

Virtual Tour of Homes and Online Auction Live July 23, 2021

July 23rd, the 2021 Virtual Tour of Homes, and an Online Auction will be launched! The online auction will have items including jewelry, fine dining, events, rentals, and art that you'll learn more about in a later article. This year's virtual tour highlights four homes.

Maison Dans Les Nauges, or House in the Clouds, is the home of Polly and Richard Gambill. First built in the sixties, it was described then by The Charlotte Observer as "a little French townhouse with a mansard roof." It has now been totally remodeled to a large, comfortable mountain home with spacious deck affording spectacular views, making it the perfect full-time home for the Gambills. The French influence has been maintained and beautiful gardens have been newly created. On a clear day you can even see the skyline of Charlotte! The views are truly magnificent!

In the entry, art welcomes family and friends: glass by Fruin, steel art by David Russell Smith and two metal flower framed designs by Tommy Mitchell. The living room is a welcoming space and is the heart of the house. It is a comfortable lounging area with beautiful Southern art. Bass Lake is featured in an oil painting *Summer Serenity* by F. Baggett lending a peaceful ambiance to the room. An eclectic collection of glass and clay art abounds in the room and on the shelves, including glass by Goldhagen, a Terry Lewis signature dogwood vase, and the homeowner's collection of goats by ceramic artists.

On the dining room buffet, *Longboat to Valhalla* is from an Asheville glass artist and the painting *Ever Changing* is by artist Brenda M. Council. The table is ready for a night to remember, with a showstopper ceramic centerpiece made by Jenny Sherburn. The beautiful and spacious deck can be entered off the living and dining areas and has seating, dining and an area for relaxing in the jacuzzi.

Upstairs, the primary bedroom showcases David Eichelberger's, *Wall Tray Set*, and other art pieces that are particularly special. There is a private balcony off the bedroom to enjoy a morning coffee or evening cocktail. The in-suite bathroom and spacious dressing room are every person's dream. Additional second floor bedrooms offer luxurious amenities.

The downstairs guest apartment has wonderful extended living space and a kitchen. Framed world and United States maps pinpoint the sites and dates where the Gambills have travelled. The one billion-year-old rock on which the home was built is also exposed for viewing.

It may be a "House in the Clouds" but on a clear day, you can see forever. What views!

The Jeff Roberts' House

Last year Jeff Roberts and his wife Casey Bastion were gutting, remodeling and updating their mid-seventies house. Ceilings were raised, walls removed, and designs planned to focus on beautiful views and an open floor plan. The staircase was relocated, display cabinets built, and everything painted to make living with their art seamless. Jeff continued the plans after Casey's death, and the house that is now a home is a testament to their life together.

In addition to the contemporary art, notable features on the first floor include the steel fireplace surround. Above the fireplace Tim Turner's *Bird's 53* grabs your attention. Cabinets flank the fireplace and a number of pieces purchased from artists at Art in the Park in Blowing Rock are displayed along with Rick Beck's *Screw*, and Sam McDowell's *Burl Ambrosia Maple* that lends an organic element. From the living, dining and primary bedroom areas you can enjoy the view and enter the deck. The views of Elk Knob, Snake Mountain, Cone Manor, the Parkway, and Wilkesboro are spectacular!

All spaces benefit from a touch of Oriental furnishings and the living room console is a handsome decorative element between the living space and the relaxed dining area. The dining room painting is by Jim Chapman. Joshua painted the beguiling portrait of a Maltese maiden that hangs on a short wall separating the dining room from the gourmet kitchen. Accomplished chefs, the homeowners furnished the kitchen with Wolf and KitchenAid appliances to make cooking easy and fun. The primary bedroom features art, antiques, and "newtiques" – round furniture complementary with the contemporary vibe. Additional bedrooms remind that comfort is luxury.

Heading downstairs, the gently curving staircase shows the creativity of Roberts who fashioned the pedestal and the downstairs table legs. The cozy downstairs has a comfortable sitting area in front of the fireplace. There are numerous paintings by Sam Ezell, Julian Davis' *Back Alley* takes everyone back to urban roots, and *The Polka Dot Cat* by Norma Murphy is a fun riff on Manet. Finally, a study dedicated to baseball memorabilia, is jammed full of baseballs, gloves, signed pictures and baseball bats from Hall of Famers. It is an amazing experience to be in that room and in the home!

Gretel's Haus

Custom designed for Jean and Otis Sawyer, **Gretel's Haus** was built by Four Forty Four Builders on a beautifully wooded site. There are many thoughtful design elements throughout, beginning on the home's exterior that has a Bavarian ski lodge aesthetic. The woodwork on the gable are multiple S's for Sawyer. Leaf cut-outs on the wooden banisters and gates were designed and executed to represent the trees on the property. Why the name Gretel's Haus? Gretel is the name of the Sawyer's beautiful dog!

The living room is the heart of the home and welcomes family and visitors alike. Mr. Sawyer is in the furniture business, and comfortable and perfectly suited pieces from companies that he represents are mixed with family heirlooms throughout the house. Throughout the home you see that the homeowners are clearly interested in preserving a piece of the past and integrating it with their present lives. Woven baskets made by the homeowner, Westmoore Pottery, antique butter molds, English Barley twist candlesticks, Penland arts and crafts, and much more accent the handsome furnishings. Treasured antiques accent the new along with collected pieces from their travels, inviting a story. A floating fireplace separates the living room from the dining room where a period console and lovely oil painting anchor the dining area.

The light and airy primary bedroom can be entered directly from the living area and also has access to the spacious deck. The bedroom has a vaulted ceiling with an exposed Bavarian style painted beam. It is a very comfortable room and invites lingering over a cup of coffee and a good book. The primary bathroom has very special tile work in the walk-in shower and dual custom vanities.

The home is designed so that the homeowners can spend most of their time living on one level. A lovely additional bedroom and bath also provide guest privacy and all the amenities on the first floor.

A gourmet kitchen with Bosch appliances, features a soffit design and has a stained knotty alder shiplap. Cabinetry houses a special collection of Southern pottery including wedding pottery from the homeowner's parents, and Edgar Pearce watercolors are of the New Jersey shore near an area where Mr. Sawyer grew up. Significant art work anchors every room. There is every thought to detail in this home. Even the floor leading to the well-appointed laundry room is brick-laid, and a barn door is used to give the space some extra pizzazz.

Upstairs, the grandchildren have their own special suite. At the top of the stairs, a large antique English voting box sets the stage for a very special room. Antique twin beds are dressed in bed linens designed by Ed Springs. Best of all, the room has a secret! Behind the built-in bookcases there is a room that is accessed by raising a lever hidden in a book. What a treat for the grandchildren – and to adults who find their way into the hidden room filled with toys and stuffed animals!

Landscaping by The Mustard Seed frames the fairy-tale home and begs you for a return visit. Combined with a lovely view from the living areas or off the deck, this welcoming home, filled with warmth, is a very special place.

Laurel Cliff

The home of Drs. Lee Rocamora and John Thompson was designed by Fryday and Doyne of Charlotte, NC to blend into the neighborhood, and sighted to take advantage of the expansive view of Grandfather and the John's River Gorge. It was also designed to mitigate exposure to sun and wind. Rocamora and Thompson are collectors: the spacious house was designed to showcase the stunning art. Most of the artists in their vast collection are North Carolina painters including Blowing Rock artist Philip Moose. The focus of the decorative arts is Penland artists.

From the moment you enter the home you sense the attention to detail. The vaulted ceiling and walls are all white oak as are all doors and cabinets throughout the home to provide an organic continuity of space. When you first walk into the home you soak up the view. Then you start to take in the art, realizing that the living room fireplace table is by Nakashima and the lamps are by ceramic artist Tom Suomalainen. The stacked stone fireplace is framed on both sides by lighted glass shelves filled with glass by Dante Marioni, Ben Cobb, Jay Muesler; Richard Ritter, Giles Bettison, and Dale Chihuly, and ceramics by Michael Sherrill, Peter Pincus, Becky Gray, Cristina Cordova, Sergei Issupov, and Akio Takamori. On the mantle is a collection by ceramic artist Michael Sherrill. The main floor living area features paintings including those by Gatewood, Payne, Moose, and Kahn. The collaborative glass sculpture on the sofa coffee table is by glass artists Kate Vogel and John Littleton. In the dining room a Bruton pyramid table and Norman Cherner chairs hold center court. Pablo Soto created the dining room glass chandelier.

The kitchen was designed by Beth Merrell of Donlon Merrell, Charlotte and fashioned with a combi steam oven and 2 dishwashers for easy clean up. The Subzero refrigerator and freezer seamlessly blend into the quarter sawn white oak cabinetry. All in all, the kitchen sets the scene for culinary success for the

enthusiastic cooks, as does the adjacent butler's pantry that has more than ample storage for everything! Counter chairs are burl walnut by artist Wyatt Severs.

The primary bedroom has a direct view of Grandfather. A table in front of the window is by ceramic artist Herb Cohen, previously from Blowing Rock. Summer Wheat's wall-sized frieze-like painting, *Sand Castle* is of women doing daily tasks - the same as men would perform. Giraffe bedside table lamps are by ceramic artist Jane Peiser. The large in suite dressing room and bathroom have many custom designs. The bathroom features double mirrors by Jane Peiser.

Grayson Gordon hand-forged the Weldon fabrication staircase bannister leading to the downstairs. You are immediately captivated by Heather Allen's quilt hanging on the wall at the facing the stairs. Wendell Castle made the handsome table in the entry to the downstairs.

Downstairs, there is a large sitting area. A floating fireplace and cozy den seating area welcome all to gather and enjoy the beauty of the tree-tops and gentle vista of the mountains. James Edward Barnes' *Trout Stream*, cloisonné with wood calls attention to the coffee table. A stacked stone wall includes lighted niches with ceramic sculptures by Alice Ballard, and glass by Susan Gott called *The Couple* electrifies one corner. Pat Skull produced a multimedia piece, commissioned as a floor piece, because the homeowners had run out of surface space! Paintings by Howell and Johnson complete the area. There is also a bar with ice maker and a warming drawer. The dark stained cabinets work to define the space from the white oak paneled room.

The second guest bedroom includes lamps by Peiser and Owen. The important paintings are by Howell, Burge, and Moose.

In the study, the beginning of the homeowner's glass collection is represented: Ron Carter, Richard Riter, John Nygren, Bernstein, and others. Emily Wilson's birds are notably holding court. Becky Gray's ceramics, Jean Yao's woven work, chairs by Michael Brown, *Bird and Fish* by Daniel Essig and a hand painted birthday card from Eric Carle are just some of the collectible items. A series of paintings by McKnight of Mykonos also hangs in the office.

The third bedroom has comfortable twin beds with a slight departure from the typical Southern American art. Paintings include Gatewood, Johnson, Boggess, Estevez and Tamiyo. Cristina Cordova's ceramic work is showcased. Lamps are by

Tom Suomalainen and Jane Peiser. The view looks to Grandfather and the gorge.
Who would want to leave?

Living with art is a lifestyle. These homeowners have mastered it with ease.

Our sincere thanks to all of the homeowners for generously donating their support to the tour. All contributions to the Tour of Homes will benefit agencies in the High Country.