

**From:** [REDACTED] >

**To:** Ike Groff <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Re: A Connecticut Charmer Story from WSJ on Saturday

**Date:** Mon, 28 Dec 2015 14:36:58 +0000

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wow cool..

On Dec 28, 2015, at 9:31 AM, Ike Groff <[REDACTED]> wrote:

## A Connecticut Charmer

New Canaan, Conn., relishes its history but looks ahead with new retail and condominium projects

<image001.jpg>ENLARGE

Businesses on Elm Street. 'What really sells New Canaan to people looking for a house is the village,' said Carl Franco, who runs a wine shop with his brother. *PHOTO: CLAUDIO PAPAPIETRO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

By

**PATRICE O'SHAUGHNESSY**

Updated Dec. 25, 2015 7:04 [REDACTED] ET

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There's a lot that is new in New Canaan, which prides itself on remaining old-fashioned.

The southern Connecticut burg is known for modern mansions, Victorian gems and stately colonials; lush parks and pristine white-spired churches; and its Norman Rockwellesque downtown.

"The corner of Main and Elm [streets]—that's my favorite place," said Chris Hussey, 75 years old, who has lived in New Canaan all her life.

"That's where I take anyone looking to move here," said the longtime real-estate broker.

At this time of year, pine boughs encircle the lampposts, sparkling lights abound and carolers stroll. Walking through God's Acre, a triangle of lawn between three 19th-century churches uphill from Main Street, is like stepping back two centuries.

But there are new condominium developments to meet changing needs of empty-nest residents and spur growth of businesses and the tax base.

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“We’ve seen an emphasis to purchase in town because the village is so attractive,” said First Selectman Robert Mallozzi III, chief executive of New Canaan, which has nearly 20,000 residents.

Forest Street has become a restaurant row, with a half-dozen eateries in the shadow of a partially built condo complex where workmen scurried on the roof one day.

New developments must fit in with the character of the historic town. “There is a 30-foot height limit, and we ask for clapboard trim and slate roofs,” said Mr. Mallozzi.

The Forest Street project, called Heritage Square, has condos selling for about \$1.8 million. There will be retail space on the ground floor.

A major mixed-use development is under way at Vitti and Cross streets, where 30 condo units and retail stores will replace industrial businesses, said Mr. Mallozzi.

New Canaan is one of the wealthiest towns in the nation. Lavish houses can run upward of \$5 million. Grander homes in the rural areas usually have 3 or 4 acres.

But even some of the homes near town with an acre or less are going for millions.

The median sale price of a home in New Canaan is about \$1.3 million and the average listing price is about \$2 million, according to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Connecticut is known for lower property taxes. In New Canaan, the rate is 1% so the tax bill would be \$10,000 for a house valued at \$1 million, said Mr. Mallozzi.

Downtown has Ann Taylor and Ralph Lauren stores, and individually owned floral shops, toy stores, antique shops, galleries and clothing boutiques.

<image003.jpg>ENLARGE

Waveny House in New Canaan, Conn., a Tudor mansion built in 1912 for Texaco founder Lewis Lapham, can be rented for meetings, cultural activities and social events. *PHOTO: CLAUDIO PAPAPIETRO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

Carl Franco has lived in New Canaan his whole life and runs Francos Wine Merchants on Elm Street with his brother, Rick. His uncle, Albert Franco, opened the store the day Prohibition ended, in 1933. It was the first store on Elm Street and has been a family-run anchor in the community ever since.

“What really sells New Canaan to people looking for a house is the village,” he said. “A lot of towns in Fairfield County have businesses along Route 1; we have a town center.”

The other main selling point is the highly regarded school system. The population of the junior high, for example, is expected to increase by 300 students by 2020, Mr. Mallozzi said.

“A lot of new people come for the schools and leave right after the kids graduate,” said Ms. Hussey.

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A new cultural asset to the town is Grace Farms Community Center, an architecturally acclaimed, multipurpose structure on a 75-acre former horse farm on the northern reaches of town, along the New York state border. It opened in October and draws visitors from across the region.

“We are bookended with that and with Philip Johnson’s Glass House,” said Mr. Mallozzi, referring to the famous postmodern, flat-roofed house.

Last month, the town approved an operating agreement with the new Waveny Park Conservancy, a citizens group formed to raise funds to refurbish the largest of the seven parks in the town. Waveny is 250 acres on a hill formerly owned by Lewis Lapham, a Texaco founder. It has all manner of recreational facilities as well as a Tudor mansion for events like weddings, and the PowerHouse Performing Arts Center.

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Lunchtime at Chef Luis on Elm Street. PHOTO: CLAUDIO PAPAPIETRO FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

**Schools:** The New Canaan Public School district consists of three elementary schools; Saxe Middle School for grades five through eight, serving some 1,200 students; and New Canaan High School, with 1,800 students.

In 2015, average SAT scores for New Canaan students were 582 in reading, 609 in math and 594 in writing, compared with the statewide average of 494, 495 and 494 respectively, according to state data.

**Dining:** A couple dozen restaurants featuring various fare, including old favorites such as Ching’s Table and Barolo Trattoria and Wine Bar on Main Street, as well as Chef Luis restaurant on Elm Street. Town mainstay Gates Restaurant & Bar, Tequila Mockingbird and Cava Wine Bar are on Forest Street.

**Transportation:** The commute from Grand Central Terminal to New Canaan on Metro-North Railroad’s New Haven line is about 70 minutes. The drive from New York City on the scenic Merritt Parkway takes about 70 minutes with no traffic.

**Parks:** Besides Waveny, parks include Kiwanis Park, the public swimming facility, and Mead Memorial Park, with a large pond for ice skating as well as the Lodge restaurant. The Bristow Bird Sanctuary is a quiet spot to enjoy nature. New Canaan’s newest park is the 36-acre Irwin Park, with jogging and walking trails.

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