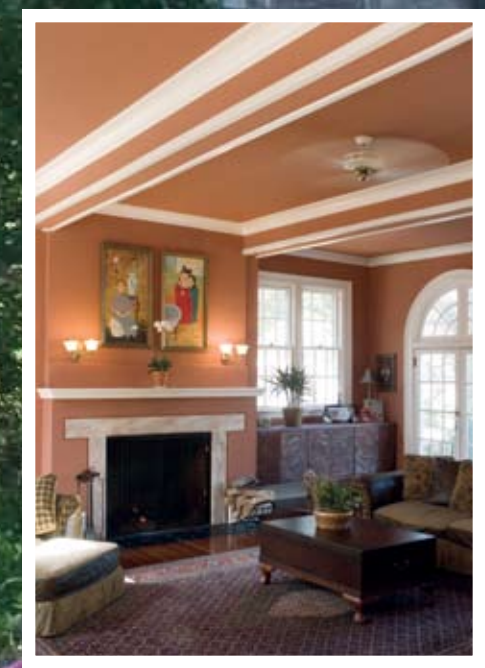


*special preview:*  
**SANCTUARY**



**INSIDE THE HOMES & GARDENS OF  
THE 24TH ANNUAL DEMUTH TOUR**

by **STEPHANIE ANDERSON** photography by **LARRY LEFEVER & DONOVAN ROBERTS WITMER**







**A**T FIRST GLANCE, THE DIAMANTONI home looks like a typical Lancaster City rowhome. There's a large, deep-set porch and Italianate features on the facade and roof, and a small patch of front yard. A closer look at the East Orange Street dwelling reveals lovingly hewn wood detailing and original stained glass, testaments to the house's history, artistry and craftsmanship. But to really experience a home, one must cross the threshold and enter it, and for one weekend in June, the region's residents and visitors will be able to do just that during this year's Demuth Home and Garden Tour.

The Demuth event has become an early-summer ritual in Lancaster, and proceeds of the tour benefit the Demuth Museum and Foundation, an organization whose mission is to promote and preserve the legacy and homestead of modernist painter and Lancaster native, Charles Demuth. Now in its 24th year, the tour is making some changes this June. After a gala at the Conestoga House on June 8, visitors will be able to tour both homes and gardens throughout that weekend. In the past, the Demuth event was just a garden tour, but now people will have the chance to visit 11 of Lancaster's most elegant and captivating locations, including nine private residences. The Demuth Foundation, which sponsors the annual event, hopes visitors will appreciate what city homes have to offer, including stunning architecture, interior design, gardening and private collections of art and antiques in this year's tour.

### REGAL ROWHOME

**T**he three-story Diamantoni home, one of the tour's 11 locations, certainly stands as a testament to each of these elements. Since it was built in 1892, the house has undergone several incarnations. A politician owned the home during the 1920s, during which time he added a first-floor ballroom overlooking the garden in the back. (This is one of the only homes in Lancaster County that has a first-floor ballroom.) The house was also a doctor's office and the former residence of Lancaster architect Thomas J. DePaul.

The home's past fits in well with its present. Dr. Steve and Laura Diamantoni currently reside in the home with their three young boys, Jack, 6, and twins Will and Gus, who are just a bit shy of 2. Architecturally speaking, the house is breathtaking. Steve Diamantoni is a doctor of family medicine in Lancaster and a former city councilman — politics, medicine and architecture under one roof at one time.

After entering the foyer, visitors will snake through the library, the living room, the dining room, and, finally, into the ballroom (now the family room) and outside into the garden. The home's most striking architectural features are the dark, hand-hewn wood, original stained glass in the dining room, a set of back servants' stairs and a spiral staircase that starts in the first-floor living room and extends all the way up to the third floor, with a remarkable skylight view at the top. The family room, with toys strewn across the lavish Oriental rug and the twins' high chairs set up in the corner opposite the marble fireplace, perhaps characterizes best what the Diamantoni

*"While at once grand, it's still comfortable. Real people, including three little ones, actually live there."*

house looks and feels like: While at once grand, it's still comfortable. It does not feel like a museum. Real people, including three little ones, actually live there.

Since she and her family moved into the house in the summer of 2004, Laura has worked hard to make the place more lovely and more livable. The floors in the family room, for instance, were painted black, accented by black lacquer cabinets.

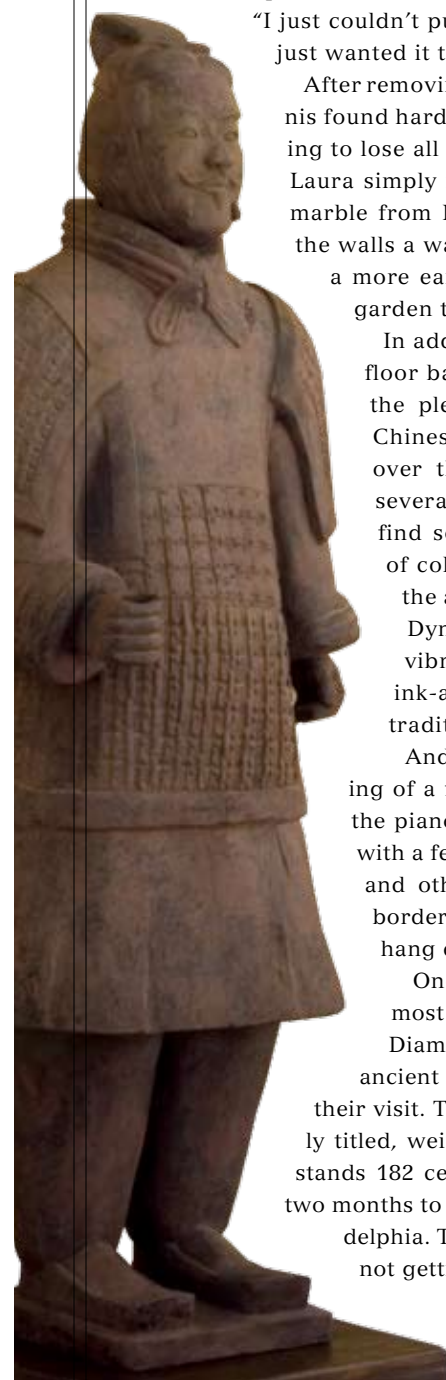
"I just couldn't pull this room together," she says. "I just wanted it to look more homey."

After removing the layers of paint, the Diamantonis found hardwood floors underneath. Not wanting to lose all that storage the cabinets provided, Laura simply repainted them. She also imported marble from Italy for the fireplace. She painted the walls a warm terracotta hue, which provides a more earthy connection to the view of the garden than its prior "pink" shade.

In addition to viewing the stunning first-floor ballroom, tour visitors will also have the pleasure of seeing the collection of Chinese art the Diamantonis have amassed over the years. During a trip to China several years ago, Laura just wanted to find some artwork that would add a bit of color, and found several paintings by the artist Ma Jia-hong at the Xi'an Tang Dynasty Art Museum. The expressive, vibrant use of color and pattern in the ink-and-wash works are reminiscent of traditional Chinese frescoes.

And there's more. A watercolor painting of a fierce-looking warrior hangs above the piano in the living room, sharing a wall with a few of young Jack's own watercolors, and others, with delicate silk around the borders and woodblock "signature" marks hang elsewhere throughout the house.

One piece of art, however, garners the most attention — and the most space. The Diamantonis purchased a replica of the ancient Chinese terracotta warriors during their visit. The Armored Officer, as he's officially titled, weighs in at a beastly 500 pounds and stands 182 centimeters high. It took the warrior two months to arrive by ship into the port of Philadelphia. The most difficult part, however, was not getting him shipped from China to Phil-



ALL PHOTOS THIS SPREAD: DONOVAN ROBERTS WITMER



### Demuth Tour Details

The Demuth Home & Garden Tour will take place on Saturday, June 9 and Sunday, June 10, 2007. Tickets and maps to the 11 sites are available through the Demuth Foundation and are good for both tour days and cost \$15 in advance, and \$18 the day of the tour. To purchase tickets or receive more information, contact the Demuth Foundation at 717-299-9940 or visit [www.demuth.org](http://www.demuth.org).

The weekend tour includes the Demuth Museum and Gardens at 120 E. King Street in Lancaster, where there will be a selection of Charles Demuth's art works on view in the museum's permanent collection gallery, located in the former home of Charles' cousins. Thomas Hills Cook will transform the gallery into an elegant dining room setting, recalling the room's original use by the Demuth family.

In addition to its extensive homes and gardens, tour visitors will also be granted exclusive access to the first-floor interior of the Conestoga House for a rare look inside this Colonial Revival home. Charles Demuth was a Steinman family friend and contributed to the interior design of the home.

The annual Demuth Garden Gala takes place Friday evening, June 8, at Conestoga House (above). Gala tickets are \$70 for members and \$75 for non members.

adelphia, but figuring out how to get him from Philadelphia to Lancaster — and then out of his large crate and into the house.

"His head is meant to come off, and his body is mostly hollow," Laura says. "Our friends started rocking him out of the box and ended up breaking the body off of the legs." Fortunately, their neighbor is a professional sculptor, so he repaired the warrior and even made him a custom stand. The Armored Officer is the closest thing many people will see to an authentic terracotta warrior outside of a Chinese museum.

While the artwork and the sheer size of the city home — 5,800 square feet — are staggering, what is most notable is that the family has created a home that still feels comfortable enough to really live in. A wooden rocking horse rests riderless not too far from family photographs and drawings made by the children decorate the refrigerator.

"We looked for a new house for a year and a half," Laura says, "but nothing fit or felt right." At first, friends were skeptical of the Diamantonis buying a row home instead of a single-family unit. But, as Laura says, looking out at the family room through the kitchen, "You never know what's behind the row homes."





*"Everything in the backyard feels like a sanctuary." >>>*

#### GARDEN ELEGANCE

A few miles from downtown, in the western part of Lancaster near Franklin & Marshall College, tour-goers will find a much smaller but equally breathtaking home: a 1930 Neotraditional home owned by Gregg and Terri Scott. The couple, who have occupied the home for a little more than a decade, are what most would consider to be a perfect pair as far as home improvement is concerned: Gregg is an architect, and Terri is a freelance interior designer. They've clearly worked well together in their vision for their home, although Terri adds with an easy laugh, "We've always got something torn up."

Their goal was to create a comfortable, relaxing space that tied the inside to the outside and maintained as much historical accuracy as possible, which meant, in some instances, undoing some "improvements" made by the previous owners. The Scotts have retained the original molding, hardwood floors and a 1930s pop-out floor-to-ceiling bay window. Features deemed too "sleek and modern" were replaced with traditional touches

such as beadboard and a pedestal tub. A wall in the family room was knocked out to provide a better view of the garden. In fact, the entire interior looks out into the garden; when standing in the foyer at the front door, guests can see straight through to the backyard.

While the garden had certainly been started before the Scotts moved in — some of the perimeter plantings are 70 years old — they added quite a bit to make the outside as cozy and well designed as the inside. The garden includes an upper terrace, a main patio with seating and dining areas, a fire pit, a goldfish pond, a brick garden shed, a detached two-car garage that looks more like a tiny cottage, fountains and a variety of statuary. The perimeter is dotted with fragrant sweet bay magnolias, and the rest of the landscaping includes azaleas, rhododendrons, cherry laurel, a cut-leaf Japanese maple, liriopse, hostas, ferns and more. As Gregg says, "You name a plant and we've probably got it back there."

Everything about the backyard feels like a sanctuary. An 80-year-old, 12-foot-high hemlock hedge provides privacy, and the soothing water sounds emanating from the fountains mask street noise. Gregg and Terri have created a handful of seating arrangements that provide different views. "There are a lot of fun little niches and nooks to hunker in and hang out," Terri says.

"The only problem is, which one to do want to choose," Gregg adds. "You'll be sitting at the goldfish pond all secluded and sequestered like in a little nest, then you look out at the area by the garage and think, 'Maybe I want to sit there.'"

Even the front of the home seamlessly connects the outside to the inside. The Scotts' farmhouse-style front porch extends the entire length of the house and serves as another room during warm weather. It's decorated with wicker chairs, ottomans, lamps, plants and a sisal rug.

In fact, every bit of space is used to full advantage, a principle that Gregg calls "every square inch." The house is by no

means large and sits on just about a half-acre, but by using space well, it feels comfortable and airy. Good planning prevents cozy from crossing the line into cramped or cluttered.

"It's a good illustration of how you can do a lot with a little," Gregg says. "Unfortunately, we often think we need to be bigger to be better. This house is the antithesis of that. It's just a good human scale."

The house, in general, seems to exude humanity, beckoning friends, family and even strangers to its door. It's the hands-down favorite choice of venues amongst Gregg and Terri's friends and neighbors for entertaining. Their son got married in the backyard several years ago, and it's not uncommon for strangers to come to the door and ask to peek inside, sit on the front porch or even clip a few of the hydrangeas out front. Gregg says they always oblige, and adds, "It's a good problem to have when people don't want to leave." **SS**

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