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Location seals the deal for Birch Harbor tiny house buyers

GOULDSBORO — Most agreed it would take a special buyer to purchase the tiny house — 12 feet-by-12 feet — perched on a corner lot in the village of Birch Harbor. And then along came Victor and MaryPat Leger, two artists, schoolteachers and independent thinkers who have a passion for the area. Asked why they bought the house, the Legers replied in unison: “Location, location, location.” They like being able to walk to Mc’s Marketplace for groceries and the ability to slip inside The Pickled Wrinkle for a brew and burger.

They also like the proximity to Acadia National Park on the Schoodic Peninsula. “Where we live now in Winchester Center, Connecticut, we can’t walk to anything,” MaryPat said. “It’s a 15-minute drive to get a gallon of milk.”

“And we spend a lot of time in the park doing plein air work,” Victor said. The two have been vacationing on the Schoodic Peninsula for five or six years, usually a week at a time. They decided they wanted a place of their own after spending three weeks as artists-in-residence at the Schoodic Institute last summer.

When they called the Realtor, Al DiMarco, and asked about the house, he told them: “It’s small.” But they remain undeterred by the shoebox space that includes a bathroom with a toilet and shower, a small food preparation area, a loft double bed with storage beneath and a drop leaf table that will serve as their dining area.

“We’re working the design to make it very palatial,” said Victor, standing beneath a portable CD player hanging from the ceiling on a harness. “Everything has a dual purpose. It’s like living on a small boat.”

The Legers closed on the property Oct. 8 and paid \$60,900, which was slightly above the \$59,900 asking price because they asked that the concrete pad be extended under the deck. They plan to screen in the front deck and eventually enclosed it in with glass to make it usable year-round. The Legers also dream of building a 12-foot-by-16-foot studio on the lot. MaryPat is a quilter whose work ranges from the traditional to pictorial and landscape quilts.

She too works plein air. “I take two large tubs of fabric out to the location, I set up an easel with a 1-inch-thick foam insulation board as my ‘canvas,’” she said. MaryPat cuts the various elements of the scene — sky, trees, water and rocks — from the fabric and pins them to the board with straight pins. Later she will attach the pieces with a fabric adhesive and then quilts several layers together on her sewing machine. Her work is available at Works of Hand Gallery in Winter Harbor.

Victor works in oil and completes 90 percent of his paintings in the outdoors. He studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and the Pratt Institute and has exhibited widely in Connecticut as well as in New York and Santa Fe. Leger said his focus is the interaction of light on the environment. “I find Schoodic Point a magical place, a kind of Elysium, a place that is beyond Earth,” he said. “We have probably driven through the park 300 times over the past seven years and it never gets old and always seems different.” His work is available at the Littlefield Gallery in Winter Harbor.

MaryPat said she is drawn to the ocean views on the Peninsula and the rocks with shades running from light gray to black, brown to pink, all in the same view. “And of course, besides the natural beauty of the landscape, the wonderful people we have met that all ask us, ‘So, when are you moving up here?’” made us know this was the place we wanted to be,” she said. Until they retire, the Legers hoped to spend long weekends at their new home each month and at least half of the summer. Leger said he welcomes the possibilities of working for longer periods of time because his window of opportunity in terms of light is usually three to five hours. “Then the light changes,” he said.

The house was built by Christina Holloway, David Trombley and Ida McGee, all of Steuben.

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Jacqueline Weaver

Reporter at The Ellsworth American

Jacqueline's beat covers the eastern Hancock County towns of Lamoine through Gouldsboro as well as Steuben in Washington County. She was a reporter for the *New York Times*, United Press International and Reuters before moving to Maine. She also publicized medical research at Yale School of Medicine and scientific findings at Yale University for nine years. jweaver@ellsworthamerican.com