



Hillcrest Garden Tour Showcases Westover Drive

ARTICLE BY MACEO THOMAS | PHOTO BY ANDREW LIGHTMAN

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he 17th Annual Hillcrest Garden Tour featured eight magnificent homes and sculptured gardens on a blistering hot Father's Day weekend. The tour featured homes on Westover Drive, best described as a scenic overlook off Pennsylvania Ave. Nearly one hundred participants shared the day as homeowners, guides and guests. Participants followed the loop to each house where they were greeted by homeowners who described their homes and their yards. The tour ended with a barbeque and fellowship.

"You like how you're in the hot tub and you can still see the TV?!"

Maxine Burnett invited tour members into her yard. The long-time resident displayed the garden in the corner of her house which included hibiscus and New Guinea patience. The oohs and ahhs commenced in the backyard as guests explored a multi-level deck constructed by Burnett's husband. Not a huge yard, but it had just about everything you could want in it. The shaded lot included a screened gazebo with electricity and a hot tub with a panoramic view of the city. A small breakfast nook with a four-foot roundtop table and high chairs sat in the corner near the grill. The yard seemed about ten degrees cooler. Some participants seemed to hover, as if they did not want to leave.

"Ooh, look at the calla lilies!"

The exclamations of several of the garden enthusiasts were immediate as they passed through the backyard of 3125. Sidney Glee, a widower, moved into his home in 1972 with his wife. The calla lilies, which she

OPPOSITE PAGE
1. A flower grows in Hillcrest.

THIS PAGE:
CLOCKWISE from TOP RIGHT
1. Richard Evans, tour leader.

2. Karen Williams, Rob Bigrigg, Carrie Thornhill,
Marvin Bowser with Officer Persaud in background.

3. Carin Bigrigg, tour organizer.



planted, were the favorite part of this splendid backyard that included a barbecue designed as a wishing well and a hundred year old table from Howard University.

“The lilies have as many as eight blooms,” he mentioned while pointing to a white bloom that had sprinkles of purple. Those lilies are for sale along with his home of 38 years.

Talitha and Kareem Stewart have lived in the community for four years. “We’ve come [to the tour] every year since we moved in,” they responded together. “It’s a great place to meet other people in the community and it also gives inspiration on what we can do in our yard.”

One young man was on his tenth tour with his parents. He is eleven years old.

Genelle Schuler attended the

tour for the first time accompanying a friend who lives in the community. “I’m a big garden geek,” she offered explaining her presence on the tour. As a self-described “native Arlingtonian” she has heard the bad press about this entire part of DC, where Westover overlooks.

“I was aware of this community and I see how people are very generous with their time,” she remarks. “Sometimes Southeast gets a bad rap and plenty of things that are written about east of the river are not charitable. It’s great to participate in something positive.”

Alexis Simendinger recalled her first Hillcrest Garden Tour. In 2000, she was on the tour when it was a bus tour. “I was born in DC, but lived all over – Gaithersburg, Alexandria, Annapolis – I didn’t know much about this

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Maxine Burnett welcomes the tour to her backyard. Photo by Andrew Lightman

neighborhood." Her opinion of the community was "spectacular." Shortly thereafter, Simendinger bought a house on Westover Drive. Her home was the fourth home on the tour.

"It's like living in a park here," she beams discussing the foxes, possum and snakes she see regularly. She continues while gushing over the photographs her next door neighbor has taken of butterflies and hummingbirds.

"Glad that so many from our community around ward 7 and beyond came out today," were the remarks that Ward 7 councilmember Yvette Alexander had to the group at that end of the tour.

For seventeen years the Hillcrest Garden Tours has served as a crown jewel of civic participation. Presented by the Hillcrest Community Civic Association the tour brings old and new neighbors together as well as showcase the best DC has to offer to the broader community. Next year's planning committee is already forming. To learn more about the garden tours follow links from www.HillcrestDC.com

Maceo Thomas is a local realtor. He volunteers his time bringing arts to the community in the form of the Capital Hip Hop Soul Fest, this year FREE in Marvin Gaye Park on July 24th. Visit him at www.maceothomas.com and www.capitalhiphopsoulfest.com ★

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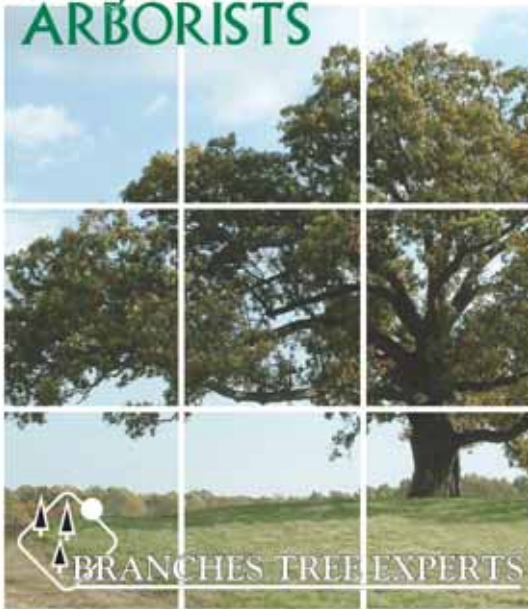
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