

...publishers choice



By Brenda Lange
Interior photography by John Armich

A home with a garden somehow always feels more complete. Whether to observe and admire or stroll around, gardens are beautiful, tranquil places.

Tucked away in one of the premier locations in Bucks County, Tarp Farm boasts many amenities of a highly desirable property. Among those features are its well-planned and tended gardens that envelop one in their simple quietude.

The elegant serenity of Tarp Farm's gardens was planned to the smallest detail by renowned landscape architect Carter van Dyke.

"These gardens were exquisitely designed for maximum pleasure, with minimal upkeep," says Linda Krick Danese, of Kurfiss Sotheby's International Realty, and listing Realtor.

The planning and implementation phases of the gardens are complete—accomplished by the designers and the present owners, Susan and Michael Wert.

"They worked hard to bring the gardens to this level, but now they don't require much work at all. One of the things the Werts love the most is the extreme privacy afforded here," says Danese. "You can't even see the home from the road; it's set back on more than eight acres, surrounded by woodlands and open fields. You get magical views from this home."

The property is actually part of three parcels. One is primarily a vacant fenced pasture, with excellent potential. The other contains a two-bedroom guesthouse and barn with four stalls, perfect for ornamental sheep, donkeys, or miniature ponies. This stunning package of more than 14 acres is bordered by farmland and the Jericho Creek.

The main home was designed by Bruce Lesser. "He is known as the 'keeper of the craft,'" says Danese. "because of his eye for wonderful proportion."

The scale of the rooms is balanced; large, but not overbearing. And the interior is thoughtfully designed for living. The lower level of the home opens onto a Tuscan grotto inspired by the ancient, vine-covered grottos of that lovely countryside. A kitchenette, full bath, wine cellar, and media room are all easily accessible from this relaxing spot. While sitting within the grotto, which overlooks the large built-in, heated pool and spa, it's easy to believe you are on an Italian vacation.

Patios of bluestone and herringbone brick border the grotto and pool area and are surrounded by a wrought iron fence laced with wisteria vines. Add Boston ivy, climatis, forsythia, and fruit trees, and this entire section of the home becomes a private retreat within the larger enclave.

"You could easily spend most of your time living in this area of the home in the summertime," says Danese.

A long rill, or thin watercourse, runs perpendicular to the back of the home, flanked by ewe hedgerows and lighted rows of perennial gardens. Koi ponds sit at either end. An English knot garden of golden globe allium, barberry, and boxwoods—intricately designed in geometric patterns resembling knots—has been planted to one side. A walking path of finely ground gravel traverses the entire area. The paths end at a greenhouse on the upper terrace, and at the loggia and grotto at the lower terrace.

The gardens are not only beautiful and relaxing, but an area of pride and joy for the Werts. Perhaps the best part is they were designed so that some part is always in bloom, providing year-round pleasure.

Each season has its glory at Tarp Farm. The roses' scents are strongest in early summer, and the formal rill garden is in high bloom throughout the rest of that season. Even in the wintertime, the many boxwoods and winter plants keep the gardens interesting.

A wide variety of roses send fragrant scents wafting into the country air, while a separate cutting garden provides multiple bouquets to fill the home with color. Paths connect the rose garden to the rill and grotto through a series of terraces and ivy-covered arches. A pear and apple espalier grow near the guest apartment.

A classic kitchen garden, complete with herbs and vegetables, has been planted right outside the kitchen door, providing easy access for the couple that loves to create culinary delights together.

An area near the front of the home known as "the bowl" is planted with 15,000 daffodils and surrounded by forsythia and other bushes and shrubs. It has been wired and supplied with electrical outlets so it can be tented for larger affairs.

"I just love the flexibility of this property," Danese says enthusiastically. "It's perfect for indoor and outdoor entertaining, whether for a large group, like a wedding, or an intimate family gathering."

Indeed, the Werts have graciously opened their home and gardens many times for fundraising events in support of St. Mary Hospital.

"They love to entertain—they have a passion for it," says Danese, "yet their home is equally comfortable for private evenings for two."

Flexible, private, beautiful...it's hard to imagine a more picture-perfect property.

Tarp Farm is marketed by Kurfiss Sotheby's International Realty. Contact Linda Krick Danese at Linda@Kurfiss.com or 215-794-1300.

Graced by exquisite architecture
and formal gardens

TARP FARM

"distinctive
landscaping creates
magical spaces"



as featured in

- Traditional Home
- Philadelphia Magazine
- Bucks County Town and Country

