



At \$6.25 million, Garrison Field offers plenty of wow for then and now.



English Lessons

This Tudor mansion is a showcase for Anglo-American design.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

The acid test for being an Anglophile is, “Can you produce an unretouched photograph of Prince Philip and Prince Edward seated in either of your two Rolls Royces?” Manhattan investment counselor Bruce D. Bent can do this, twice over.

On top of that, he and Van Stewart own Garrison Field.

“I bought it from Colin Hampton [president of Union Mutual Life Insurance Co.],” who owned it from 1974 until 1993.

“The house gets its name from the British, who kept a fort and supply dock here in pre-Revolutionary days,” says listing agent William Davisson of LandVest, who is offering this Cotswold-style castle on 14 lush acres of bold Cape Elizabeth oceanfront for \$6.25 million.

“It’s the first \$6.25 million listing I’ve ever been into that’s actually worth \$6.25 million,” our photographer says.

But then, Garrison Field has always enjoyed a wow factor leagues beyond just ‘curb appeal.’

Built in 1928 on Pulpit Rock Road (off Old Ocean House Road) for Walter Goodwin Davis, this is the summer



Original owner Walter G. Davis participated in the Paris Peace Treaties at the close of World War I as a young Army lawyer. New York buddy William Lawrence Bottomley designed Davis's winter residence on the Western Prom—a copy of a home in Regency Park, London.



house to end all summer homes in Maine.

Portland architect John Pickering Thomas, a friend of Davis's, created this fanciful country manor out of Indiana limestone to make it the toast of Spring Cove. Just a walk beside the pool here—"one of the first two in Cape Elizabeth"—is so evocative of the 1920s you expect to see a model of the *True Love* gliding across the blue water toward the green-lattice arbor and his-and-hers changing rooms.

During our visit—fully as fun as touring one of the Newport, Rhode Island, mansions—Bent points to chimney pots serving eight massive fireplaces as the roofline dips and swoops. "See how each of these has a different de-



sign? That's a Cotswold trait."

Shadowed with verdigris, the copper gutters repeat a floral motif, with the collector on the façade proclaiming 1928.

Entering through the massive front door after arriving on the circular driveway, your guests will love the formal hallway with slate floors connecting to the great room, dining room, and west wing. There's a beamed ceiling here and a fireplace to take the chill off.

The floors shift from slate to dark, wide-planked oak as you find yourself running to the great room (40 feet by 21 feet, six inches). The vaulted ceiling, "crowned with hammer-beamed framing," is 32-feet high.



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A recent addition is the open gallery with balustrade in red oak. Designed by Stewart, who studied under legendary photographer Philippe Halsman, it makes the great room even greater.

Over the granite fireplace is a massive, carved Scottish unicorn and British lion—perfect for the room but not for sale unless you make arrangements by separate treaty.

“It was created during Victoria’s reign, before she was married,” Bent says.

Triple-tiered windows flood the space with light from the bright blue sea.

Another of Stewart’s inspirations is a gorgeous oak doorway that opens to the seaside

FROM TOP: LANDVEST/STEVE RUBICAM; JENNIFER KEARNS



terrace with more knockout views of the ocean and private pool.

In the library, wavy half-timbers add conviviality to a room that glows with a bespoke overmantel oil-on-canvas of historic Cape Elizabeth by Kennebunkport's Roger Deering (1904-1980).

After you stop at the bar, a dutch door conducts you to the pool from here, too.

*W*alter Goodwin Davis (1885-1966) was one of Portland's richest young men. His grandfather made his fortune as owner/partner, with James Phinney Baxter, of the world-famous Portland Packing Co. Not only did this firm can



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Present owner **Bruce D. Bent**, who earned his fortune as a Manhattan investment counselor, is also past president of the **Palm Beach Symphony**. He recently listed his **Palm Beach** house "**Hogarcito**," once the property of **E. F. Hutton & Marjorie Merriweather Post**, for **\$19.5M**.





Post's **other home** in Palm Beach, "**Mar-a-Largo**," is now owned by **Donald Trump**.

much of the meat eaten by Union soldiers during the Civil War, there was once a time when, if you wanted, say, some hermetically sealed canned corn, you had to get it from Portland Packing Co., because it held the patents, according to historian Danny D. Smith in his biography *Walter Goodwin Davis: A Scholar's Unique Contribution to New England Genealogy* (Anthoensen Press, 1985).

Talk about the catbird seat!

Young Walter (think Jeremy Irons with his pencil moustache in *Brideshead Revisited*) first went to Phillips Exeter Academy, then Yale (Skull & Bones), then Harvard Law School before earning his commission as a captain in the Army, serving as "Assistant Military Attaché and Liaison Officer to the British Military Office," Smith writes. "On 20 December 1918, he was attached to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace in Paris and a week later was sent to Vienna with a group of officers directed by Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge to study

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JESSE STENBAK; JENNIFER KEARNS; LANDVEST/STEVE RUBICAM



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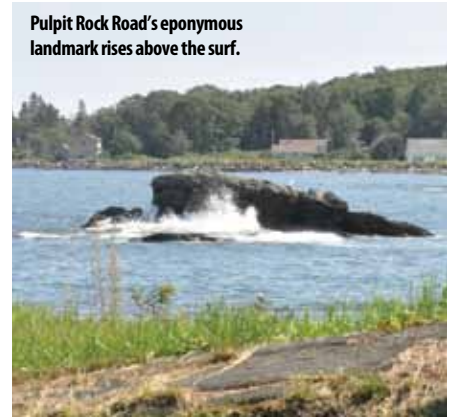
TALKING WALLS

and report to the American Commission upon political and economic conditions in the nations which formed the old Austro-Hungarian Empire."

That is, when post-war Europe was sliced up like a pie, with new countries created with new names, Walter G. Davis, almost like Forrest Gump, was holding the knife.

As Yale University tells the story, via Smith: "...At the time when Austria-Hungary had gone to pieces, and when the situation in Vienna was acute, he was brought into touch with the leading finan-

Pulpit Rock Road's eponymous landmark rises above the surf.



The shore sparkles against the English conservatory from Marston & Langer of London.





TALK ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE
 These marble tiles were rescued from
 a demolished bank in Portland.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: JENNIFER KEARNS/STEVE RUBICAM, JENNIFER KEARNS/LANDVEST/STEVE RUBICAM



ciers and business men. As a result of these contacts he provided the Peace Conference with most important information on economic topics and also upon political questions touching the boundary of [Y]ugoslavia, the Tyrol, and German Bohemia.”

Returning to Portland after working as an attorney in Manhattan after the war, he served decades as President of Portland Savings Bank as well as guarded his interests at Portland Packing Co., which operated until 1955.

Davis, an elegant writer and the author of 19 genealogical books, was president of Maine Historical Society for “nearly a quarter century,” Smith writes, from 1930-1953.

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Bruce D. Bent, left, and Van Stewart are thoughtful stewards of Garrison Field, where they keep part of their antique car collection when they're not in Palm Beach. They purchased the 14-acre oceanfront estate off Old Ocean House Road from the late Colin Hampton (1923-2002), president of Union Mutual Life Insurance Co.

"He virtually saved Maine Historical during the Great Depression with his own finances," Smith says. Knowing these details "adds a human touch" to Garrison Field.

Because Davis took "ocean voyages" to England nearly every season, we can only imagine the treasures he brought back to Garrison Field, perhaps storing them in the three-door, two-story garage here or at his winter home on the Western Prom (No. 155, designed by William Lawrence Bottomley after Davis's mother sent the young architect to London to copy a house she loved in Regency Square [see "Worldly Walls," Summerguide 2010]). "Many items wound up at the Historical Society," Smith says of their vast collection of English antiques.

*O*n the personality front, surely neighbors Bette Davis and Gary Merrill stopped by for a cup of sugar—or a slug of 18-year-old scotch—during their fiery seven-year (1953-1960) interlude next door (okay, a three-iron away) at "Witch Way." Named by Bette, "Witch Way" has since been torn down, with a new structure built in its place.

In the here and now, Bent is justifiably proud to show us his office, which Colin Hampton paneled in sumptuous knotty pine. The modern Bosch kitchen glows smartly in green beadboard and granite. The copper sink coordinates successfully with the fabulous original zinc sink in the pantry.

More goodies include an ancient stone pump house at water's edge with a modern bedroom and an English conservatory



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approaching the shore. Photos of celebs like pal Kitty Carlisle testify to Bent's service as past president of the Palm Beach Symphony and present owner of "Hogarcito," (a 1921 Mediterranean palace in Palm Beach built for financier E. F. Hutton and his wife, the former Marjorie Merriweather Post)...but here at Garrison Field, all roads lead back to the great room.

Bruce Bent surveys his green lawn as it slopes to his private beach and the sea. He points above the enormous window to a truly nice rack.

"Do you see these? They're bigger than moose antlers, larger than elk. They're the 8,000-year-old, petrified antlers of an Irish deer elk, long extinct, discovered in a bog."

What can you say to that? To all of the mythic grandeur of Garrison Field?

"They don't make 'em that way anymore."

During your next mini-break, you should tour this wonderland. Call ahead re: the Vicars-&-Tarts attire. Taxes are \$51,704.70. ■

▶▶ For more, visit portlandmonthly.com/port-mag/2011/09/english-lessons-extras.

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