

REAL ESTATE

LUXURY LIVING

Greenwich buyers gravitate to one-of-a-kind dining rooms

By Gretchen A. Peck

So much of American culture is defined by food and diet — on what we eat, and where we choose to eat it. The same can be said for our homes. Kitchens are known to be the “heart” of our residences. Life unfolds in kitchens, as meals are made, conversations are shared, and tales are told.

Families gather for special occasions and holidays around long dining room tables, big enough to accommodate everyone. Formal dining rooms are tricky in that way — a need to be large enough for comfort, yet intimate and soft enough for guests to feel at home.

In many Greenwich homes and estates, space is a luxurious perk, and formal dining rooms can be grand and glamorous. In some, it's easy to imagine gatherings of colleagues, philanthropic occasions, or big bashes for any reason happening in them.

Ellen Mosher and Julie Church of Houlihan Lawrence are co-listing the six-bedroom home at 24 Field Road in Riverside. It was built by Sound Beach Partners, which Mosher referred to as a “beloved builder in Greenwich.”

Church agreed, lauding the firm for its specialized millwork and custom details that make each of its homes one-of-a-kinds.

“The entryway is very spacious, and it flows so gracefully into the dining room. So when you're entertaining and having cocktails in the entry foyer, the party can then ease right into the dining room,” Church said. “We also find that people still like to have a portal from the kitchen to the formal dining room, like this property has, in the form of a butler's pantry.”

Mary-Stuart Freyberg of Sotheby's International Realty has the listing at 65 Overlook Drive. This is a home that's “great for parties,” she noted.

“The stone terrace spans the rear of the house, allowing a natural flow from the gourmet kitchen to the elevated outdoor dining terrace, and back into the dining room,” Freyberg said. The ter-



Houlihan Lawrence

Above: The formal dining room at 526 North St. has specialty moldings and a fireplace. The home is listed for \$4.595 million. Below left: The dining room at 15 Mountain Laurel Drive has a simple, understated elegance. The home is listed for \$3.995 million. Below right: The formal dining room at 24 Field Road has windows that look out over the property. The home is listed for \$4.795 million.



Sotheby's International Realty

race expands the home's dining spots to the outdoors, where early-morning breakfasts or dinners in the evening shade may take place. The central island in the home's kitchen is granite covered and has seating, she pointed out.

William Raveis Real Estate's

Charles Magyar, of the Magyar Team, has the listing at 1 Wyckham Hill Lane. He recalled selling the property to its current owner more than 15 years ago.

“One of the important features of the house for him, in addition to the four, beautiful, open and level

acres, was the great dining space. They have a large family and do a lot of entertaining,” Magyar explained. “This home's dining room is large enough to accommodate formal dinner parties of 12 to 14 comfortably, which is unusual in today's newer construction.

“Informal dining was also a priority for the owner, particularly in the summer, when the atrium windows and French doors meld the interior and exterior space — especially for this home, which has a large terrace cascading down to the pool and pool house. Very few homes currently on the market today in Greenwich have this combination of great features,” he suggested.

Dining at the pace of life

Increasingly, the fast pace of life often demands eating on the go. Envision hot oatmeal, steaming from bowls on kitchen islands, ready for families preparing for the school day or lite lunches and laughter shared across the table in a sunny breakfast nook.

American families like to dine together even when there's no formal occasion, nor complex menu. Eat-in kitchens or breakfast rooms sometimes become the de facto dining spot in Greenwich homes.

To complement the entryway and formal dining room at 24 Field Road, there's also a casual breakfast room off the kitchen, and adjacent to its family room. Co-listing agents Mosher and Church agreed that the home's floor plan is exemplary of family lifestyles and what's coveted in today's housing market.

“Everyone seems to want an open kitchen and breakfast area, and this home has that,” Church said. “It has lots of windows and light, and a door that leads to the side yard. It also flows into the family room.” The door leading to the side yard also provides access to the home's patio and private backyard.

Houlihan Lawrence's BK Bates is the listing agent for 526 North Street, a home with both a formal dining room and a solarium off of the kitchen, which makes for the perfect casual dining spot.

“A dining room for formal entertaining is a requirement for any family,” Bates said, “but having an attached informal dining area allows the family to eat together at all occasions.”

AGENT PROFILE *Suzan Rose*

Earning repeat, referral business

Suzan Rose earned both a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Skidmore College, and a master's degree in development psychology. “Both have been exponentially useful in selling real estate,” she said.

She and her husband spent some time abroad, working and living in Tokyo, before returning to the U.S. and putting down roots here.

“We had the choice to move elsewhere, but felt that Greenwich offers the best of all worlds,” Suzan Rose said.

Once settled in Greenwich, she began to explore her career options. She'd always enjoyed traveling and shopping, and had a sense of curiosity about people and how they live. Residential real estate felt like a perfect match, and in hindsight, it was a wise decision.

“Working with different families has been rewarding,” she said. “Many of my former buyers and sellers have become very dear friends. My business has grown thanks to repeat sales and personal referrals from clients. Now, I sell homes to the children of friends who were former buyers.”

For 30 years, she's been a sales associate with Coldwell Banker.

As someone who has personal experience expanding and renovating homes, she is able to offer her clients perspective and



Business: Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

Works: Greenwich

Lives: Greenwich

Expertise: An understanding of the psychology of real estate, with experience in home expansion and renovation

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ideas on how to take a home they love and make it better or bigger.

Suzan Rose also helps her clients manage the potential stress of real estate dealings by keeping a sense of humor, and listening carefully to how they communicate their needs and wish lists.

AGENT PROFILE *Jill Barile*

Marketer with an eye for detail

Jill Barile and her husband — a local real estate developer — have lived in Greenwich for nearly a quarter century. They raised a family here.

An agent with Coldwell Banker, Greenwich Fine Properties, she's knowledgeable about the Greenwich real estate market, and also well-versed in the language of renovation and construction. Her husband's profession and her own make for “an easy marriage,” she said. “I understand the renovation and construction process, and that comes into play with real estate more often than you think.”

It doesn't matter if a home is new construction or a historic manor, every home buyer wants to make it “their own.”

“Even millennials, who are known to want more of a finished product, something move-in ready, still want to put their own stamp, their own style on the home, as anybody does,” she said.

Barile is also a smart marketer, who acknowledges that the Internet has changed the way homes are bought and sold. Third-party websites are both a bane and a blessing.

“Information isn't always correct on those,” she said, “but they do offer us so much more exposure for listings — as long as you're prepared to monitor the information.”

In addition to leveraging Coldwell Banker's digital media presence to promote her listings, she also maintains social media pages on Facebook and Instagram. She hosts branded websites for each of the properties she's helping to sell, and hires professional photographers and videographers to show a home in its best light.

Barile credits some of her success in the business to patience and preparedness. A



Business: Coldwell Banker/Greenwich Fine Properties

Works: Greenwich

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Expertise: An intelligent marketer, with an eye for interior and structural renovation

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client recently told her that he'd appreciated her patient calm during a transaction — that she never made him feel “rushed” into decisions.

She's empathetic that real estate can be stressful for all parties. One of the ways she helps clients manage stress or uncertainty is to provide a chronological, step-by-step rundown of the process ahead.

When she's not working, Barile enjoys time with her family, gardening, running, and playing tennis. Her career gives her a great deal of pride and satisfaction, too.

“I enjoy my job,” she explained. “I truly love helping clients on their journey. No matter if they're on the buy side or the sell side, it's a formidable time in their lives.”

THE LIST *Highest for sale*

Address	Price
25 Lower Cross Road	\$65 million
110 Clapboard Ridge	\$35 million
124 Old Mill Road	\$25.75 million
200 Guards Road	\$22.25 million
42 Mooreland Road	\$21.5 million
160 John Street	\$21.5 million
1 Harbor Drive	\$20 million
17 Cowdray Park Drive	\$19.9 million
107 Indian Head Road	\$19.5 million
7 Cobb Island Drive	\$18.75 million
3 Cobb Island Drive	\$18.75 million
36 & 38 Game Cock Road	\$18.5 million
29 Round Hill Club Road	\$18 million
11 Round Hill Club Road	\$17.95 million

Source: MLS

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