

PRIVATE QUARTERS

HOME DESIGN

Spring home tours feature legendary architects, exquisite gardens

By **Marena Galluccio**
Fast Copy/News Service

Spring cleaning takes on a special significance for homeowners and gardeners whose residences are featured in this season's lineup of home tours.

Everything from elaborate gardens to high-end interior design is showcased during the events throughout this month and May.

Atlanta Botanical Gardens' Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour, May 12-13

The Atlanta Botanical Gardens' annual Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour (atlantabtg.org) will feature a collection of 10 private gardens on Mother's Day weekend.

The 24-mile, self-guided tour will feature properties, including an urban oasis and a garden inspired by north Georgia.

"With the varied size and scope of gardens on the tour, there will be inspiration that everyone can take away to create their own private garden oasis," said Alec Michaelides, a principal with Land Plus Landscaping.

He remodeled a garden in Buckhead into a series of spaces, including a formal limestone terrace, a perennial garden with a rose arbor, and a sunken pool and pavilion. Michaelides created a formal boxwood garden in the arrival court, which the homeowners wanted for guest parking. One of his favorite features is the tiered boxwood garden that leads to the rose arbor.

"It becomes more of a separate garden in itself, and I like being up there looking back at the house and the whole rear of the property," he said. "I just love the vantage point from up there."

The trails in a garden in Druid Hills are inspired by the north Georgia mountain terrain, and the garden "celebrates water" with a waterfall and reflecting pool, said designer Eric King of King Landscaping.

"It's more about working with what nature gives you and celebrating the beautiful beech trees, and adding more plants like it that would grow in a forest," he said, adding that he used more than 300 ferns.

Druid Hills Tour of Homes & Gardens, April 20-22

The Druid Hills Tour of Homes & Gardens (druidhillstour.org) is celebrating its 50th anniversary by featuring a collection of 12 private gardens and historic homes, including residences by Atlanta architects Leila Ross Wilburn and Neel Reid.

Reid's original Druid Hills home will be featured on the tour, along with another home he designed on Springdale Road that was constructed in 1919 and expanded about four years ago. Another building, the old Scottish Rite Hospital in Decatur designed by Reid, inspired a family room addition by architect Karen Soorikian in 2014.

"He designs beautiful houses, he really does," said homeowner Kirsten Jacobson. "We didn't want to mess with what he did."

Southeastern Designer Showhouse & Gardens, April 19-May 13

The third annual Southeastern Designer Showhouse & Gardens (southeasternshowhouse.com) is a new Buckhead residence by Atlanta's Harrison Design and Sheehan Built Homes. The rooms are decorated by



The Atlanta Botanical Gardens' annual Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour will feature 10 private gardens, including the home of Meredith Langston and Zach Pressley, on May 12-13.

CONTRIBUTED BY JENNI GIRTMAN / FOR THE AJC

15 interior designers, and the gardens are created by four landscape architecture firms.

The English country-style residence at 2805 Normandy Drive NW spans about 9,800 square feet with seven bedrooms and six baths.

Ryan Hughes of R. Hughes, an Atlanta-based showroom, said their "luxe study" is designed around a palette of golds, pinks and whites with a "glowing moon" light fixture and photography by Mona Kuhn.

Madison in May Spring Tour of Homes, May 4-5

The Madison in May Spring Tour of Homes (madisoninmay.com) will feature eight homes in the historic town, located about an hour east of Atlanta, that span more than 175 years. Styles range from historic to modern as the homes were built from 1832 to 2013.

Dan Belman owns Camp Boxwood, a one-story home built in 1979 that was transformed into a three-story Victorian farmhouse in 2003. Belman said he and his partner Randy Korando of Boxwoods Gardens & Gifts in



A farmhouse residence, called Camp Boxwoods, will be featured in the Madison in May Spring Tour of Homes on May 4-5. CONTRIBUTED BY DAN BELMAN

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DESIGN RECIPES

Get your home ready for rental

By **Cathy Hobbs**
Tribune News Service

Spring has officially arrived. But if you are looking to rent your home or investment property, then you are likely already looking to summer. Summer is typically the hottest season for seasonal and vacation rentals, and spring is the ideal time to start to prep your property with the hope of securing top dollar. Here are some suggestions to help your property show its best, while also making the most of your investment dollars.

Check windows and doors. The spring is an ideal time to make sure all doors and windows open and close properly.

Have your HVAC system serviced. From changing filters to making sure everything is operational, heating and cooling systems may need a checkup.

Install a generator. Summer storms can be just as

devastating as winter ones, and renters will have little sympathy if they are renting a property in which the power is out.

Deep clean. Often, a property may have undergone little maintenance during off months. So in preparation for the new season, now is the time to allow your rental property to experience a deep scrub.

Change the water in your hot tub. If you have a hot tub, now is the time to drain the water, clean surfaces and refill.

Refresh landscaping. Spring is one of the busiest seasons for those in the garden and landscape business, so you will certainly need to book your professional early.

Make provisions to combat pests and insects. If you have an issue with rodents, insects or unwanted animals, they will soon come out of hibernation. Now may be an ideal time to plan for their return.

Install or replace lighting especially along sidewalks and pathways. While the sun sets later in warmer months, you certainly want to make sure your guests have a clear path, even at night.

Plant a seed and watch it grow. The spring is a splendid time to plant a tree you wish to bloom at your rental property next year.

Have your drinking water tested. This is something many homeowners do annually, along with making sure smoke alarms and carbon dioxide monitors have fresh batteries and are fully functional.

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design and home staging expert with offices in New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C. Contact her at info@cathyhobbs.com or visit her website at www.cathyhobbs.com.

Buckhead hope that visitors can see that people can remake a "transform a home with good design and good material."

"It was an amazing transformation," Belman said.

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