


# ‘A house that’s meant to be full’: Niagara-on-the-Lake estate with sweeping gardens listed for \$5.8M

Located in the Old Town, 217 Butler St. is within walking distance to Shaw Festival theatres and downtown shops and restaurants.

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This two-storey detached home at 217 Butler St. in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town neighbourhood is listed for sale for \$5.8 million.

Johnson & Daniel photo

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By **Victoria Nicolaou** Reporter

## **Community: Niagara-on-the-Lake**

### **Price: \$5.8 million**

When Harriet (Sis) Bunting Weld purchased her home in Niagara-on-the-Lake at 217 Butler St., she took the 510-square-metre building down to the studs, undertaking extensive renovations for the next 16 years.

She blew out the ceilings of the master bedroom, installed a gas fireplace and enclosed an outdoor porch and turned it into an indoor addition, enlarging the footprint of the house.



An outdoor porch was closed in to create a living room addition.

Johnson & Daniel photo

In the back, Bunting Weld fenced in the property, maintained a large in-ground pool and built a spacious and tranquil garden, filled with perennial shrubs, flowers and mature trees — including azaleas, peonies, rose bushes and exotic plants that bloom through spring, summer and fall.

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The backyard has played host to Niagara-on-the-Lake garden tours and welcomed Shaw Festival, holding season-opening parties over its many years.

“It’s a wonderful house to live in. I spend a lot of time in the winter, sitting beside my little fireplace in the bedroom,” Bunting Weld said, adding she only recently has been able to enjoy the backyard garden — sitting, reading and taking a swim in the pool.

“I’ve done a lot to (the house) ... the kitchen was a family room, the kitchen is now the dining room and the dining room is now the library (and) I changed all the bedrooms upstairs.”

As a young girl, she spent summers in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Her father, a colonel with the Governor General’s Horse Guards in Toronto, trained troops nearby as her family enjoyed the town, golfing and riding horses.

As an adult, she left Toronto and returned to the region, buying two homes before purchasing the property on Butler Street. The home has become a gathering spot for her entire family (and many friends) who visit for golfing,



The property features extensive gardens.

Johnson & Daniel photo

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The renovated kitchen.

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fishing and theatre. Bunting Weld has been tied to Shaw Festival since its inception, including as a member of its board in the 1990s. But now, at age 92, as she loses her ability to easily walk around, the former real estate agent — she has listed her home for sale at \$5.8 million — has



begun to change her thought process.



The two-storey home features an in-ground pool.

Johnson & Daniel photo

"I don't think I want to keep up with a lot of land. It is wonderful. I think to myself, 'Sis, why are you doing this?' But I am," she said, adding she has no plans to leave Niagara-on-the-Lake.

"The garden sells itself ... at night, the lighting comes on and it is very pretty, going up to the trees."

The Butler Street property was built in 1931 for a son of nearby residents. It's about 0.4 hectares of land, considered by the town as an estate lot, which Bunting Weld 's daughter — Leeanne Weld has taken after her mother in the real estate business — said is "rare and sought after."



The sitting room.

The Old Town property is opposite Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, the oldest course in North America, and Lake Ontario is just beyond, with “beautiful open views” leading to “tranquility and beauty.”

“You very much live with the elements in Mom’s house because of the lake effect, and on the days that it’s really placid, you hardly even think it’s a big huge lake like it is, and other days, it’s got whitecaps,” said Weld.

“I like the fact that the views really change depending on what’s happening on the lake.”



The primary bedroom features a recently installed gas fireplace.

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The house features four bedrooms, with a separate annex — previous owners converted the second bay of a two-car garage into an in-law or guest suite — containing a bedroom, living room and a fully-equipped kitchen.

There is another bedroom on the top level, with an ensuite bathroom.

The property features multiple walkouts, fireplaces (gas and wood), landscape lighting and an irrigation system.

It’s a quiet town in the winter, bustling in the summer, but an area in which “you want for nothing,” said Weld.

“You’re in this really leafy quiet setting, but in five minutes’ time you can walk up the main drag and be in town for shops and restaurants,” said Weld.

“When you think of Niagara-on-the-Lake, it is this kind of house — it’s a white clapboard house that just fits in with the landscape and has a lot of, obviously,



character and charm.”



The home sits across from Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club and is within walking distance to downtown restaurants and theatres.

Johnson & Daniel photo

The home itself is traditional, with grand walls that display Bunting Weld’s art and photography collections. If that appeals to potential buyers, her daughter said the house is ready and in very good condition, but if someone is looking for a more contemporary style, “you might feel that there’s work to do to make it suit your taste.”

“It is a great house to entertain in and it’s a great house to sleep a whole bunch of people. As a family, we can all be down at any given time and there’s room for everybody,” she said.

“Mom’s house is like a revolving door, particularly during the Shaw season. There are always people coming down and she loves to have people stay and she loves to have them come over for a cup of tea or come for a swim. It’s a house that’s meant to be full.”

**\$5,800,000**

217 Butler St., Niagara-on-the-Lake

**Bedroom/bathrooms:** Five bedrooms, six bathrooms

**Living space:** About 510 square metres (5,500 square feet)

**Lot size:** 0.5 to 1.99 acres

**Property taxes:** \$26,809.05

**Features:** Two-storey residential home with hardwood floors and gas and wood fireplaces; central vacuum and air conditioning; six bedrooms

and five bathrooms, including a guest suite with fully equipped kitchen; in-ground pool and full landscaped and fenced yard.

**Neighbourhood:** Located in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Old Town, 217 Butler St. is within walking distance to Shaw Festival theatres and downtown shops and restaurants. It is steps away from Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Club, the oldest course in North America.