

Victorian jewel

Designers to display talents at annual Show House fundraiser

BY WEVONNEDA MINIS

The Post and Courier

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Designers will work their magic on a restored Victorian, transforming the structure into the 29th Designer Show House, which will raise money for the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

The house was home to the Winborn Wallace Lawton family of Lawton Bluff Plantation.

Around 1888, the family, which also owned James Island Dairy, moved into the 15-room house at 43 South Battery and established a dairy on the peninsula. They brought milk across the Ashley River from James Island and processed it in a dairy building behind the house.

The Battery Dairy, as the peninsula operation became known, continued until the Great Depression.

Local members of the American Society of Interior Designers will use their creativity to highlight the best features of the house, which has cove ceilings throughout. Their goal is to intrigue, transform and captivate visitors.

The show house is a collaboration between the local designers and the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League.

The structure, between South Bay and the Ashley River, will be open Thursday through April 15. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Noon fashion shows take place at the house from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Tea will be served in the garden Sunday afternoons, and there will be a boutique featuring accessories, art and gifts.

Advance tickets can be purchased online at www.csolinc.org, by writing CSOL, P.O. Box 22613, Charleston, SC 29413, or by calling 723-0020.

The advance purchase price through Wednesday is \$20, plus \$1 for handling. Starting Thursday, tickets can be purchased at the door for \$25.

Reach **Wevonneda Minis** at 937-5705 or wminis@postandcourier.com.



JIM PARKER/STAFF

This Victorian residence will become the 29th annual Show House.

cvf Buildings - 43 South Battery

*The Charleston Symphony Orchestra League &
The Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers
present
the 29th annual*

2006 Designer Showhouse

*Formerly a dairy serving early 20th-century Charleston,
43 South Battery has been dressed to the nines by
12 of the Lowcountry's talented interior designers*

March 16-April 15

Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 1-4 p.m. (closed Easter)

Tickets: \$25; \$20 advance; (843) 723-0020, www.csolinc.org



The Lawton Dairy

By Tiffany Jonas

It's a crisp morning in 1920. Not unlike most days at Lawton Bluff Plantation, two workmen load the day's milk into a flat-bottomed cargo boat on James Island Creek, as St. John Alison Lawton and a guest, their bellies full from a plantation breakfast of grits and eggs, climb down a ladder and take a seat at the bow. They listen as the boat's one-cylinder engine stutters to a start before gliding out of the creek headed for Charleston's 43 South Bay Street.

Their destination is the wharf of Lawton Dairy, reaching 75 feet out into the river. There, a horse-drawn wagon stands waiting for the load of milk cans. The motto emblazoned along its sides reads: "Oldest Dairy, but Freshest Milk." The morning, with the slow approach of dawn on the glowing cityscape, presented a serene façade. The Lawton house, on the contrary (which sat beyond its adjoining dairy distribution center), held the history of a family with fiery dispositions, entrepreneurial spirit, and even hotter disputes.

In the 1880s, when the Lawtons' plantation needed a distribution center for its milk, the waterfront lot at 43 South Bay provided ample room for the dairy wharf and building. With



Family Matriarch: A photograph of entrepreneur Cecilia Lawton. The back side of the photo (below), notes that she was 22 years old at the time it was taken in 1870.



its first appraisal in 1890, the house was the most expensive on the block.

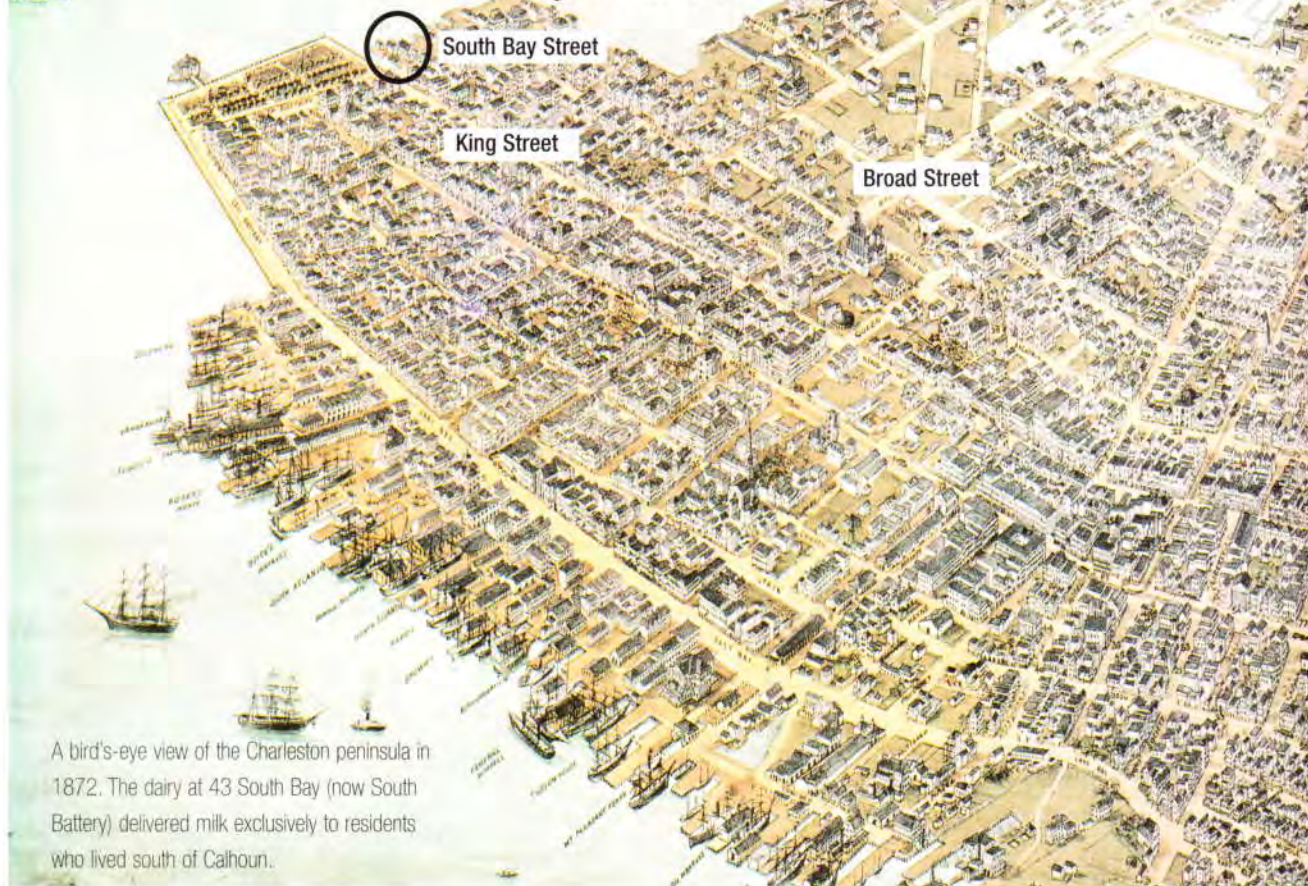
Winborn Wallace Lawton, the dairy's founder, came through Civil War skirmishes, the destruction of two plantations, and a marriage to a distant cousin 10 years his junior—a feat requiring repeated proposals to achieve—to die unhappily in a Charleston hotel apartment across the river from his own plantation. He passed his remaining hours playing solitaire, leaving no will. During the allotment of his personal items after his funeral, silence reportedly filled the air when it was asked who wanted his portrait.

In comparison, wife Cecilia Lawton was a blast of fresh air, possessing determination, business savvy, and a shrewd mind. In 1901 she saw an opportunity to purchase the Mills House Hotel and took it, renaming it the St. John Hotel. She helped found the Charleston City Federation of Women's Clubs, serving on its board for four years, and her dairy wagons delivered exclusively to properties south of Calhoun Street.

Waterfront Property: This photograph, taken prior to 1909 when plans were drawn to fill the mud flats where Murray Boulevard now runs, shows the area at the west end of Tradd Street. White Point Gardens is at the right of the picture in the distance. The wharf for Lawton Dairy extended out from the flats.



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A bird's-eye view of the Charleston peninsula in 1872. The dairy at 43 South Bay (now South Battery) delivered milk exclusively to residents who lived south of Calhoun.

St. John Alison Lawton, meanwhile, the couple's only surviving child, served as master of the family's plantation and was nearly the opposite of his father—absent-minded, but consistently honest and kind. A longtime dairyman once remarked that he had never heard him swear.

The Lawton house bore witness to more than one family drama. Alison once refused to come home to 43 South Bay while away at college, apparently preferring to try his hand at shining shoes rather than endure the company of his father. Shortly before his death, Wallace sold the house; Cecilia repurchased it the following year, and stayed there until her death in 1923. Even at the end of her life she refused to release the management of the dairy to her son.

The wharf was destroyed by the hurricane of 1911 and the dairy folded in 1930. The street changed names in 1928 to South Battery. Wallace and Cecilia's line died with their son but the house they built still stands, the legacy of a family who boldly made their mark on the city.



A 1936 photo of the old Battery Dairy Dock, six years after the dairy folded. By then, it had become a popular spot for swimming and diving.

welcome!

Welcome to the 2006 Designer Showhouse at 43 South Battery, presented by the Charleston Symphony

Orchestra League (CSOL) and the Carolinas Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

Mr. James K. Price of Monarch Development has carefully restored this beautiful Victorian house and garden and has generously offered its use to the CSOL as the 29th Annual Designer Showhouse. Talented ASID designers, who donated time and expense, created beautiful rooms, showing off lovely furnishings and accessories. Many of the items seen in the rooms may be purchased through our volunteer Designer Sales Staff.



CSOL members and friends will greet our guests, serve lunch and Sunday teas, and model fashions from local stores and boutiques.

Guests to the house may browse and shop for unique items in our gift boutique, which carries a variety of hand-crafted items and original art by Carolina artists. We extend our thanks to designers, volunteers, local merchants, and visitors. The Charleston Symphony Orchestra is an integral part of the greater Charleston community, and the success of this project helps keep the music playing.

Enjoy your visit to the Designer Showhouse and join us at a concert with the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.



Hilde Hottendorf (left)
2006 CSOL/ASID Designer
Showhouse Chair
Pat Gorgone (right)
2006 CSOL/ASID Designer
Showhouse Co-Chair



Carol Lou Yaeger (left)
2006 CSOL/ASID Designer
Showhouse Co-Chair
Mary Jo Daugherty (right)
2006 CSOL/ASID Designer
Showhouse Co-Chair



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIC SMITH/STAFF

This Tuscan-inspired dining room features informal touches including pots of herbs growing on the dining room table.

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A Victorian Gem

Charleston Symphony Orchestra League benefit show house sparkle:

BY WEVONNEDA MINNIS

The Post and Courier

Sake 32lele PID
erene. Glamorous. Surprising. Natural. Sophisticated. Huh! All those terms and more are likely to be uttered by visitors who will tour the 29th Designer Show House through April 15.

The house is more than special. It's really something to see.

Members of the American Society of Interior Designers have applied their own perspectives to create 13 extraordinary spaces in the Winborn Wallace Lawton House (c. 1888) at 43 South Battery. The results inspire visitors as they move from room to room.

Design elements used to furnish the house are combined in a way that helps the restored Victorian gem sparkle. The Designer Show House is a fundraiser held annually by the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League to benefit the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

In the living room, dominant colors are black, white and cream, punctuated with bright green. The room is designed to evoke thoughts of 1920s glamour.

Designers Reagan Morris and Lauren Muzekart, allied members of ASID, and Donna Horack, professional member, wanted a room well-suited for evening entertainment.



The living room in the show house is designed with evening parties in mind.

"We wanted to have a clean approach, kind of edgy, not expected," Morris says.

Organic shapes such as a leaf design on the black-and-white fabric of some accent pillows are repeated

on the backs of two Chinese Chipendale chairs. They also echo the outline of plants found in the room.

A pair of custom-designed stools topped with green cushions, the

gleaming silver surfaces of the table lamps and a mirrored cocktail table contribute to the glamorous feel of the room.

Jane Jilich, professional member of ASID, and Kaylan Guthrie, al-



The Winborn Wallace Lawton House (c. 1888), a restored Victorian, is the 29th Designer Show House.

lied member, chose to highlight the dining room's coved ceiling painting it to simulate tile design Jilich saw in Italian churches. The designers achieved a similar effect with bold black-and-cream chevron. The first impression of the room dominated by reds and golds, is that it is very formal. However, closer look reveals that it is not, Jilich says. The designers prevent the room from feeling too formal by using informal accessories.

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The library in the show house features eggplant, green and white for a cozy retreat.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIC SMITH/STAFF

A Victorian gem

SHOW HOUSE From Page 1D

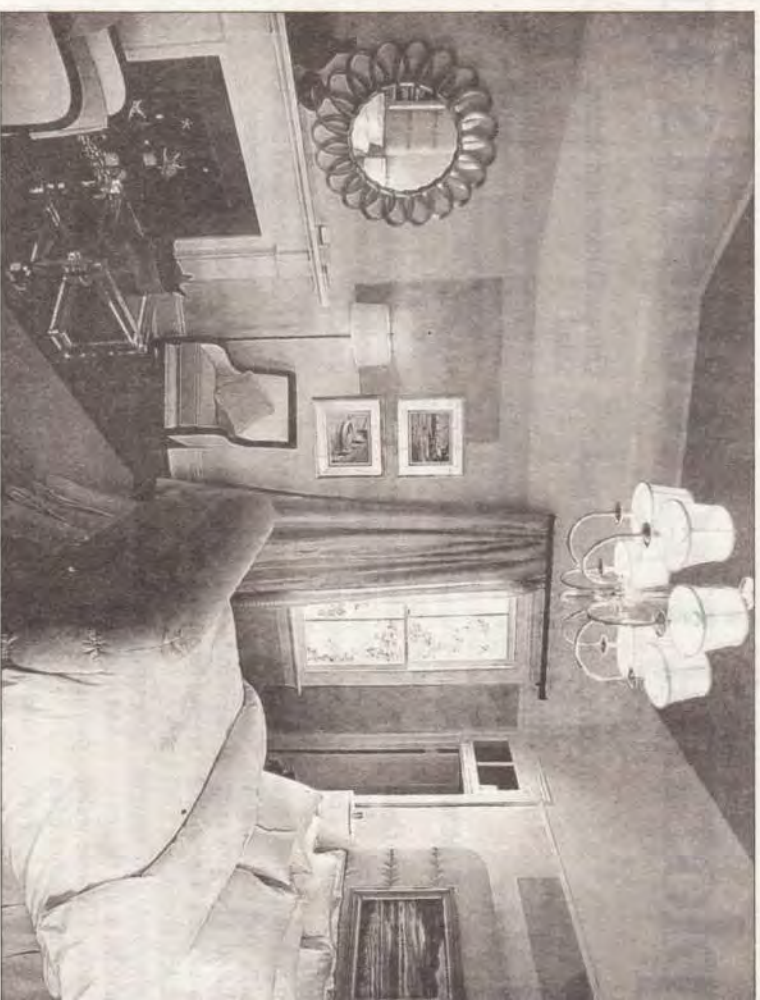
Large candle cylinders contain fresh lemons and rosemary floating in their lower compartments rest on a glass-topped dining table placed diagonally. Thyme grows in adjacent porcelain pots. An antique Avshar carpet made in Turkey anchors the table, which is surrounded by comfortable chairs. The carpet echoes the colors found all around the room.

designed by Valerie Askins, allied member of ASID, and the word serene comes to mind. Askins chose blues and tans as dominant colors in the room, which has a window providing a view of nearby Charleston Harbor.

"I was going for a Lowcountry type of feeling, a very comfortable feeling that includes modern, but aged pieces of furniture, such as the desk," Askins says. "I was also trying to draw on a nautical feel."

at the house, and lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Tea is served in the garden Sunday afternoons. An on-site boutique features accessories, art and gifts. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$25.

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This room is designed to complement the view of Charleston Harbor, which can be seen from one of the windows.

A bronze chandelier and sconces add a level of elegance to the bedroom.



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIC SMITH/STAFF

A Victorian gem

SHOW HOUSE From Page 1D

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An antique Avshar carpet made in Turkey anchors the table, which is surrounded by comfortable chairs. The carpet echoes the colors found all around the room. A lampshade covered in a white feather boa completes a nearby floor lamp and adds a whimsical touch.

Macadamia, a paint color inspired by nature and food, was chosen as the wall color in the breakfast room, designed by Carolyn Stevenson, allied member of ASID. Roman shades and woven blinds add interest and depth to the room.

The wood of the round dining table and floor add warmth to the room, where green and gold, colors found in nature, also figure prominently. Chairs upholstered in a quiet pattern and muted shades provide a level of comfort that invites family members to linger.

A bronze chandelier and sconces provide a level of elegance not usually expected in a breakfast room.

Eggplant walls, gleaming white trim and a ceiling painted in neutral shades are the attention-getters in the house's library, designed by Katherine Sparks Elliott, allied member of ASID. The colors are dramatic, but work with the neutral sofa, green fabrics and other design elements to create an atmosphere suitable for reading and playing games.

Library steps serve as a resting place for books, eliminating the need to crowd the room with bookshelves.

While the wall color prevents the

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A painting placed on the upholstered queen-sized headboard features James Island as seen from the house in the 1800s. Paintings of water and boats found at the harbor are placed elsewhere in the room.

A Venetian plaster treatment with lustre stone, in a combination of oyster, sand and bronze colors, is applied to the walls giving the room a relaxed and inviting feel that also coordinates with the room's contemporary elements.

The room's fireplace is highlighted with shells of sea creatures such as starfish and conch that are attached to a cast net and candles. A compass incorporating colors used elsewhere in the bedroom is painted on the ceiling.

In this room, as in others, little touches make a big difference. Long before a tour of the Winborn Wallace Lawton house is complete, visitors will be able to understand why it's called a show house.

Other designers whose work is featured in the house include Trudy Mercy Brown (master bath), Joyce Cerato (upstairs porch), Jennifer Ferrell and Shay Russell (guest bedroom), Regina Garcia (kitchen), Beth Huntley (entry and stairwell), Amy Inlow (hall bath and powder room), all allied members of ASID, and Marion Simons (laundry), professional member of ASID.

Many pieces in the house, as well as the house itself, are available for

at the house, and lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Tea is served in the garden Sunday afternoons. An on-site boutique features accessories, art and gifts. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$25.

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