

HOME & GARDEN

\$4.5M French manor in Orono boasts palatial rooms and 'resort-like' pool and gardens

There's also a state-of-the-art kitchen with two marble-topped islands, a custom La Cornue French oven and appliance lifts.

By Kim Palmer (<https://www.startribune.com/kim-palmer/6370606/>) Star Tribune |

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Louis XIV would probably feel right at home in a stately European-style manor in Orono that recently hit the market for \$4.495 million.

With rooms on a grand scale, gracefully curving wrought-iron details and opera balconies overlooking the great room, the home has a regal French air — and enough chandeliers to stock a lighting gallery.

But the home also has all the modern bells and whistles that a 17th-century monarch couldn't have imagined, like a state-of-the-art kitchen with two marble-topped islands, a custom La Cornue French oven and appliance lifts.

There's also a butler's pantry with pocket doors and its own island, a wood-paneled library, a billiard room, an exercise room, five bedrooms (all with en suite bathrooms) and a backyard pool with gardens that create a resort-like setting. Carved woodwork, built-ins and multiple box-beam ceilings give every room a luxurious vibe.

The original owners hired professionals — including Peter Eskuche, Eskuche Design Group, and builder Steiner & Koppelman — to create what was intended to be their “forever home,” said Debbie McNally, real estate agent with Lakes Sotheby's. “It's an exquisite house with a hit parade of good parentage. Nothing was spared” during its 2006-07 construction.

The home's distinctive architecture attracted the current owners, who bought the place two years ago.

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French manor in Orono

“It has very classic lines with balance and symmetry,” said owner Tom Abood. “The layout is tremendous with generous hallways and nice large rooms.”

The living room/great room, for example, measures a palatial 36-by-20 feet, and the main-floor master bedroom is a spacious 24-by-17. There are 10,000 finished square feet in all, with potential for two more bedrooms on the lower level.

Abood also was drawn to the private setting on 2.6 acres surrounded by nature. “It’s close to everything yet still feels secluded,” he said.

Lake Minnetonka is across the street, and downtown Wayzata is 10 minutes away.

Abood and his wife, Amara, gave the house a major refresh, updating the kitchen, including adding the marble and the French stove, replacing hardware and fixtures throughout the home and lightening the color palette to a lot of crisp white with silver accents.

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“My wife was the design visionary,” Abood said. “She has a very good eye.”

The couple have decided to sell the house and relocate to Arizona, where Abood’s job is based. “I got tired of commuting,” he said.

“When I think about leaving I clench up. We love the home and its location. But it’s harder to think about being away from my family several days a week,” he said.

While the home's size, materials and craftsmanship are on a grand scale, its layout and features were designed for modern living, McNally noted. "It's beautiful — it really is like a museum — but it has a casual coziness that's perfect for a family house."

Debbie McNally, 612-388-1790, Lakes Sotheby's, has [the listing](https://debbiemcnally.com/featured-listings/propertydetail/230/1000-old-crystal-bay-road) (<https://debbiemcnally.com/featured-listings/propertydetail/230/1000-old-crystal-bay-road>). There will be an open house 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 11, and another 1 to 3 p.m. Jan. 12. The address is 1200 Old Crystal Bay Rd., Orono.

Kim Palmer is editor/reporter for the Homes section of the Star Tribune. Previous coverage areas include city government, real estate and arts and entertainment

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