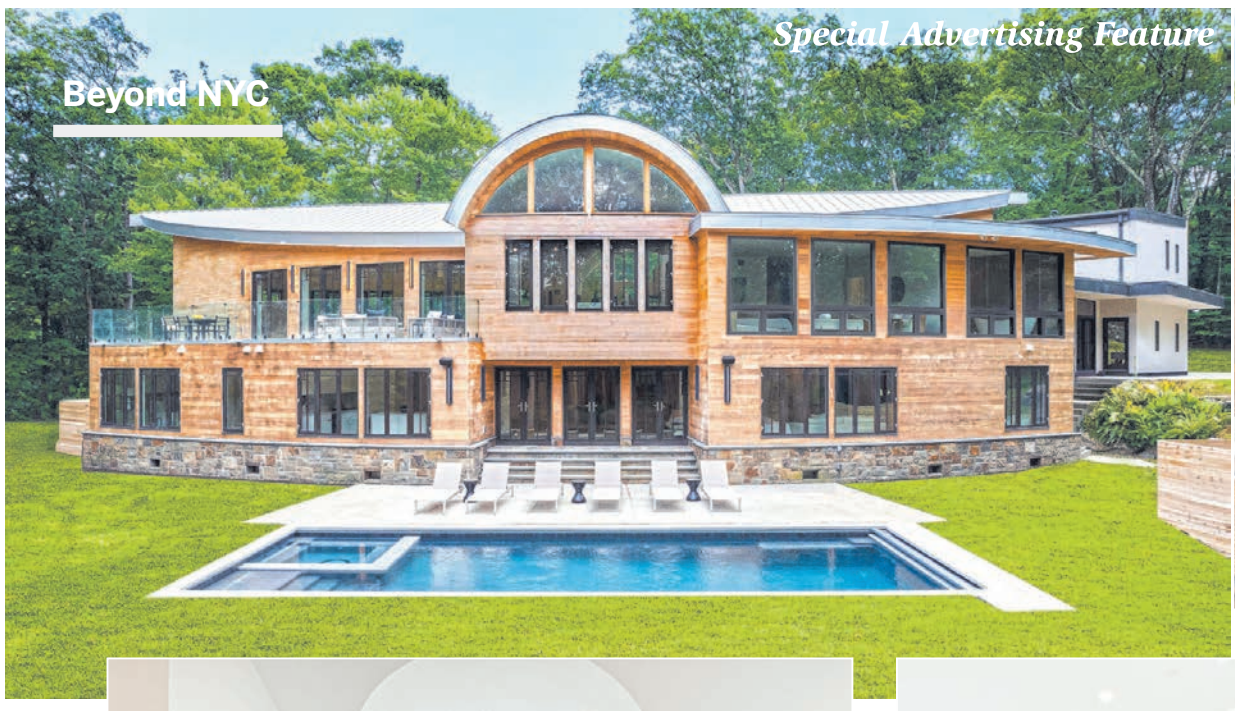


PHOTOS BY LAUREL & GRAND

This stunning custom home at 16 Sheldon Lane in Pound Ridge, New York, is waiting for an artistic buyer. The newly completed home in northeast Westchester County is priced at $4.99 million and contains five en suite bedrooms, one with its own living room for guests or a nanny, plus a home theater, gym, office and pool. It all sits on 4 acres of wooded and landscaped grounds.

FROM HIGH-END HAVENS TO SAVVY BUYS

Homes for a weekend in the country or leading a glamorous life

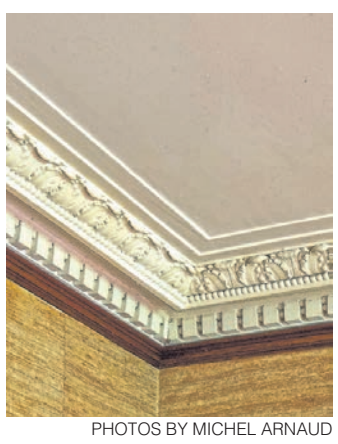
by Julie Bennett

The Berkshires in Massachusetts and Litchfield County in Connecticut are still top spots for vacation retreats from New York, and Westchester County is still the place where many New Yorkers aspire to live. But recent changes in the economy, the real estate market and even the environment have altered the homebuying landscape in these areas. Prices are dropping. Additionally, once-in-a-lifetime homes are now on the market.

Elle Villetto, a real estate salesperson for William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty in the Berkshires says home prices have dropped 10% in some towns. "It is slowly turning into a buyer's market," she says. "We've had a couple of spectacular high-end homes with dramatic reductions."

One iconic estate, at 319 Under Mountain Road in Lenox, Massachusetts, was first listed at $13.5 million and is now selling for $4.99 million, though with less land. Jared Kelly, the William Pitt SIR agent who listed the property explains, "This historic property was built in 1903 as a Berkshire cottage for a wealthy family and is on the market for the first time in 40 years." Except for a new gourmet kitchen, the seven-bedroom home, with its sitting and living rooms, library, and music and dining rooms, has been maintained with its Gilded Age decor and beauty intact. The grounds include a pool built into the natural bedrock and fed by a spring, a carriage house and a garage, both with guest apartments.

Kelly says, "This legacy home was first listed with its original 220 acres of woods and meadows, but that was more land than most buyers wanted. The owners are considering putting 140 acres into conservation and selling it with the remaining 80 acres."



PHOTOS BY MICHEL ARNAUD

Return to the Gilded Age in this once-in-a-lifetime Berkshires estate built in 1903 and maintained with its historic beauty intact. From the formal reception hall to its ornate bannisters and handcarved ceiling moldings, this home has a total of 21 rooms with several outbuildings on its 80 acres. It is located at 319 Under Mountain Road in Lenox, Massachusetts, and is priced at $4.99 million.

Another reason for price reductions is an increase in inventory, Villetto says. "Investors are selling homes they purchased for short-term rentals during COVID-19 and no longer have enough business to sustain them.

But homes in the Berkshires are still not a bargain. Buyers can save money by carefully choosing their towns. "You can find a house in Lee, for example, that can be priced as much as 30% lower than a comparable one 10 minutes away in trendy Lenox. And you will pay more in Great Barrington than in nearby New Marlborough," Villetto says.

THE PEACE AND QUIET OUTSIDE OF THE CITY

Like the Berkshires, Litchfield County caters to second-homeowners. Elvia Gignoux, a salesperson with William Pitt SIR in Salisbury, says, "We've always had a strong luxury weekend market for people coming up from New York City. That market expanded during the pandemic when people from other parts of the country started looking for a place with lots of water that was safe from climate change."

The northwest corner of Connecticut contains lakes and rivers for boating and fishing, has great hiking, and even connects to the Appalachian Trail, adds Gignoux's business partner Lenore Mallett. "We have an amazing assortment of restaurants, and we are less than an hour's drive from cultural venues like Tanglewood."

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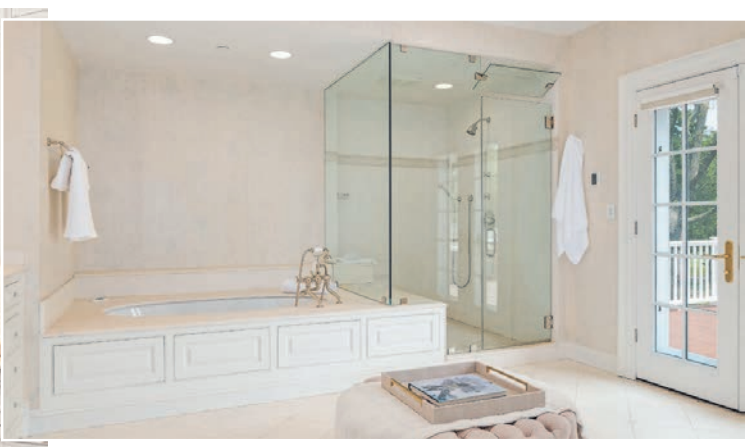

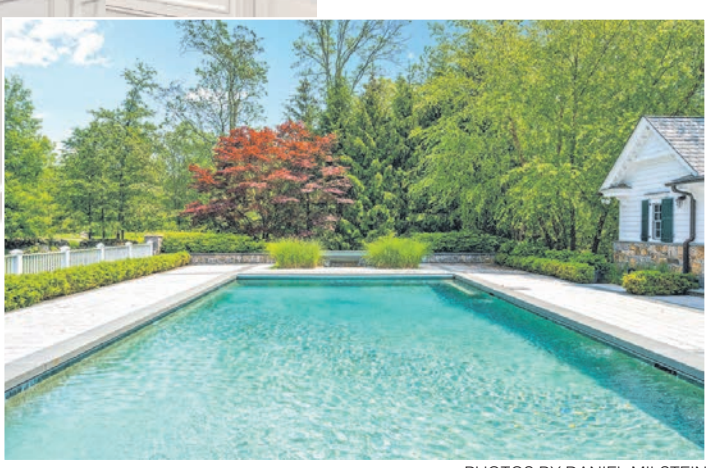

PHOTOS BY DANIEL MILSTEIN

An elegant estate at 21 Dorann Road in Purchase, New York, is tucked away behind private gates on 2.89 acres, waiting for the right luxury buyer. The home, with its oversized kitchen, greeting room and great room, is perfect for entertaining and upscale living. Its 18 rooms include eight bedrooms, a paneled library and private office, a home theater and gym, and manicured grounds that contain a swimming pool and fully equipped pool house. Located in western Westchester County, this home is priced at $5.59 million.

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Beyond NYC

Special Advertising Feature

PHOTOS BY DAN MILSTEIN (EXTERIOR) AND KENNY HAYDEN (INTERIORS)

Home seekers who dream of a country retreat on over 5 acres they can buy for less than $3 million may find it in the northern Westchester village of Waccabuc. The five-bedroom home at 41 Rock Shelter Road has a first-floor primary suite, a tiered backyard and a pool. It is listed at $2.79 million.

Continued from page M5A

Most of all, for buyer Sarah Tynan, it has peace and quiet. Tynan says she and her husband, Elliott Smith, spent almost three years looking for a weekend house "far enough away from New York that it felt like we were going somewhere but close enough to get there."

Earlier this summer, Mallett, who was their agent, showed them a house in the historic district of Litchfield. "It has real charm and warmth, is big enough for our family and friends to visit and has a little bit of woods and a pool. Best of all, it is on a lovely, quiet dead-end street where our kids can have some freedom and I don't have to hear any traffic," Tynan says.

Unlike the Berkshires, "Prices are holding steady in Litchfield County," Gignoux notes. "Some of our iconic estates are coming on the market, including Stones Throw Farm, a four-bedroom Colonial built in 1795 selling for $2.2 million that includes a pool with a poolhouse and almost 24 acres of land."

The heated garden room, potting shed, glass-walled solarium and vibrant flower gardens "should appeal to anyone who loves to garden or wants to learn about it," she says, and adds that the grounds include a barn and fenced fields for horse lovers. "The property checks all the boxes."

A YEAR-ROUND WEEKEND HOME FEEL

Westchester County, with its 16 towns, six cities, 23 villages and many country clubs and boat harbors, has long been a luxury residential choice for people who gathered enough wealth to move out of New York City permanently. "Living in these communities is a luxury in itself," says Brian Murray, vice president of sales and luxury for Houlihan Lawrence.

While the majority of houses across the country are selling below their asking prices, "the luxury market in Westchester remains strong due to unprecedented demand and limited inventory," Murray says. "Many of our high-end buyers are local, either trading up or downsizing."

That local demand is one reason the Westchester market is hard for newcomers to enter. "Local buyers tend to act quickly when the right house comes up," Murray reveals, "knowing they can sell their current property fast and often at a strong profit."

Nevertheless, many New Yorkers dream of owning an iconic Westchester home, and each year a few of them stay on the market long enough for viewing. According to Houlihan Lawrence's second quarter 2025 report, the county had 71 active listings for homes over $4 million at the end of June this year.

A spectacular Houlihan Lawrence listing is the eight-bedroom, nine-bath home at 21 Dorann Road in Purchase, priced at $5.59 million. The New England Colonial on 2.89 acres features a primary suite with two bathrooms, a spa, custom dressing room, walk-in closet, fireplace and private terrace. The recreation level contains a home theater, gym, guest suite and game room, and outside there's a pool and poolhouse with its own kitchenette, full bath and laundry room.

"Home seekers willing to trade a longer commute to New York for more space, charming village centers, open land and the feeling of a weekend home all year round may prefer Northern Westchester," Murray remarks. "Towns like Katonah and Lewisboro are becoming increasingly popular with a large influx of city buyers attracted by lower prices." Houlihan Lawrence lists a stunning five-bedroom house on 5 acres with a pool at 41 Rock Shelter Road in Waccabuc for $2.79 million, for example.

The array of towns and villages across Westchester County is so great that Juan Castano and his wife Rebekah Stellick spent a year of intense searching before they settled on a house there. "We'd moved back from Los Angeles," Stellick says, "and lived in Manhattan while spending time getting a feel for Westchester's different towns. We wanted the right combination between suburban and country living."

"We started during the peak of the market," Castano adds, "and one house we liked sold for something like $300,000 over its asking price. We thought we'd be lucky to get a house anywhere in the county. But our agent, Chelsea Hammerschmidt with Julia B. Fee Sotheby's, knows the county inside out and was a patient guide."

"Chelsea finally showed us a house in Chappaqua that felt just right," Stellick says. "It's four minutes from the train station, near stores and restaurants, has a big yard and a basement for a home theater, and the neighborhood is really welcoming."

Hammerschmidt agrees Westchester is still a strong seller's market, especially for houses under $3 million. "People who moved to Westchester during the pandemic five years ago and did not get their dream homes then are buying them now. We have young families coming up from the city hoping to be close to their parents. And since the beginning of the year, we have families coming in from California because of the fires."

THOSE SLEEPY RIVER TOWNS

Meanwhile, Southern Westchester and the River Towns are trendier than ever, Hammerschmidt notes, and are drawing families from Brooklyn. Suddenly, towns like Bedford and Pound Ridge are becoming hubs for designers and artists. A unique new home with huge windows and high ceilings on 4 acres is waiting for an artist or art collector to buy it, she says.

The modern home at 16 Col Sheldon Lane in Pound Ridge is listed for $4.99 million. "There are only 10 houses on this street, and many of them are also modern," Hammerschmidt describes. "Pound Ridge has a very creative community, and the home has everything luxury buyers want — dual primary suites upstairs and down, a pool, hot tub and movie theater, and an extra guest suite over the garage. And it's surrounded by beautiful nature."

Julie Bennett is a freelance writer specializing in luxury travel, real estate and lifestyle issues.

PHOTOS BY KG VISUALS

People have gathered in this country home since it was built in 1795, although the sleek kitchen and hydrangea-hedged swimming pool are centuries newer. The Colonial-era house, at 381 Smith Hill Road in Colebrook, Connecticut, includes 23 acres of land, a heated room for gardening, a barn, fields for horses and a library for reading. It is on the market for $2.2 million.