

HAMPTONS

REAL ESTATE SHOWCASE

Where the Brokers Live



Real estate brokers get to see the inside of our houses, right? So we thought it only fair to take a peek inside theirs for a change. Herewith is the first installment in an ongoing series.

Bibliophile Extraordinaire

Michael Braverman is a reader. With a capital R. He reads so many books that his home is a testament to them.

His living room, a great room with a soaring 20-foot ceiling, is really a library with book-lined walls straining upwards like a cathedral honoring the written word. The house boasts “upwards of 16,000” tomes, organized by such subjects as philosophy and history (and further by period). Many books are on or by artists “I know and like,” he says. Circling around the room, at the height of an elephant’s eye, is a frieze on which are painted the names of around 70 “great thinkers,” from scientists to artists who have made an impact on him – Camus, Palladio, Spinoza, Kant, Dante, Mozart, Emerson, Jefferson.

You won’t find much fiction chez Braverman. The real estate maven, once a partner at Braverman Newbold Brennan who now parks his license at Douglas Elliman, reads only nonfiction. Sorry, Gillian Flynn. He boasts a collection of several editions of *The Iliad* “going back a couple hundred years,” which he rereads every few years. He’s currently on an American Revolution bender, having just reread *The Quartet* by Joseph Ellis. Luckily his friend Wednesday Martin’s new book, *The Primates of Park Avenue*, is a sort of memoir about her time spent on the UES (Upper East Side), a habitat she views through an anthropological lens. Therefore reading material for Braverman. “She gives insight into a world that we in the Hamptons know very well,” he says.

Given his reading proclivity, it is fitting that he should host an annual East Hampton Library Author’s Night party along with sponsor HAMPTONS magazine, of which he is editor-at-large. This summer’s fete honored such writers as Ed Burns, Robyn Lea, Mark Murphy and Stephanie Smith. A consummate host, Braverman entertains guests al fresco all summer long with drinks by the outdoor fireplace, and dinner at a long table set with flowers from his prolific garden. And in winter, in the library, of course.

Hamptons Foodie

During summers Judi Desiderio, CEO of Town and Country Real Estate, lives with her husband, John Tracy, and a golden retriever, Emma at the tip of Kings Point in Springs, an idyllic piece of land from which there are views of the North Fork, Plum Island, Connecticut, Gardiner’s Island (from which the sun rises) and Shelter Island (over which the sun sets). In winter they live in a house on Newtown Lane in East Hampton Village.

Desiderio built the Springs’ house based on a cottage she’d seen in Nantucket., emulating details like the pink rose archway that welcomes all into the garden. She uses Rhett Landscape design to create continual color in the garden from the “first daffodil to the last Montauk daisy,” she says “I’ve built all the houses I’ve lived in,” “I love the smell of sawdust, and when I’m finished building I’m ready to go on to the next project.”

The couple’s lives are “all about entertaining,” thus an outdoor kitchen and huge chef’s kitchen from which they “built the house around.” Both husband and wife are self-described “foodies,” with Tracy, a former New York City firefighter who hails from a large Irish family, and Desiderio, who comes from a large Italian family, spending much time preparing meals for their continual parade of houseguests. Tracy fly fishes directly from the shore in front of the house, or takes out the 25-foot Wellcraft. Dinner can be striped bass or fluke poached with tomatoes and herbs from the garden. Or it might be Iacono chickens roasted in the smoker along with a grilled garden eggplant tart made with fresh mozzarella from Red Horse Market and fennel sausages from Villa Italian Specialties.

Along with food, much in the house is of local origin. Décor is from such neighborhood emporiums as Fishers Home Furnishings, English Country Antiques and Hildreth’s Home Goods. Art was made by area artists including Ralph Carpentier, Priscilla Bowden and Ted Jeremenko. The kitchen cabinets made from reclaimed wood from an 18th-century Canadian barn, is one material that couldn’t be sourced here. Ditto for the kitchen’s limestone floors. Judi cashed in her stocks and bonds years ago to invest “only in East End dirt.” The Hamptons, where she stockpiles her own real estate inventory, she believes, are a “proven winner.”

Her home is her “happy place,” the hideout to which she retreats at the end of the day. “The real estate business is very cerebral,” she says. “When I come home I exhale for the first time with the help of mother nature.”

Southampton Sanctuary

Tim Davis of The Corcoran Group, who has been named the number one Hamptons’ broker for the past two years, considers his four-acre compound sited on a picture-perfect estuary his “sanctuary...a total escape from my business in the village where I can really unwind.” When he bought the property 16 years ago, Davis declares, “It was the most beautiful site I’d ever seen.” It was also “completely overgrown,” a fact that’s hard to imagine now when beholding the rolling lawn and restrained landscaping. “I had always wanted to live on the water and this just felt right to me.” When he saw that the land was located on his namesake, Davis Creek, he knew it was his “calling.”

The aquatic surroundings proved to be the ideal place in which to raise three boys, now ages 20 to 26. A dock allows all sorts of summer activities including boating, fishing, kayaking and paddle boarding. “I wanted the boys to grow up on the water; it was a life-changing experience for them.” When asked how much the land would cost now, he estimates “20 to 30 times more” than he spent.

The five-bedroom house is modest in scale. “I didn’t want to build a mansion,” he says. He preferred a “house we could grow with” to include extended family. He and his wife, Susan, have been making a lot of changes lately, instigated by pipes that froze last February. Luckily the couple was home to notice water pouring through a light fixture. Since then they have replaced many downstairs walls and added coffered ceilings in the living room and den. While at it they decided to give the furnishings a “facelift” and add some “modern elements.” In the living room the subtle palette of soft brown, blues and tan, is counterbalanced by a vibrant painting by German-born New York abstract painter, Friedel Dzubas, which Davis was drawn to at an art-staged event at one of his listings. Davis has a sweet spot for one of his two guesthouses. Known as the “Flower Cottage,” it was originally a kit house featured at the Madison Square Garden Flower Show, and moved to the property in the 1930s. He extensively renovated it and jokingly refers to it as the “Ritz-Carleton,” based on the generous amenities – think Champagne, cheeses, muffins – provided for guests. The Davises entertain regularly, hosting Friday night dinner parties at sunset. Their guests, who hail from all over the world “are always in awe of the view, of the whole experience.”