

Press Contact: Susan Kline
732-450-1772
susan.kline@verizon.net
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Behind the Brick Walls, Designers at Work!

As winter slips into spring, there is a flurry of activity behind the beautiful brick walls of “Sheep’s Run,” the Stately Homes By-the-Sea Designer Show House. The landmark at 99 Rumson Road, Rumson, will open its doors to the public April 28 – May 31 to benefit services and programs of Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey.

Creating a show house requires both creative vision and hard work. Rooms that now resound to the pounding of hammers and the buzzing of saws will soon emerge as tranquil, elegant spaces that will draw the oohs and aahs of thousands of visitors.

The designers agree that their greatest inspiration is the house itself. It drew Joe Lucas back to his native Monmouth County from West Hollywood, Calif. where he is a partner with Parrish Chilcoat in Lucas Studio. “I had driven past the house many times and longed to see the inside,” he says. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work on such a Rumson gem.”

Resembling a Cotswold cottage despite its nearly 30 rooms, the house was designed in 1915 by Harrie T. Lindeberg for Thomas Vietor and his wife, Elizabeth Allen Vietor of New York. New construction on the 6.4 acres includes a pool, pool house, greenhouse and potting shed.

Through their designs, Barbara Ostrom, of Barbara Ostrom Associates, Mahwah, and Kim O’Connor, of Kensington Design, Ridgewood, pay tribute to the house’s English architectural tradition. “The pool house design strongly relates to the traditional English architecture of the main house,” says Ms. Ostrom. “It is more whimsical in concept, with cheerful, summer colors that bring the outside in. We have custom-designed the fireplace, kitchen, banquette dining nook and changing area, which are being fabricated by Habersham Plantation in collaboration with S. DeCenzo Designs, Little Silver. Our furnishings will look like antique furniture that has been there forever.”

Kim O’Connor is creating a guest room with ensuite bath. “The inspiration for the design comes from the architect’s original design of the home, which was to evoke the charm of a romantic Cotswold cottage,” she says. “Located on the southern coast of England, the Cotswold area boasts homes surrounded by fields filled with sheep and magnificent views of the sea. The color scheme, fabrics and furnishings of the guest bedroom suite combine to make it an elegant, restful, yet fashionable space that any guest would find hard to leave.”

For additional information and tickets see www.statelyhomesbythesea.com or call 732-224-6791. (To learn more about the architecture of the show house, click on “In the News” to see a video by architect and historian Mark Alan Hewitt.) ###