



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

THE JEWEL OF BUCKHEAD

BY ALYSON PITARRE

New York Times critic Florence Fabricant once wrote that Buckhead is “the jewel of Atlanta, an area of gracious homes, elegant hotels and shopping centers, as well as some of the best restaurants.” A jewel with its own hidden gem set right in its midst: an estate that goes by the name of Chestnut Hall. Originally built in the 1930s, the awe-inspiring, 17,000-square-foot mansion rests on over 18 acres straddling Buckhead and Sandy Springs. Yet surprisingly, few Atlantans know of its existence. If they did, they would surely want to know about its storied past—who planted its manicured lawns, who placed ancient European statuary among its formal gardens and who paved the long private driveway leading to the majestic limestone and brick residence.

The home’s current owner, an international businessman who safeguards his privacy, purchased the property in 1987—for a then-record price. He completed two renovations during his tenure, the most recent occurring from 2010 to 2012. Inspired by the mansion’s English Tudor and French Provincial architecture, he worked closely with architectural designer Eduardo Contreras to seamlessly blend Old World details with New World amenities.



“Eduardo and I collaborated extensively to incorporate Old World charm with modern living,” he says of the process. “We pored through books and photographs of the world’s finest architecture and furnishings for inspiration and traveled far and wide to acquire exquisite pieces for the house. The main objective was to bring the estate to such a standard that would capture the heart and mind of the most discriminating acquirer, and to pass on the beauty of the estate and its contents to their care.”

He surely succeeded. The result of this most recent two-year renovation culminated in a vast

residence that can accommodate a growing collection of precious antiques, antiquities and fine art from all over the world. Imposing iron doors imported from Paris reveal a spectacular foyer and art gallery with a magnificent carved-plaster ceiling, crafted by Venetian plasterers and inspired by three sources: Borromini’s gallery at the Palazzo Spada in Rome, the Braccio Nuovo at the Vatican Museum and the Hôtel de Béhague in Paris. The far end of the gallery opens to a 2,500-square-foot limestone terrace with imported Jerusalem stone floors that overlooks sweeping views of the stately grounds. Each room, one right

CONTINUED



after the next, is punctuated by exquisite antique lighting—a 19th-century French Neoclassical-style bronze and crystal eight-light chandelier (circa 1880), a Baccarat crystal and bronze ceiling light from a Paris hotel (circa 1920), and an impressive early 20th-century Louis XV-style gilt bronze, rock crystal and amethyst chandelier in the master suite sitting room.

Artifact after artifact graces the home. A South Arabian funerary stone stele carved with the face of a man and inscription, dating back to the 5th to 3rd century B.C. A rare chimneypiece featuring an 18th-century George II statuary mounted with white fleur Sienna marble and yellow scrolls made from ancient Roman ruins. A mosaic from a Roman temple built in 450 A.D. Iron windows with hand-blown glass from Germany. There is even an enviable original art collection from the likes of Pablo Picasso, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Kees van Dongen, Maurice Utrillo, Edouard Vuillard, Raoul Dufy, Jean Dufy, Georges Braque, Louis Valtat and others. This is all worth mentioning, of course, because it is currently being offered fully furnished.

“We had an appraiser with the Appraisers Association of America tell us earlier this year that it is one of the nation’s finest private collections under one roof,” reveals Debbie Sonenshine, the listing agent who is based in the Atlanta office of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. “It is a collector’s dream. It is going to appeal to someone who wants to move into a turnkey home where everything from the furnishings to antiques and fine art has been rendered in perfect taste.”

With all the priceless paintings, tapestries and rare antiquities, it may be tempting to compare Chestnut Hall to a museum. However, both the owner and Sonenshine insist it is “warm and inviting,” and very much designed for contemporary family living. The residence features seven bedrooms, eight full baths, three half-baths and a 2,400-square-foot master suite with a bedroom, sitting room, his-and-her custom closets, and an elaborate bathroom featuring Herbeau fixtures, an onyx bath tub, and custom-designed waterjet marble floors. (Even the lady’s closet is dripping with elegance, thanks to Swarovski crystal hardware embellished by a jewelry designer.) You can practically picture a family enjoying the magnificent library, 16-seat dining room, 1,700-square-foot fitness center, luxurious spa, children’s playroom and outdoor playground. Says Sonenshine: “It’s perfect for those who are accustomed to enjoying a luxurious lifestyle, but also for those who want a showpiece for entertaining.”

For example, wine enthusiasts will appreciate the climate-controlled, 1,000-bottle wine cellar featuring mahogany racks, travertine floors and antique Parisian bronze mausoleum doors, circa 1900. Hosting dinner parties is also made easy with a Thermador 96-bottle wine cabinet in the dining room and a 46-bottle Sub-Zero wine storage unit in the kitchen. And when the party needs to be moved outdoors, there is a magical setting in the rear yard with a large saline swimming pool, pool house and a separate four-bedroom, three-bath guest/manager’s house—all kept watch over by ancient statues from Versailles, of course.

The future buyer of Chestnut Hall will no doubt find its privacy, warmth and Old World gentility precious. As precious as a jewel.

Atlanta, Georgia

7 bedrooms, 8 full and 3 half baths

\$48,000,000

Represented by: Debbie Sonenshine

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage

T. 404.252.4908

debbie.sonenshine@coldwellbankeratlanta.com

