Packages that include meals and resort activities for two and start at \$1,475 a night.

To become a real estate owner at The Preserve's Sporting Club & Residences, you must first apply for membership, Cowan says. Some guests choose to have a property tour during their stay to find out more about membership and real estate. Often they begin the application process before they check out.

"Our goal is to offer as many white-glove outdoor activities as possible," Cowan remarks. "Most recently, we built a 2.2-mile track in association with Bentley Motors to demonstrate the capabilities of the luxurious Bentley Bentayga. This was a members-only event and is one of many that we will hold throughout the year."

The Preserve membership is also very involved in the evolution of the property. Suggestions are always welcome on what should be built and added next. "There is a close-knit family atmosphere here at The Preserve," Cowan says. "Our members are the core of our operations so their input is always taken to heart."

## BETTER DAYS IN THE BERKSHIRES

If you prefer a more artful vacation vibe, check out western Massachusetts. The Berkshire region features mountains, lakes and other gorgeous scenery, plus several colleges, concert venues, Equity theater companies, art museums and galleries, farm-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRESERVE SPORTING CLUB AND RESIDENCES

The Preserve Sporting Club and Residences in Richmond, Rhode Island, contains the longest indoor private shooting range in the country, plus thousands of outdoor acres for other activities.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRESERVE SPORTING CLUB AND RESIDENCES

Who wants to sit on a beach when you can soar over fields and streams at The Preserve Sporting Club and Residences?



What could be more lovely than dining on your own wisteria-covered porch, near your pool and with sight of the Berkshire Mountains?

PHOTO BY TERRY HOLLAND FOR LANDVEST

to-table restaurants and picturesque small towns. Because the area attracts so many sophisticated people, local realtor Gladys Montgomery with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty calls it "a cultural outpost of New York."

Montgomery lists 23 performing arts companies in her Berkshire LifeStyle Guide, including Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival; Shakespeare & Company; and the Williamstown Theatre Festival. The visual arts are represented in the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Norman Rockwell Museum and other institutions. Excellent restaurants abound.

"We experienced a tsunami of families wanting to get out of Boston and New York when the pandemic began," she says. "The pace has slowed, but people are still looking for second homes with three or four bedrooms where they can vacation year round and entertain family and guests. Many millennial buyers are seeking investment properties, because the Berkshires are great as short-term rentals."

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Another great thing, adds a woman who purchased a home there recently, "is that it's only a two-hour drive from our main home in Cambridge. We've always loved getting out here in the summer, but now that we have two little girls, it's not fun or practical to stay in a hotel. We worked with Gladys last summer, could not find anything and had driven back home when she called us about this house. We drove back out the next day and made an offer."

"Houses are still often selling for way over the asking price, and prospective buyers are getting more realistic," says Cindy Welch, a project manager for LandVest in the Berkshires. "Every buyer, it seems, starts out wanting big acreage or property on a lake or both. As they explore more of the Berkshires they realize they could be overlooking prime locations in less populated towns like New Marlborough or Monterey. Some are even crossing the border into Columbia County in New York."

Another couple, whose main home is on Nantucket, had searched for several years before buying a unique house on lots of land from Welch this spring. "My husband is a real outdoorsman so we love the mountains, but it's also really important to have culture, art, music, restaurants and access to interesting people doing interesting things," the wife explains. "You can't beat the Berkshires' proximity to Boston and New York. We love to entertain and want to be close to the Turnpike so our friends and family in the New York City area can visit. I'm already picturing this as a climate change-resistant gathering place and retreat."