

## Special Advertising Feature

Westchester | Fairfield Properties

## COMMUTER DREAM

Why homeshoppers are heading north

by Joseph Dobrian

Now is the time to buy in Westchester County. Motivated sellers have come on the scene in many communities — bringing home prices down slightly and providing the buyer with a solid menu of options.

As often happens at this point in a cycle, the bottom and top ends of the luxury market are still tight, but deals can be found in the middle of the price range, with properties listed between \$1.5 and \$2.5 million offering the greatest opportunity.

Many Westchester communities chronically lack new product, but classic properties are available — fully modernized. Buyers might be surprised to find homes that exude 18th-century grace on the outside and the latest design ideas within. Of course, fixer-uppers also are available for those who want to make a home entirely their own.



Maya Sheehan, salesperson with The Why Westchester Team of Compass in Ardsley, New York, reports that Westchester generally is a buyer's market, with sellers interested in getting deals done. Some buyers want as close to a work-free property as possible, while others don't mind maintaining luxury features such as a pool.

"The one common requirement is a commute to the city no longer than 45 minutes," Sheehan says. "Walkability to the train is important, although a short drive is fine for most people as long as they have a parking space at the station. A few years ago, buyers wanted a place they could renovate; now the demand is for move-in-ready, modernized properties."

## COUPLES MOVE IN

One important trend Sheehan notices is that couples are moving to Westchester from the city before they have children. "People who have been coming for weekends are deciding to stay," she says. "River towns are especially popular. Tarrytown, for instance, used to be perceived as a small town with not much going on. Now, it's much more vibrant."

Buyers are also drawn to Irvington, which is quieter and more suburban. In Ardsley, Sheehan is offering two properties on Bellwood Road: a fixer-upper and a larger home with a basketball court, gym, putting green and theatre.

Sleepy Hollow features some interesting modern condos and townhomes. It is also the home of Edge-on-Hudson, which its developers, Toll Brothers, call a "transit-oriented" destination. Two rail stations connect Edge-on-Hudson to Manhattan, 37 minutes away.

Edge-on-Hudson offers three distinct residential districts: Kingsland Point, with walk-up brownstone townhomes and traditional architecture; Waterfront Park, with its contemporary condos; and the Loft District, with stylish apartments that include four-story contemporary lofts. All addresses are a five-minute walk or less from the water's edge. A boutique hotel, marketplace and office space will round out the offering.

Loretta Rapisardi, an agent with Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International Realty in Rye, New York, explains that the current market in Rye, Harrison and Purchase has strong action in the \$1 million-plus range, less activity in the middle market and a recent upswing at \$4 million-plus. Downsizing Baby Boomers and Millennials entering the market are now competing for similarly priced homes.

"New construction is always popular, but the more recent trend favors the aesthetic attraction and appeal of pre-war homes," Rapisardi says. "The most desirable high-end properties are adjacent to the waterfront or golf courses."



2 Sunset Lane in Rye, New York (above), and 7 Vanderburgh Avenue in Larchmont (below) illustrate the range of luxury properties available in Westchester County. Pools, elaborate gardens and direct-access garages are popular features.

Proximity to town and functional outdoor space are becoming more important, she adds. Buyers want to bring the elements of inside — cooking, dining and entertaining — to the backyard.

"I'm especially enthusiastic about 2 Sunset Lane in Rye: built at the turn of the century on three acres, with a pool, tennis and squash courts," she says. "This home, in terms of amenities, location and quality, would be hard to replicate today."

Rapisardi points to the home's top-notch materials, including a marble fireplace mantel, solid wood paneling and brick façade, all of which would be prohibitively expensive in a new construction.

## KINGFIELD ATTRACTS INTEREST

In the village of Rye Brook, Kingfield, a 30-acre development, includes many recreational and social amenities. Its central clubhouse features a midcentury design and a resort-style pool, as well as a full menu of wellness and recreational options. The protected open space offers walking trails and tree-lined buffers for extra privacy.

Several home designs are available, from 2,324 to 4,726 square feet. All feature two-car garages and three or four bedrooms. Purchase College and the Doral Arrowwood Conference Center and Golf Course stand nearby.

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