



Story by NANCY MCCARTHY | Photos by HUGH MCKENNA, BRANDON BARNES and MARGARET CHAPMAN

Walking into the rooms of the century-old home on Gearhart's Gin Ridge is like walking into a big family hug. It's the feeling that co-owner Margaret Chapman has felt ever since she was a youngster playing in the large cozy rooms of her grandparents' home with an abundant number of siblings and cousins.

"It lives much bigger than the square footage might indicate," Chapman said of the 2,448-square-foot ocean-front home. "Yet it's a great size for just a couple."

The five-bedroom, 2.5-bath home is listed for \$1.895 million with realtors Rinda Shea of Windermere Stellar, and Mimi McCaslin and Anne-Marie Knapp of Christies, Lux Platinum Properties.

Built in 1916, the home is one of the last originals on the impressive Gin Ridge where ocean views stretch all the way to Tillamook Head. A path adjacent to the home leads to the beach. Nearly every room features a view of the ocean, even the window over the sink in the spacious kitchen. But the family is sure to gather in the dining room and the adjacent sun porch where a 50-foot-long wall of windows opens to an expansive view of dunes, ocean and sky. The room is bright and comfortable even on cold, cloudy days.

On beach nights, the brick wood-burning fireplace in the living room is the place to be. A built-in corner seat next to the fireplace is perfect for reading, or there's enough room for family and friends to gather around a jigsaw puzzle on the coffee table for an evening of fun. "There are so many nooks and crannies for people to enjoy," Shea said.

While the "old girl" has a new roof, furnace, plumbing and septic tank, the early century touches remain, including the beadboard and wainscoting on the walls and a second set of "servants' stairs" leading from the kitchen and merging with the living room stairs to the second floor. Hardwood floors throughout the house lie under the wall-to-wall carpeting. "We tried to keep the charm of the house as much as possible," Chapman said.

Included in that charm is a small billiard room in the basement where Chapman and other teenagers played pool and threw darts. Next to the billiard room is a

workbench area where Chapman's grandfather used to putter on projects.

A small bedroom and half-bath are tucked away on the first floor, but four generous bedrooms and two bathrooms take up the second floor. One bedroom has room for two sets of bunk beds while the others will hold queen- or king-size beds. Three of the bedrooms have ocean views.

Outside, a sand pit is set up for volleyball games. The .23-acre lot has plenty of room for camp fires or large gatherings. Land-use restrictions prevent any construction in front of the lot, so the view will endure. Vehicles also are prohibited from driving on that stretch of beach. Chapman recalls days when "mothers (were) sitting there watching their kids, having great conversations while the kids were playing in the sand or playing hide-and-go-seek."

"My grandfather loved clamming," she added. "He would arm all the kids with shovels and bags and we would collect the clams. We would have amazing clam dinners."

Some mornings lend themselves to sitting on the bench outside with a cup of coffee, quietly viewing a herd of elk romping on the dunes. "It's like a wildlife safari out there sometimes," Chapman said. "We can see birds, rabbits, crows, gulls and, occasionally, we can see hawks. There's a lot to see out there. The scene is always changing."

A walk to the town center's grocery, restaurant and bakery – or the annual Fourth of July parade – takes 10 minutes or less. Yet, it's an easy drive to the more bustling Seaside, four miles to the south and to Astoria, 15 miles to the north.

But for peace and tranquility, the "old girl," which has withstood 100 years of blustery as well as blissful beach weather, is always there to welcome visitors. "It's like a little Zen," Chapman said. "It's like you go back in time."

welcome **HOME**

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