

Buying paradise at a price

By Sam Bari

When Gloria Kurz, owner of Mansions & Manors real estate brokerage, advertises a New England shingle-style home on over seven acres of waterfront property with tantalizing views of beautiful Narragansett Bay, she is speaking to an elite and exclusive audience. The exquisite property with 406-feet of waterfront on the East Passage features an array of amenities.

Designed by renowned architect Charles Bevins and built circa 1892, the finely proportioned home is distinguished by detailed ornamentation, a richly paneled living room, formal dining room with trompe l'oeil ceiling, period staircase, and five fireplaces. The first- and second-floor waterside piazzas extend the length of the home and overlook sweeping grounds, a Koi pond, formal gardens, a waterfront pavilion with fieldstone fireplace and a custom-designed pool with spa framed by a bluestone terrace and accented by an arbor with climbing roses and plantings. A deepwater dock, mooring, separate combination carriage house and garage, and an expansive shingle-style barn perfectly complement the manor house. That is what \$11 million will purchase on the coveted coastline of Conanicut Island.

The privileged few that can afford the luxurious estate consider the price to be in line with the prime location, and a real find in a maturing market with limited available inventory. "We don't even have to leave the state to find buyers," says Kurz. "More intrastate sales of super-luxurious homes occur between well-heeled Rhode Islanders than interstate purchases made by out-of-towners. Some are sold through brokerages. Many sales are handled privately. Only a few years ago, I was selling luxury homes on this island starting at \$500,000. Now,

a luxury home starts at \$2 million and super-luxury homes are upwards of \$5 million. And there are more buyers than properties for sale in the high end of the market," she added.

Sales statistics reveal that the prime real estate on the Rhode Island shoreline is destined for ownership by the carriage set wanting both summer and year-round homes in the picturesque area. And Jamestown is the crown jewel in the perfect island setting on Narragansett Bay, with mini-mansions and luxurious estates gracing the shores of the East and West Passage.

"Accurately pricing these prime properties can be tricky," said Patricia Elsworth of Gustave White, Sotheby's International Realty. "Jamestown has a good inventory of both high-end properties that can be developed, and existing homes ready for renovation. The secret is to find the right person for each property. That is the key to success in this business. Making that match is never easy," she said.

Caroline Goodrich of Lila Delman Realty said that "more homes are available for renovation at the high end of the market than super-luxury homes that are ready for sale. Recently, a man bought a luxury home for \$4.5 million and allegedly put over \$20 million into the renovation. Although dramatic investments like that are the exception, sizable renovations are not rare. Whether

he could get his money back if he were to sell, I don't know. But if he keeps the property long enough, it's possible. Many of the summer cottages are being sold to people who want to turn them into luxury year-round homes, and business is brisk in that market," she noted.

"There is a limited inventory in the million dollar-and-up price range," said Linda Wallace of ReMax Bay View Realty. "That market will always get activity because not that much is always available. It seems to go in cycles. Right now, the \$600,000 to \$900,000 price range is the most active part of the market. The property is often the valuable commodity in many of the sales. The houses are often torn down and completely rebuilt to be worth much more than when they were purchased. It won't be long before the little summer cottages that used to be so plentiful, will be a thing of the past," she said.

Although a few of the super-luxury estates have been bought for investment purposes, it appears that the majority of buyers at the top of the market are making the purchases to establish permanent residency. Whatever the reason, the market is good, and the price of luxurious estates in Jamestown is not going to go down any time soon.

Food safety course offered

One of the largest outbreaks of salmonella in the United States occurred after a church supper in Maryland where 741 people became ill. Similar outbreaks of food-borne illnesses have occurred at festivals, community dinners, fund-raising events, and other programs sponsored by non-profit agencies around the country.

To ensure that Rhode Island's non-profit organizations know how to prepare food safely and understand how food-borne illnesses are transmitted, the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension and the Office of Food Protection at the state Department of Health are offering a free food safety training session for non-profits on May 24.

"Non-profit organizations

have an obligation under the law to prepare and serve safe food to the public," said Martha Smith Patnoad, a URI Cooperative Extension food safety educator who will lead the training session. "Most groups do a great job, but there is always room for improvement, especially since the consequences of an outbreak of food-borne illness could be devastating to the organization," she added.

The two-hour training session will be held at Warwick Public Library beginning at 6:30 p.m. on May 24. The \$25 workshop fee per organization includes a 10-minute video, a set of short learning modules for use with volunteers, food safety resources for workers, and a food safety log for recordkeeping.

For more information or to register for the workshop, contact Patnoad at 874-2960 or mpatnoad@uri.edu.

Choristers sing tomorrow

The Newport Navy Choristers, under the direction of JoAnn Loewenthal, will present the "Proudly We Sing" concert in celebration of Armed Forces Day Friday, May 12, at St. Lucy's Church on West Main Road in Middletown.

The performance starts at 7:30 p.m. and proceeds will benefit Stopover Services of Newport County, Inc.

Costing \$8 for adults and \$5 for children and seniors, tickets

can be purchased in advance by contacting any chorister member, or by contacting Stopover Services at 848-0758. Tickets will also be sold at the door. There is a \$15 family ticket.

For more information, call Steve Larson, chorister chairman, at 848-6623.

* Yoga 4 Everyone *

Spring Session Begins May 1

Monday	9 am Mellow Vinyasa (Kim/Judy)	10:45 am Beginner (Kim)	4 pm Gentle* (Katherine)	5:30 pm Vinyasa Flow (Sheri)
Tuesday	7 am Moderate (Maggie/Sarah)	9 am Power Vinyasa (Philip/Priscilla)	10:45 am Moderate (Kim)	5:45 pm Blissful Back (Polly)
	7:15 pm Continuing Beginner (Karen)			
Wednesday	9 am Moderate (Kim)	10:45 am Gentle (Kim)	4 pm Mellow Vinyasa* (Priscilla)	5:30 pm Moderate (Elizabeth)
	7:00 Beginner (Kim)			
Thursday	9 am Vinyasa Flow (Sheri)	10:45 am Continuing Beginner (Karen)	4 pm Blissful Back* (Polly)	5:30 pm Svaroopa Bliss III (Polly)
				7:15 pm Moderate** (Hope)

**Class begins May 18

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LEGAL TIP

A release signed by the parents of a disabled child who drowned in a municipal pool does not bar subsequent claims for gross negligence, the California Court of Appeal has ruled.

The parents sent their 14-year-old daughter, who suffered from cerebral palsy, epilepsy and other disabilities, to a municipal summer camp. They signed a release, that precluded claims for injuries "caused by any negligent act or omission... or otherwise". The court ruled the drowning was caused by "gross" negligence and was not protected by the release for "ordinary" negligence.

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