

Sprucing things up

When I recently revisited 160 Bedford Road (which I wrote about last week), I initially thought that I'd pulled into the wrong driveway.

What I remembered as a wooded property, albeit with a great lawn in front, was now wide open with great, sweeping vistas over all its eight acres. Because there's nothing worse than barging unexpectedly and uninvited into a stranger's home, I snuck around back to make sure that the distinctive pool and pool house were still there. They were, so, emboldened, I entered the house and met its listing agent, Jane Gosden.

"So what happened?" I said.

Jane explained that last summer's tornado swept away 65 mature trees and a similar number from the neighboring property. "Mother Nature's vacuum cleaner" was how Ms. Gosden described the process, and she was absolutely right. It cost the poor homeowner close to \$100,000 to clean up the wreckage (home owner's insurance pays for damage caused by trees that hit your house; otherwise, you're on your own) but the salutary effect was probably well worth it.

My point is, if you're cleaning up your house to prepare it for sale, take a look at your grounds. Trees have a habit of growing ever larger and, if you've owned your house for a long time, they may have crowded close and now block your views. I'm not suggesting a clear-cutting operation but there are very few homes in town that wouldn't benefit from a session with a chainsaw-wielding tree-cutter.

26 Mayfair Lane

Carolyn Sarsen (David Ogilvy & Associates) has just listed this beautiful old home for \$8,350,000, which is a tad out of my price range but perhaps not for you Wall Street bonus babies. It was built in 1936 and last renovated in 1971, which means it's due for more, but what a house. Set on five acres off Pecksland Road, it reminds me of some of the houses of my (rich) friends that I used to visit growing up. Beautiful grounds, a nice pool and terrace, it is, as the owner described it, "just a good house to live in." It certainly is. Today's buyer will probably want to expand it, needlessly, in my opinion, but there's plenty of room to do that, should you wish.

Moving down the food chain

Alice Duff of Sotheby's has listed 27 Doverton Drive, off of Sabine Road, for \$3,985,000. A terrific contemporary that was completely rehabilitated by its present owners-fellow agents who remembered it in its previous condition were astonished when we attended its open house. Big, wide open spaces, a nice two-and-a-half-acre lot and an excellent location. Good deal.

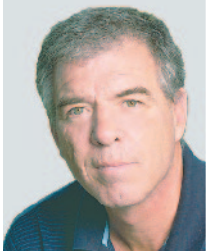
Will Morton's Rotisserie

Some time back, traveling to New Mexico to research a book, I left the interstate somewhere in western Arkansas and drove for miles searching for my favorite food, barbecue. I finally found what I wanted at a run-down spot with a screen door that slammed behind me and filled with locals, all in their Sunday best, chowing down. Ambrosia. I've never found its equal around here until a friend, Wilson Alling, recommended Will Morton's new restaurant at 280 Railroad Avenue. Will's a Greenwich native and graduate of France's Cordon Bleu who for some reason decided to combine French rotisserie cooking with southern barbecue, and has produced a felicitous marriage of both. His pulled pork is the best I've had — ever — and his ribs and chicken are just as good. The restaurant is easily overlooked, as it's located in that small building complex next to Pet Pantry, but it's convenient to the movies and the Avenue. As an eat-in destination, I'd describe the place as somewhere between bleak and cozy (bleak's too harsh; perhaps "utilitarian"), but there's take-out available and delivery for just \$1.50. If you eat in you'll gain the presence of Will himself who's always there, cooking. Very nice guy. There's a very tasty sandwich menu and, for Thanksgiving, he's offering an incredible range of dishes that obviously take advantage of his training, which go far beyond "mere" rotisserie foods: turkeys, roasted or uncooked, a huge variety of side dishes and desserts, soups, salads and so on. I smoke cigarettes precisely because it frees me from worrying about such lesser hazards but health-nuts will be relieved to know that everything served is free-range, all natural, pesticide free, etc. Call 661-0100 or hit Willmortonsrotisserie.com to order or view the menu. You'll thank me for this, just as I did Wilson.

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For what it's worth

By Chris Fountain



P&H construction won 'Best Home Construction' in the 2006 Home Building Industry Awards, by Home Builders Association of Connecticut, for this 9,000-square-foot, European-style home in Old Greenwich. It boasts five bedrooms, five bathrooms and a number of finishes such as intricate plaster moldings, trim details and carved stone mantelpieces.

And the HOBI goes to... Greenwich homes get recognized

By Isabelle Ghaneh, Post Correspondent

Greenwich is known as a locale that boasts beautiful and gracious homes, townhouses and condominiums, and those residences have often been the recipients of awards given by the home-building, design and landscaping industries. What makes a home worthy of an award, and what does an award winner do to obtain one?

Joanne Carroll, the producer for the past 13 years of the most prestigious award in the home building industry — the HOBI Award — said, "The first criteria [sic] in judging for the Home Building Association of Connecticut award is quality, as in construction quality and quality in the materials used in both the exterior and interior of the homes."

Ms. Carroll stated that the HOBI judges have many years of experience and are "builders, architects, remodelers and custom-built marketing professionals."

Nick Barile, president of York & Company Building & Development, won this year's HOBI for Best Spec Home in the \$5 to 6 million range. Mr. Barile said he feels one of the reasons his company won the award for the Greenwich midcountry Lutyens-style Tudor home, is that he created "the finest house" he could. He added that he "thought about all the details and how they would flow from one room to another."

He added that he fits his homes into the surrounding neighborhood.

"I use the topography, if it's a woody area in the mid- or backcountry, and I use earthy materials, pleasing lines and I am not too overbearing or dramatic," Mr. Barile said.

Attention to detail

Paul Hirsch, president and owner of P&H Construction Associates, won the HOBI for Best Infill Community for Laurel Ridge, a town-home complex at the corner of Milbank and Connecticut avenues in the heart of downtown Greenwich.

Mr. Hirsch stated that while the Laurel Ridge project was built as a spec, "the level of quality involved was similar to a custom-built home."

He added, "The architectural detail work involved instantly gives the viewer an impact of quality."



Hoffman Landscapes recently won an award for designing the landscaping for this backcountry home in Greenwich.

"Paying attention to even the smallest detail, and using only high end products," contributed to his company's success in winning three HOBI's this year, Mr. Hirsch said — as did the design. All three of his projects were designed by Greenwich-based Ridberg & Associates Architects.

Brindisi & Yarosack Custom Builders won the HOBI for Best Custom Home of the Year for a property located on Willowmere Circle, which is on the water in Old Greenwich.

Jon Brindisi said his company "mainly does beach houses, and has for at least the past five years."

Mr. Brindisi said his success comes from the teamwork among himself, the architect and the client. "I become friends with my clients," he stated, adding that he "travels, dines and fishes" with them.

Hoffman Landscapes won this year's Grand Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) for a backcountry Greenwich property. Hoffman's Neil Brunetti, the landscape designer involved in the project, said the company won the award because "the design, project and site were unique and had many challenging elements due to the rough terrain, wooded site and significantly sloped grade."

He added that the level of craftsmanship involved in installing the project was high, and that the project was a team effort among the homeowner, designer and craftsmen.

Ms. Carroll said that one of the main judging criteria for the HOBI is "how the builders dealt with the constraints of the site, if it was rocky for example, and how did they adjust to that situation."

Ms. Carroll said among the things considered by the judges for such an award are how spec-built homes meet the needs of the marketplace, how the custom-built homes fulfill the desires of the client and how the homes are positioned on the site.

Solidifying a sale

According to Diane Dutcher of Coldwell Banker, the agent for York & Company's Tudor-style home on MacKenzie Glen, having an award-winning



The octagonal stair foyer in P&H's award-winning Old Greenwich home is one of many special features that qualified this house as "Best Custom Home" in the 2006 Home Building Industry Awards.

See Award Page 6D

Award: Home values increase with award-winning design

Continued from Page 1D

listing “will bring more people in the door, and has the advantage of publicity for the property.”

She added, “home-buying is a personal thing, but it certainly helps to be associated with a builder who does quality construction work.”

That sentiment was echoed by Christopher Finlay of Sotheby’s International Realty. Mr. Finlay is the listing agent for Laurel Ridge, and he said that representing an award-winning property is “a help in a property selling ahead of the competition, since it provides a seal of excellence from a construction point of view.”

He added that a property winning an award could also play an important role in the decision-making process for buyers in the luxury condo market.

Mr. Hirsch said he doesn’t visualize a potential buyer while he is building his projects, but instead has a general idea of who would be interested. In terms of his Laurel Ridge homes, he said the most likely candidates for the property would be “people moving out of a large backcountry home and wanting to downsize, or a young couple coming out of the city who want to be in town.”

Mr. Barile said one of the main criteria for a potential buyer could be location.

“People would be attracted to the house that are attracted to the area,” he said. “It’s important to have a feel for the area you are working in. A sailor might be attracted to the Long Island Sound, so a house with enough windows to take advantage of the view would appeal to him or her.”



Laurel Ridge is among the award-winning products by local builders.



New terrace

The blue stone terrace adjacent to Greenwich Hospital's Carl and Dorothy Bennett Community Garden was recently dedicated to the memory of longtime Greenwich resident and internationally renowned musical celebrity Victor Borge and his wife, Sanna. Shown at the event, from left, are Sanna Fierstein, the Borges' daughter; and Nancy Lynch, chair of Phase 2 of the Campaign for Greenwich Hospital. The terrace was made possible through a \$1 million gift from the Borge family, and is expected to be used heavily during the warmer months when patrons of the hospital's Garden Café will choose to dine at tables outdoors under a trellis just outside the facility.

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