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PRIVATE PROPERTIES

A 50-Room French Castle Asks \$17.1 Million

Château de Villersexel is located in northeast France, near the Swiss border.

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By CANDACE TAYLOR CONNECT Nov. 27, 2013 7:19 p.m. ET

When Baron Jean-Pierre Potet bought a 50-room, Louis XIII -style château in the French countryside 40 years ago, it was empty. Occupied by German soldiers during World War II, the castle had been looted, with nearly all of its furnishings stolen, Mr. Potet said.

See Inside the Homes



This roughly 38,000-square-foot castle is listed for about \$17.1 million, including furnishings. *Fares Dingreville*

15 bathrooms. The property, where the Potets run a boutique hotel, is on about 74 acres and includes horse stables and a working farm.



A castle in France called Château de Villersexel hits the market for 12.6 million euros. Southampton's glamorous Normandy House sells for \$28 million. Candace Taylor takes a peek inside this week's Private Properties. Photo: Fares Dingreville.

abandoned and ripe for looting, he said.

One of the founders of the L'Ecole des Métiers de la Communication, a graduate

Luckily for him, he said, it was Frenchmen who did the stealing. That meant he's been able to retrieve nearly all of the castle's furnishings by trolling antique stores in the area, using old photos as a guide. The castle, where Mr. Potet lives with his wife Corinne and their two children, now looks much as it did a century ago, he said.

Now Mr. Potet is putting the nearly 38,000-square-foot castle and all of its furnishings on the market for about \$17.1 million. Known as the "Château de Villersexel," it has some 30 bedrooms and

Château de Villersexel is in northeast France, near the Swiss border. For centuries, it had been the seat of the Grammonts, a noble French family. The castle was destroyed twice, Mr. Potet said: once around the year 1,000, and again in the Battle of Villersexel in 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War. During World War II, the Marquis de Grammont took part in the French Resistance, ultimately dying in the concentration camp at Dachau, according to Mr. Potet (who can trace his family line back to Charlemagne, but is no relation to the Grammonts). After the war, with the Germans gone, the castle was

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school with locations throughout the world, Mr. Potet purchased the castle from the Grammont family in 1976 for an undisclosed sum. At the time, he said, he "wanted to run away from Paris" and was looking for a simpler life. Now he says he's selling because he wants a smaller place.

Xavier Attal of Paris-based Immo Best International has the listing.

Lake Tahoe Home of Baseball Player Ty Cobb Goes on the Market for \$6.5 Million

When Ty Cobb was a teenager, his father wrote him a letter extolling the beauties of nature.

"To be educated is not only to be master of the printed page but [to] be able to catch the messages of star, rock, flower, [and] bird," W.H. Cobb wrote.

That is a message the baseball Hall of Famer carried with him throughout his life, according to his granddaughter, Leslie McLaren. And nowhere was her grandfather's love of nature more in evidence, she said, than at his hunting and fishing lodge on Lake Tahoe. The lodge "was really the place that grandfather came home to himself," she said.

The lakefront house, which Mr. Cobb purchased in 1938 after retiring from baseball, is now being sold by Ms. McLaren and other members of his family. The 2,438-square-foot, four-bedroom, four-bathroom house on a 2¼-acre site in Zephyr Cove is listed for \$6.5 million with David Cloutier of Coldwell Banker Select Real Estate. Ms. McLaren declined to discuss the reasons for selling the property.

The property has 147 feet of lake frontage, with two buoys for boats, Mr. Cloutier said. He added that there are two other buildable lots on the site. "Having this land mass with this lake waterfront is very unique" in the area, he said.

Ms. McLaren, who was 12 when Mr. Cobb died, said she has fond memories of spending summers with him at Lake Tahoe. She remembers her grandfather, who grew up on a farm in Georgia, "loving nature, loving the out-of-doors," she said.

Initially, the house was a "little bitty cabin," Ms. McLaren said. There was a master bedroom and three smaller bedrooms, she said, though she and her siblings often slept outside in tents on summer nights. A great room, with a large granite fireplace, was decorated with "all sorts of skins and heads" from animals her grandfather had hunted, she recalled. The family enlarged and modernized the house in 1992, and while the animal pelts are gone, the fireplace is still there with the original andirons, she said.

A Historic Hamptons Estate Sells for \$28 Million

Normandy House, a historic Hamptons estate that hit the market two years ago at \$39 million, has sold for \$28 million.

The deal closed earlier this month, according to the Corcoran Group's Don Gleasner, who represented the seller, Richard Burdge, a onetime president of the American Stock Exchange and a former executive vice president of Cigna. Corcoran agent Tim Davis, who represented the buyer, declined to identify the purchaser.

Mr. Burdge purchased the Southampton property in 1998, Mr. Gleasner said. Called "Normandy House" for its French-style architecture and steeply pitched gray shingle roof, the six-bedroom, 8,000-square-foot house was designed in 1923 by architects Polemus & Coffin, and took seven years to build. The 8.4-acre property also has a matching three-bedroom, 2,000-square-foot guesthouse as well as a pool and pool house. "The gates open and you see this huge expanse, this lovely long driveway lined with apple trees," Mr. Gleasner said. "It's a very grand, beautiful entrance."

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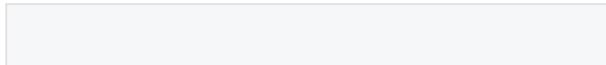
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Apart from its distinctive architecture, Mr. Gleasner said the property is unique for its location on Lake Agawam, which provides "views up and down the lake and out to the ocean," he said. Mr. Davis added that the estate was one of the largest parcels available on the lake. The property can be subdivided if the buyers choose, he said.

As for why it took so long to sell, Mr. Gleasner said, "at the beginning, since it's such a unique property and there's nothing else like it, we weren't sure how to price it," he said.

The property was "a sleeper on the market," Mr. Davis said. "Finally, the right person saw it."

'Burn Notice's Jeffrey Donovan Lists a Miami Condo for \$2.95 Million

Jeffrey Donovan, star of the television spy drama "Burn Notice," is selling a three-bedroom, 2½-bathroom condo in Miami's South Beach.

The apartment, located in the three-building Capri South Beach on 16th Street, is listed for \$2.95 million with Alexandra Rutten of ONE Sotheby's International Realty.

Mr. Donovan bought the 2,000-square foot apartment in 2010 from the developer, and was the first person to live in the unit, Ms. Rutten said. But "Burn Notice," which had been filmed in Miami, recently completed its final season, and Mr. Donovan and his family have now moved out West, she said.

"I had started a family with my wife and the show ended, so it was time to move back to nature," Mr. Donovan said in an email.

Mr. Donovan's apartment is in the "Ana Capri" building. With its own entrance and garage, Ms. Rutten said, the building is "very intimate." A keyed elevator opens directly into each unit. The condo comes with two parking spaces Mr. Donovan owns, Ms. Rutten said.

Mr. Donovan said he was drawn to the seclusion offered by the building. "I wanted privacy," he wrote. "Having your elevator open to your home made me feel really safe."

After moving in, Mr. Donovan said he made significant changes to the unit. "We wanted to soften the modern, travertine look with a New England feel, so we dropped the ceiling and installed wood paneling," he wrote. Another one of his favorite features, he said, is the view of Biscayne Bay from the apartment.

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