

Gardens and Historic Houses of Savannah & Charleston

A Pacific Horticulture Society tour

April 4-11, 2016

Step back in time to a world of colonial mansions, antebellum homes and peaceful public squares shaded by ancient live oaks. Our visit is timed (El Nino willing) for bloom of magnolia, daffodil, iris, camellia, azalea, flowering fruit tree, and much more. We will have exclusive access to gardens not open to the public in both Charleston and Savannah

Monday, April 4: Savannah. Make your way to the Planters Inn for a 3-night stay. The Planters Inn is a small boutique hotel, centrally located on Reynolds Square in the historic district, walking distance to the Riverfront and Marketplace. The Planters Inn offers a nightly wine and cheese reception in the lobby. Your tour escort will hold an informal gathering in the lobby at 630pm, followed by a very short walk to our 730pm welcome dinner with wine at the Olde Pink House. *Reception, Dinner*

Tuesday April 5: Savannah After breakfast at the hotel, depart at 930am to enjoy a private, "Savannah Gates and Gardens" walking tour with a local guide. Wander through the residential districts of the city with glimpses into the gardens that have made Savannah world famous as an urban forest. Every spring Savannah becomes a pilgrimage site for garden lovers, enhanced by the blooming azaleas and flowers in the 22 major squares and parks. An introduction to the squares of Savannah is only the beginning of the tour. Savannah hosts some of the finest private urban gardens in the country and your tour includes admission into one of Savannah's best. Savannah has a significant history as a center of elegant ironwork produced at many of the now defunct ironworks. The tour also encompasses a look at Savannah's "iron gardens" leading into Savannah's multitude of courtyard gardens seen along many of the streets and squares of downtown Savannah. We'll have lunch at Paula Deen's *Lady & Sons* restaurant, located in the newly-restored White Hardware historic building near City Market, featuring a host of authentic farmhouse southern classics. Following lunch, noted landscape designer John McEllen will lead us on a tour by private motorcoach to several private gardens that he designed. John's travels in Italy, Spain, and South America have influenced his work. He brings water features into play and approaches the outside as a green room. We'll return to the hotel late afternoon, with the rest of the day free for shopping, relaxing in the lovely squares or walking along the riverfront. *Breakfast, Lunch*

Wednesday, April 6 Savannah

Following breakfast, depart the hotel 9:30 am for a guided walking tour. We'll first visit the Owens-Thomas Historic House Museum, considered the finest example of English Regency architecture in America by architectural historians. Inspired by classical antiquity, this style of architecture takes its name from England's King George IV, who ruled as Prince Regent from 1811 to 1820. The site also includes a beautiful English-inspired parterre garden and an original carriage house—which contains one of the earliest intact urban slave quarters in the South. Our next stop is the Telfair Mansion, which houses a fine art collection and was designed by English architect William Jay in the neoclassical Regency style. Built 1818-1819 for Alexander Telfair, son of the Revolutionary patriot and Georgia governor Edward Telfair, the mansion was home to the Telfair family until 1875. The Telfair Museum of Art opened its new state-of-the-art building to the public in March 2006. Designed by architect Moshe Safdie, the Jepson Center for the Arts features two large galleries for major traveling exhibitions; galleries for African American art, Southern art, photography and works-on-paper; a community gallery; two outdoor sculpture terraces, café, and store. This afternoon and evening is at leisure, so feel free to extend your visit at the Telfair Museum and perhaps lunch at the museum café. Shopping, restaurants, and peaceful public squares are all yours to explore. Balance of the day free to enjoy charming Savannah, Georgia. *Breakfast.*

Thursday, April 7 Savannah-Beaufort-Charleston

Early breakfast and check out to board our private motorcoach, bound for Beaufort (Bew-furt). Upon arrival, enjoy a guided walking tour of this lovely village with its beautiful and stately homes, many of which were built prior to the Civil War as summer homes by wealthy plantation owners. Learn about Beaufort's interesting history as the sight of several of the earliest settlements in this area and experience the unique beauty of its placid marshes and broad alluvial rivers rolling down to the sea. Complete your tour with a visit to St. Helena's Church, c. 1724. With good appetites after our walk, we'll enjoy luncheon in a historic home, hosted by the ladies of the Beaufort County Open Land Trust. A little time to shop and browse along Bay Street, before we reboard our motorcoach, bound for Charleston. Arrive late afternoon and check into the historic Francis Marion Hotel, with the balance of the evening at leisure. *Breakfast, Lunch.*

Friday, April 8 Charleston

Following breakfast at the hotel, depart on a 9am *Cobblestones and Gardens* walking tour. Stroll with your guide down lovely streets and lanes and view the marvelous architecture of homes built more than a century ago. Peak into the lush private gardens of this quaint old city and breathe the aroma of tea, olive, and magnolia. During your walk you will learn about the unique, relaxed culture of this grand old city as you gaze at beautiful historic homes and buildings which have stood the test of time. A highlight of this tour will be a visit to Mrs. Whaley's Garden, an exquisite garden created by a native Charlestonian. We'll end our walking tour near the Old City Market for lunch on your own. At 2pm the Festival of Houses and Gardens tour begins. We'll each be provided an entrance ticket and a map for this self-guided, self-paced tour. Enjoy the diversity of this unique city and its architectural legacy by touring some of Charleston's beautiful historic houses and lushly planted gardens. Stroll through her lovely streets and lanes to

private homes and gardens which are rarely open to the public where volunteer docents will welcome you with interesting narrative about the charming interiors of these marvelous old dwellings. Balance of the day at leisure. *Breakfast.*

Saturday, April 9 Outside of Charleston

After breakfast, depart 9am by private coach to visit two of America's earliest plantations and gardens: Magnolia Gardens and Middleton Place. Magnolia Gardens and Plantation, founded by the Drayton family in 1680, is considered one of the most beautiful romantic gardens in the world. As you wander the garden paths through a Cypress Swamp turned into a garden by the Rev. John Drayton prior to the War Between the States, the beauty of these unique gardens will take your breath away. After touring the gardens, board the Nature Train which will take you into part of the Audubon Swamp Garden, home to scores of water loving creatures and traversed by boardwalks, dikes, and bridges designed to put the visitor in close contact with its inhabitants. You may even see an alligator and will have the opportunity to view the abundant bird population of the low country. Middleton Place, a Registered National Historic Landmark and the plantation home of the Middleton family since 1741, boasts the oldest formal gardens in America and has stable yards where one is treated to a view of life on an 18th century working plantation. While at Middleton tour the remaining wing of the Middleton House, furnished with heirlooms from the Middleton family and enjoy a delicious luncheon in the Middleton Place Pavilion. Return to Charleston late this afternoon with the evening on your own. *Breakfast, Lunch.*

Sunday, April 10 Charleston

After breakfast, we'll enjoy a morning of private garden visits, with details to be advised in your final itinerary. We'll end around noon, leaving the afternoon free for unfinished shopping and sightseeing. This evening we'll take a short drive through historic Charleston to our farewell dinner with wine at Magnolia's restaurant, including entertaining *Tales of the South* by local storyteller, Tim Lowry. Return to the hotel later this evening. *Breakfast, Dinner.*

Monday, April 11 Farewell

Our tour ends following breakfast at the hotel. Check out and return home with fond memories of the Low Country, or perhaps continue your exploration of this fascinating region. *Breakfast.*

Flights Please note our tour begins in Savannah, Georgia (SAV) and ends in Charleston, South Carolina (CHS), flights should be booked accordingly. Please plan flight arrival into Savannah by 4pm Monday April 4 in order to make our welcome reception and dinner, otherwise consider coming in a day early (please ask us about extra hotel night rates before or after the tour). Departures from Charleston Sunday April 11 are at your convenience as there are no scheduled events other than breakfast that day. Airlines offering service to Savannah and Charleston include Delta, United and American/US Airways.

Travel Insurance As your deposit and eventual final payment are both non-refundable, we wish to make you aware that individual travel insurance is available to protect you against cancellation penalties as well as provide coverage should an incident occur during the trip. We will send an email with your deposit confirmation containing information about how to get a free quote and/or secure your coverage online or by phone. *We strongly encourage you to purchase insurance at the time of deposit, as most pre-existing conditions can often be covered.* Group travel insurance will not be offered with this tour.

Tour Land Cost

\$2845 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture Society, \$2945 for non-members,* based on 2 persons sharing a room. Supplement for single occupancy is \$995. A deposit of \$300 per person is required to reserve a place on this tour with balance due 60 days before departure. A minimum of 15 guests is required to operate this tour. *Membership in PacHort starts at just \$28 so why not join before you register for the tour as you can then receive the member price.

Cost includes:

- 7 night's accommodations: 3 nights Savannah, 4 nights Charleston.
- Hotel taxes and service charges
- 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners, nightly wine & cheese in Savannah.
- Ground transportation as specified in itinerary
- Top local guides
- All sightseeing and entrances as per the itinerary
- Tips to local guides and drivers
- Escorted by Pat Wipf, board member, Pacific Horticulture Society
- Donation of \$150 to Pacific Horticulture Society

Cost does not include:

- Airfare
- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers
- Items or services not specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

Physical Capabilities - This tour include a GREAT DEAL OF WALKING (see itinerary above for April 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 to see what we mean), sometimes on uneven or unpaved pathways and/or cobblestones, and occasional use of stairs. Some of the places we will be visiting can only be seen on foot with no other access possible. Guests with limited mobility **MUST** consult with Sterling prior to tour registration.

Important Note: This itinerary is subject to revision because the schedule for several included events had not been finalized when the itinerary was released. We do not anticipate major schedule revisions, but do want all guests to understand that revisions may be possible. Guests will be notified should revisions be necessary.

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