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An island retreat for sale in Yorktown

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When you think of island life, northern Westchester doesn't usually come to mind.

But Enrica Staeger has a 1-acre private island in Mohegan Lake. The compound boasts a four-bedroom main house, one-bedroom guest house, garage, boat house, circular driveway, goldfish pond and its own bridge from the mainland on Lakefront Avenue in Yorktown (that first long drive over the one-lane roadway with wooden railings is a bit unnerving, but the Yorktown Fire Department has said it's just fine).

The property is now on the market for \$959,222, down from just over \$1 million when it was first listed with Mark J. Seiden Real Estate Inc. To help sell the house, Staeger hired Jennifer Stoltz of First Impressions Home Staging Inc. in Ossining to help her declutter the house and get rid of personal photos and mementoes and any extraneous decorations and move them into storage.

"Her house is located on a lake, which is such an incredible feature, but when you first walked in you saw a living room filled with furniture and much of it was facing away from the water, and there was a big TV on the wall," Stoltz says. "We removed about half the furniture and took the focus off the TV and got the sofa facing out to the windows."

"She also had a rug that was too big for the space," Stoltz says. "It actually made the room look smaller."

You can certainly see the effects of her work as soon as you step inside the front door and into the 28-by-17-foot living room that now feels extremely spacious, spare and open to views of the lake on all sides.

"There's a lake view from every window in the house," says Staeger, the treasurer of Wüsthof-Trident of America, the knife-making company that's headquartered in Ossining. "The colors are just gorgeous in fall and in summer it looks like a Monet painting, with that bridge and the water lilies out on the lake."

"We also have great birds here," she says. "It's like a paradise here for a nature lover." (Fencing keeps Canada geese out of the yard, Staeger says.)

In addition to the large living room, the first floor of the 2,330-square-foot main house has a den, dining room, home office (or bedroom) and long galley-style kitchen and eating area with maple cabinets, double sink and appliances from Bosch and GE's Profile and Monogram series.

"The eat-in kitchen area was another area where there was too much going on," Stoltz says. "We removed some plants that didn't look too healthy, and I encouraged her to take all the accessories off the counters."

The back end of the kitchen opens to an attractive mud room with a full bathroom and laundry facilities. The second floor holds three simple bedrooms, including a master with a walk-in closet and bathroom with Jacuzzi tub, double sink and marble floor.

The Colonial-style house dates to 1940. Staeger and her late husband, Hans, did a gut rehab and complete remodeling of every room in 2001, including replacing the concrete footings and adding a new roof, central air-conditioning and furnace.

The Staegers also renovated the charming light-filled guest house. It could be used as a studio, home for extended family or as an income-producing rental property. The 900-square-foot house that was built in the 1970s has an open floor plan with a full kitchen, four skylights and fireplace in the living room.

Across from the front door of the vinyl-sided main house, there's a large wooden deck on the edge of the lake and a boat launch into the water. You can also see perennial beds and the remains of two small vegetable gardens.

Staeger says that she and her husband had many great parties out on the lake in their pontoon boat, which sits just inside the boat house.

"That's the present at the closing - keys to the boat house and that party boat," she says.

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