

# Come what May, there is Splendor in September



*Mansion in May has become Splendor in September. Photo by Kevin Coughlin*

## By Morristown Green Contributor - September 7, 2020

### By Marion Filler

The pandemic has disrupted just about everyone and everything, including ***Mansion in May*** — which opens as ***Splendor in September*** on the 8th.

Yet despite many obstacles facing designers — showrooms were closed, shipments were delayed, tradesmen and materials suddenly were in short supply — the extra time to complete their projects was put to good use at Tyvan Hill in New Vernon.

**Cindy Gelormini, The Paint Diva of NJ**, took advantage of social distancing to spend some quality time with Benjamin Moore, painting murals along all three stairwells of the 1928 country estate.

“I started in May,” said Gelormini. “It was great, I was all by myself. It gave me something to do and got me out of the house. I was here for four hours, two to three days a week, for a couple of months.”



*May flowers? Almost. It's Splendor in September, the rescheduled Mansion in May 2020. Photo by Kevin Coughlin*

She created a bamboo forest accented by a small chandelier made of twigs that she made herself. "I had plenty to choose from when we had the storm a few weeks ago," Gelormini said.

Organized by the **Women's Association for Morristown Medical Center**, *Splendor in September* runs through Oct. 4, 2020, as a fundraiser for the hospital's Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute. It's the 19th edition of an extravaganza that's been showcasing mansions since 1974.

*Video preview of Splendor in September:*

Interior designers and landscapers let their imaginations run wild; it's like visiting dozens of luxury homes in one place. This time around, you'll need a mask to do so, and the number of visitors at any given time will be limited so everyone stays safe.

The talent roster had some dropouts along the way, most notably **Barbara Ostrom Associates**, who were to have designed the living room. The space is now the History Room, devoted to photographs of Tyvan Hill and its occupants over the last 92 years.

But landscaper Sean Murray of **Nature's Apprentice LLC** went with the flow. You can't miss the giant head of Gabriela from the **Broadfoot & Broadfoot Gallery** in his garden space, immediately to the right of the main entrance.

"We had the patio and statue in place for an early spring opening," said Murray, "but we didn't plant anything. We didn't come up with a new design. We just said, 'What's going to look good now?'"

Equally flexible were **Lisa Mierop** and partner **Frank Contey** of **Mierop Design**. They created the stunning garden along the back of the house. The long narrow space is a lesson in farm-to-table design, especially for children.

"I think it's a great training tool for kids," said Mierop. "I don't like the idea that they think food comes from the supermarket."

It begins with a fenced-in kitchen garden, moves on to a chicken coop, then a cooking island, and ends with a seating area around a fire bowl. The resident chickens are not real, but their

feathers are, Mierop said. Live birds were out of the question; these specimens were sourced from China.

“This was a big commitment,” said Mierop, whose hopes were dashed when COVID-19 hit because most of the work had been done prior to shutting down. “But then it was rescheduled and here we are.”

The company is a design/build firm that also sells furniture. So, just two weeks ago, when a semi-enclosed lounging area adjacent to the garden suddenly became available, Mierop and Contey took it on, “only because we could throw it together,” Mierop said.

*Splendor in the Backyard: Tyvan Hill. Video by Marion Filler for MorristownGreen.com:*

Other innovators include **Teggy French**, who also knows a good thing when she sees it. A small area, originally a tack room and now Designer Sales, still had original wallpaper with an equestrian theme. It was just too interesting to throw away.

“You can’t find anything like that anymore,” said French, who updated the room with a black-and-rust color scheme and high gloss painted furniture.

**Broadfoot & Broadfoot LLC** displays a varied collection of painting and sculpture throughout the mansion. The first floor hallway, where many works are installed, is painted a rich red, which according to **Scott Broadfoot** is a historically appropriate color for the architecture of the house.

The display continues on the second floor with a collection of landscapes by **Todd L.W. Doney**, who lives near the Great Swamp and captures its many moods in vivid color.

Around the corner, also on the second floor, **Deborah Macy** animates the walls with a grouping of endangered wild animals inspired by Rousseau.

Tyvan Hill was built in just one year (1928-1929) on 115 acres by **Dorothea and John Wesley Castles**. The property has been reduced to a mere 22 acres, but they still are magnificent — and now, even more so with the refurbished interiors and landscaping of the home.



*Deborah Macy's exhibit of endangered species at Splendor in September 2020. Photo by Kevin Coughlin*

The steel pool is original to the house, but the natural fieldstone exterior was whitewashed when the house was built and now has faded away. A pair of columns at the foot of the driveway now are painted a deep green and topped with stone slabs and planted urns, still as welcoming as ever.

*Tickets are sold in time slots, to maintain social distancing. They are \$40 per person and only available **online**.*

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