



Fairfield County Rising

From picture-perfect small towns to affluent waterfront communities to the largest financial district just outside New York City, Connecticut's southwesternmost county offers a diverse mix — from backcountry serenity to grand estates along the Long Island Sound.

Located about four miles from the beach at 65 St. Nicholas Road in Darien, a Philip Johnson-inspired five-bedroom green home, designed by International Design Awards Architecture winner Amanda Martocchio, is a contemporary-styled series of geometric boxes that cantilever from the spine of a trophy home on one of Darien's highest points. Built in 2006 on 2.4 acres, the 7,500-square-foot home, on the market for \$5,288,000, was intentionally sited to maximize the light from sunrise to sunset, and to take advantage of the Long Island Sound views. Among the many green features are biofuel-burning high-efficiency boilers that provide radiant heat throughout the house, an underground cistern to recycle rainwater, a five-kilowatt solar-powered system that provides about 25 percent of the

home's energy needs, and a white rubber roof to reflect the sun's rays during the summer months.

"During the day, there is so much light, there is little need to keep the lights on, and the building's passive solar design keeps in the natural warmth during the winter months," said Sara Franzese, sales agent with Houlihan Lawrence. "The windows are abundant and very high, and the terraces and floor-to-ceiling glass manage to bring the outdoors in and still hold heat inside when they need to, saving on energy costs. The current owners had five kids here, and they lived well in the house — it is more than just a trophy. Even though it is 12 years old, the striking design makes it look brand-new."

Also in Darien, 53 Blueberry Lane is noteworthy for its landscaping and rare tree specimens, includ-



ing some that date to the 1700s. Three rare Franklinia trees (named after Benjamin) — first discovered in Georgia, preserved in the nation's first botanical garden and now extinct in the wild — are the highlights of the property's remarkable tree collection, with 72 different species of trees and shrubbery. A rose-covered trellis leads to the fenced garden with raised beds, including dozens of differently colored hydrangeas that bloom all summer long. The three-acre property is ringed by stepping-stone pathways, with many of the unusual shrubs and noteworthy trees, including a Sequoia, rare on the East Coast this far north, tagged with their botanical names. The six-bedroom main home, built in 1999 and currently on the market for \$4,495,000, includes a wine cellar with wet bar, home theater and a three-floor elevator, with a tennis court with a pool, patio and a four-season guesthouse.

"The whole outdoor area is set up for entertaining as part of a true luxury home," said Pam Roberts, sales agent with William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty. "The recreation room, wine cellar with wet bar and a 3-D home theater downstairs can all be accessed via the home's three-floor elevator, and outside, the pool, patio space and four-season guesthouse are ideal for guests. There are a dozen apple trees carefully arranged in the orchard next to the tennis court — and all the trees and shrubs are meticulously cared for by professional landscapers. Some perennial or tree is in bloom nearly all year."

The white Georgian colonial at 32 Weston Road in Weston, on the market for \$4,950,000, is the



OPPOSITE: 65 St. Nicholas Road, Darien. Photo: Michael Smith

TOP: 53 Blueberry Lane, Darien.

ABOVE: 32 Weston Road, Weston.
Photo: Barry Hyman & Alessandro Piovezahn



grandest of the 21 lakefront homes on Crystal Lake along the Westport border. The five-bedroom main home, built in 1810, is now connected by breezeway to a one-bedroom, 1,200-square-foot barn/guesthouse, built in 1994, and constructed of reclaimed wood from older barns. There are 10 fireplaces (one gas, the others wood-burning), with two in the living room, and a tiger oak wood library with a wet bar. The first of two pool houses (built in 2000) comes with a full gourmet kitchen with two outdoor fireplaces near the pool, which has an electric cover. In all, there are 147 linear feet of lake frontage, with a lakefront gazebo and private dock, and a total of 12,186 square feet of interior living space.

"This classic Connecticut white Georgian colonial is really set up well for lakefront living as the first and most important house built on the lake," said Cindy Saul, sales agent with Coldwell Banker. "With three stories and many balconies, it has a Charleston feeling. The lake is spring-fed and clean, no motor boats, and everything here is about swimming and boating, with patios for alfresco dining and two pool houses. With the opportunity to use the Westport beaches as a hidden perk, you have it all there. After all, how many pool houses actually have a gourmet kitchen?"

Even older is the Jonas White house, an estate on three acres in Long Ridge Village, a rural historic district along the northern border of Stamford listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1770, expanded in 1790 and recently renovated by its current owners, 353 Old Long Ridge Road, listing for \$2,095,000, comprises an antique



main house and a separate two-bedroom guesthouse with its own driveway/entrance, along with a pool, tennis court and a renovated barn, currently being used as an art gallery, with its own reception area, vaulted ceiling, office, bathroom, bar and sauna. The square footage of the four-fireplace main house is listed as 4,522 square feet, less than half the total indoor square footage of 9,151 for all the structures combined. The historic district is well served by The Inn at Pound Ridge by Jean-Georges and La Crémaillère Restaurant in Bedford, both located just across the state line.

"For these owners, the barn is a showcase for events where they can exhibit their artwork, but it could also serve well as a great place to live for a family with in-laws," said Marsha Charles, associate broker with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. "One potential buyer who has been looking at the property entertains a lot, and has a huge family — and wanted to use the barn to set up tables for large family events, as the current owners do. Right now, it is used as a special place for guests to come in to see art — but it could also be a great party barn."

The four-bedroom transitional beach house at 194 Shore Road in Old Greenwich, listing for \$3,195,000, was raised and renovated in 2015 to exceed town and FEMA standards. The property comes with deeded beach rights to Lucas Point Beach, a new three-season screened-in porch with outdoor decks and abundant basement storage, ideal for storing kayaks. The home has its own access point to the Long Island Sound, and the location is a stroll or bike ride away from Tod's



Point, and to the Metro-North train station in Old Greenwich of Greenwich, which is about 31 miles to Grand Central Terminal.

"There are water views from every room," said Jenny Allen, sales agent Houlihan Lawrence. "From the front of the house, you can see Greenwich Cove, and then on the other side is the Long Island Sound. The home is basically done and now virtually maintenance free — and that is a huge factor for any house on the water, which can be difficult to maintain. All of that was taken care of in the remodeling."

The five-bedroom contemporary built north of the Merritt Parkway on 4.5 acres at 11 Mohawk Lane in Greenwich is a distinctive circular residence with five bedrooms, expansive gardens and terraces, putting green, half-court basketball court, pool with a courtyard in front featuring a 17-foot-tall Roger Phillips sculpture, valued at \$250,000, that moves silently with the wind. The finished lower level includes a gym and a 23-speaker movie theater. The 8,099-square-foot home is listing for \$5,750,000.

"The pool is similarly curved, by design, and lends itself to a feeling of tranquility," said Jennifer Leahy, sales agent with Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "When you are inside, you see a lot of nature, with greenery and trees all around you — each bedroom feels like its own singular little moment in the woods."

Leahy is also showing 360-364 Laurel Road in New Canaan, a compound set on 6.43 acres that serves as a sports paradise for all ages. Aside from the six-bedroom main residence, there is also a guest cottage, putting green, a brook-fed trout pond with a waterfall, pool and spa with a water-



side cabana and full outdoor kitchen with a stone fireplace. The pièce de résistance is the standalone sports barn, with a professional half basketball court, theatrical production stage, ballet and yoga studio, steam room, bowling alley, billiards room, golf simulator, THX home theater and stadium seating for 30. The total cost of building the sports barn alone exceeded \$6 million.

The compound is listing for \$9,500,000. "This is the ultimate family sports and entertainment destination for an active, multigenerational family — and it makes sense for a large, blended family," she said. "The previous owner built it for the grandkids, but it really works well for all ages. You can golf, putt, swim, fish, play basketball, do yoga, bowl, put on a play — there is something for everyone. This could be great for someone who works in sports, or who is looking for a place to entertain with sports and who wants to entertain all ages on a grand scale." ■

OPPOSITE LEFT: 353 Old Long Ridge Road, Long Ridge Village.

OPPOSITE RIGHT: 194 Shore Road, Old Greenwich.
Photo: CT Plans | Hicham Bensaoui

ABOVE LEFT: 11 Mohawk Lane, Greenwich.
Photo: Douglas Elliman

ABOVE RIGHT: 360-364 Laurel Road, New Canaan.
Photo: Douglas Elliman