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Signature Southern Accents

A customer can accomplish a lot with us, whether it be for remodeling or from the ground up, with just one stop.



Photo © of Sylvia Martin for Elegant Earth

With many years of combined retail experience, Melane Landry and Pam Petit make a magnificent team at Zachary's Signature Southern Accents. Since its beginnings as a flooring company in 1992, when Landry first joined the company, the store has expanded to offer furniture, window treatments, artwork and other design accessories—and Landry has evolved with it. She is now celebrating her 26th year in the business.

In 2015, four years after Landry became sole owner in 2011, her longtime friend Pam Petit came on board as manager, leaving behind forty years in clothing retail to enter the world of home furnishings. "Whether it is clothing, home furnishing, or design, style is style," says Landry. For the past three years the duo has worked together to move Signature Southern Accents forward to its highest potential in order to create the most fulfilling experience for each and every customer.

Walking into Signature Southern Accents, a customer feels as if the path to their ideal space will be stress free. The ambiance of carefully arranged furniture, select antiques, and unique décor evokes the irresistible feel of home.

"You can really be inspired when you walk in the store," says Landry. "Right when you step inside you get an immediate feel for who we are and what our look is."

Thanks to Landry and Petit's ingenuity and intuitive style, the business has grown to provide homeowners with services and guidance for every step of home design. "We are truly a full-service store," says Petit. "We have a design staff available for consultations. We offer over 500 options in

flooring including carpet, tile, wood, and laminate. And we carry everything from beautiful furniture to lighting to décor."

Signature also provides quartz countertops, custom showers, and backsplashes. "We represent all tile options," says Landry. "If we don't have it, we can probably find it. We offer special orders beyond what is in stock."

The trip to Zachary is well worth the time for homeowners seeking to avoid the hassle of visiting first a flooring store, lighting store, fabric store, window treatment store, and countless furniture stores before finally hiring a designer to pull it all together.

"A customer can accomplish a lot at Signature, whether it be for remodeling or from the ground up, with just one stop," says Landry. Petit echoes her, emphasizing, "We do everything for a home, whether a client is just freshening up a space or building a new home."

Over the years Landry, along with the number one priority of quality, has ensured that her showroom stays on top of the latest in home decorating trends. "While buying at market, we always represent the newest styles and trends, while keeping our customers in mind," she says.

The two remember more than one occasion when they have brought in something totally new and struggled to sell it because it was "too different," only to have people rushing in for the exact thing a month or two later.

Whether it be pieces of furniture, finishes or color, Signature Southern Accents has never been afraid of trying something new, all while maintaining the impossible-to-miss traces of

high-quality southern style.

"We are not just your average furniture store," says Petit. "Our clientele have been very receptive to the new looks. They love it!"

One of the biggest benefits of shopping with the team at Signature Southern Accents, though, is their commitment to finding what works for each individual customer. "We really do work with people to get a look that works with their lifestyle," says Landry. "Everyone has a different residential set up, family situation, and overall way of life. Our design staff truly works to create spaces that work best for you."

Sidebar

"To just meet someone and be treated like family is unheard of these days."

"Melane Landry and her staff are amazing! Quality products, personal service, and the best decorating talent in the area."

—testimonials from Houzz.com, an online home design community

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INTERVIEW

Dr. Neil Odenwald

SITTING DOWN WITH THE MAN BEHIND THE SOUTHERN GARDEN SYMPOSIUM AHEAD OF ITS THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Interview and photo by Lucie Monk Carter

CR: Over thirty years, how have you seen the Southern Garden Symposium distinguish itself from other symposiums?

NO: From the inception, we've aimed to be the best. In other words, we try to get good speakers—and this is worldwide. We get first-class people that are in the publications, garden designers and so forth. That's our first requirement: to have good speakers. We haven't spared any expense for them. So people have supported that. In St. Francisville [where the symposium is held], there's a lot of gardening interest from the natives; and over time, it's come to be regional. Even people from Texas and Mississippi come. It's gotten to be very supported and popular.

CR: How was the symposium originally conceived?

NO: Thirty-one years ago, I was teaching at LSU. Someone knocked on the door—I didn't know who this person was—he introduced himself as Larry Smart. He said, "Would you be interested in helping and supporting a gardening conference in St. Francisville?" I said, "Yes..." He said, "When can we get started?" I said, "Well, next year, maybe!" It started with Larry, who is now deceased—he was the person who charged me over the years with the requirement that we wouldn't spare any cost to get the best speakers available at the time.

CR: Tell me about some of the speakers you've had over the years.

NO: We started very early with the people from England, like Penelope Hobhouse, Rosemary Verey, and John Brooks. Those are three of the big names in England. You start in England when you're thinking about gardening. Then we've gotten people from Texas A&M: Bill Welch, Greg Grant. We've had big-name people across the United States. James van Sweden, he is spoken of as pioneering the new style of gardening, which is much more of an organic approach. Pretty much cutting-edge people in the garden. Last year, we even had Bill Richardson [LSU Vice President of Agriculture] speaking on marijuana, for medicinal uses and all. He gave us a rundown on how big to grow the marijuana plants and the restrictions they'll have for growing the marijuana plants. This year we'll have Peggy Martin, of the Peggy Martin Rose. We've had people like Allen Owings. We've had Mississippi State people. Whoever's in the news, we've invited.

CR: For you personally, as a gardener, what have been some of the more useful aspects of the symposium?

NO: One thing I like is learning about any management style: how to make the garden manageable and not be a responsibility that overwhelms you. Something



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"IT STARTED WITH A FIVE-CENT PACK OF SEEDS. WHEN I COULD GET THESE SEEDS, I'D PLANT THEM AND GROW THEM. I HAD LITTLE PARCELS OUT BESIDE THE GARAGE, RIGHT CLOSE TO THE CHICKEN YARD. GARDENING'S BEEN IN MY BONES."

you enjoy doing that doesn't burden you—"I've got to do this and I've got to do that at certain times." I think any topics that give you an engagement with the organic and with nature—regardless if it's in design or in management style (i.e. caring for the plants). As you know, gardening is my passion. So anything that has to do with the management of the garden is very important. Another thing is new plants—new introductions. Any plants that are on the forefront; for instance, the Wave Petunia has become pretty popular. Well, I had to have some! We offer plants for sale at the symposium—in fact, we have plants, we have books, and we have the authors signing their books. We also have tools—we're the specialists in Felco. They're very good hand tools. It's a Swiss tool. I think I've got them in every station across my garden. We also have a silent auction with prized things that other people tend to want. We bring in a couple of thousand dollars just from the auction and the plant sales.

CR: Tell me about the social events surrounding the symposium.

NO: We put on very nice galas. We try to identify a house that is a fine house, architecture-wise—old usually, antebellum. We try to find a garden that will complement. We don't repeat very often—maybe every five or eight years. People are very generous with their contributions of gardens and homes. Thursday night, we have the speakers' gala—that's the committee and the speakers. We've got eight to ten different speakers each year. We don't tend to repeat.

Then Friday night, we have an invitation-only gala. That's a dress-up thing. Thursday night is more informal—we have a barn, but it's a very nice barn. No cows or horses. Friday night is the real gala, at a big house with a garden usually. Then Saturday after the symposium at Hemingbough, we have a tea where everyone's invited. And that's at a house with a garden. We support places like Rosedown and Afton Villa and all those places that have gardens. We've done scholarships at LSU. We supported a park restoration in St. Francisville. Fifty, sixty thousand dollars at one time. For a small town, that's pretty good.

CR: How do you find the balance between gardening being an occupation and a passion?

NO: Well, it's both. Outside, here at home, it's my experiment to be my own boss. When I was teaching students, it was a different hat. But I still pulled on the emphasis that I love nature. I want to impart that enthusiasm about nature before pulling them into the technical aspect of growing things and the creativity of design. At the symposium, we look at both design and horticulture. I personally enjoy that, and I work still on design consulting.

CR: How did you become a gardener?

NO: That goes back to being five years old, on a farm in the upper Mississippi Delta. It started with a five-cent pack of seeds. When I could get these seeds, I'd plant them and grow them. I had little parcels out beside the garage, right close to the chicken yard. Gardening's been in my bones. My education started out in horticulture at Mississippi State, came to LSU for landscape architecture, and then went back to Mississippi State for a PhD. Gardening's always been a part of my life. ✨

The Southern Garden Symposium will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary on October 19 & 20, 2018, with the theme of "The Changing Nature of Gardening." Visit southerngardensymposium.org for details.

Bellingrath

Gardens and Home

Springtime is a wonderful season to visit Bellingrath Gardens and Home! Our beautiful, 65-acre estate Garden and our historic Home are located on the Fowl River in south Mobile County in Theodore, Alabama, an easy drive from Interstate 10.

During our Azalea Bloom Out in March, our guests enjoy the blooms of more than 250,000 vibrant azaleas in an explosion of color throughout the 65-acre estate. The **Azalea Bloom Out** goes back to Bellingrath's earliest beginnings in 1919, when Walter Bellingrath purchased a rustic fishing camp on Fowl River. His wife, Bessie, who loved gardening, wanted to beautify the property and relied on old-growth azaleas as a starting point. Ever since, Bellingrath Gardens has been synonymous with the Gulf Coast's beautiful azalea season. The Azalea Watch page is updated daily on our website, bellingrath.org, to help guests plan a visit!

Bellingrath Gardens has two traditional Easter events: **The Easter Egg Hunt on the Great Lawn** and the **Easter Sunrise Service** on Live Oak Plaza. This year, our Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, March 24. Children of all ages are invited to join us! Thousands of Easter eggs will be scattered across the Great Lawn, and there will be plenty of candy and treats for little ones to fill their Easter baskets. After the egg hunt, families are encouraged to enjoy other Easter activities within the Gardens.

On Easter Sunday as the sun rises over Bellingrath Gardens and Home, guests are invited to come and enjoy a special **Sunrise Service** with friends and family on Live Oak Plaza. The service will begin at 6:30 a.m. and is open to everyone in the community. Complimentary admission will be given to guests from 6 to 8 a.m. on Easter Sunday. A limited number of chairs will be set up and guests are encouraged to bring their own chairs. A hot breakfast

will be available for purchase in the Magnolia Café after the service. (In the event of inclement weather, the service will be moved to the Magnolia Café.)

April is also a terrific time to visit. We're celebrating the 25th anniversary of the **Camellia Classic Open Car Show** with the Mobile Bay Mustang Club on Saturday, April 7. And don't miss a visit to our award-winning Rose Garden, where the April **Rose Bloom Out** is truly a feast for the eyes.

For details, visit bellingrath.org, or call 251-973-2217.



Brush With Burden

March 14-22

Check our website for reception and seminar information.

Master Gardener Plant Sale

March 24 . 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

StoryTime Healthy Families Day

April 7 . 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Crawfish in the Garden

April 8 . 6-8 p.m.

Gourmet in the Garden

April 19 . 6-9 p.m.

Visit our website for details for these and other events.



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LSUAgCenter.com/BotanicGardens

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SPRINGTIME!

WE ASKED OUTDOOR EXPERTS FOR THEIR ADVICE ON ENJOYING THE SEASON



Honey Island Swamp, near Slidell, Louisiana, provides an especially natural environment of nesting waterbirds, alligators, and—if you're a believer—the Honey Island Swamp Monster. Photo by Elisa Rolle via Wikimedia Commons. Read more about Honey Island Swamp on page 50.

Take a Swamp Tour ...

"I look forward to watching the trees in the swamp turn green. This is also when the wildlife, like turtles, snakes and alligators are waking up. The best way to enjoy the weather is from my kayak and taking a swim in the river."

- Jessica Gauley, tour guide,
Honey Island Kayak Tours

Become a Louisiana Master Gardener

Whether you are a seasoned gardener or just beginning to sprout your gardening skills, you can become a Master Gardener. The Louisiana Master Gardener program, implemented by the LSU AgCenter, is a statewide educational and service program for gardening enthusiasts. Contact your parish LSU AgCenter extension agent for more information or visit our website.



LSUAgCenter.com/MasterGardener
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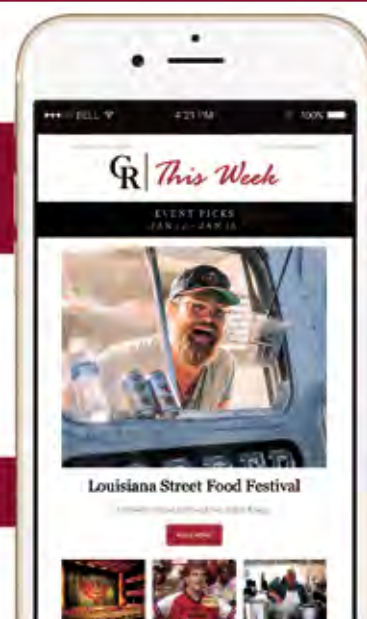
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[CR | This Week]

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The Northern Parula's arrival heralds the beginning of spring migration for birders. Photo by Christopher King of the Jackson Audubon Society.

Grab Your Binoculars ...

"Early March brings in the Northern Parula and Prothonotary Warbler, which heralds the beginning of spring migration for birders. You can find these two migrants in wet wooded areas such as Bluebonnet Swamp in Baton Rouge, Lake Martin in Breaux Bridge, and LeFleur's Bluff in Jackson, Mississippi. On Louisiana's coast, Wilson's warblers arrive and set up territories. Additionally, the beautiful Swallow-tailed Kites are returning and can be seen soaring overhead in different areas, such as Sherburne Wildlife Management Area."



- Harriett Pooler, avid birder,
Ducks Unlimited

Tend & Mend Your Garden ...

"We could call our thirtieth anniversary Southern Garden Symposium, 'What Are We Going to Do About This Winter?!' We've become so spoiled in the past five years. You get a little more tropical—citrus and things like that—a little braver in what you introduce. We don't know if our plants will come back from the roots like they have. It's gone deeper this year. I look forward to seeing what will come back. Look how brown the sego palms are—I think they'll come back with a new flush of growth, but had it been five degrees lower ..."

- Neil Odenwald, master of proceedings,
Southern Garden Symposium



Dr. Neil Odenwald, pictured in his garden at home. Read our interview with Dr. Odenwald on page 43. Photo by Lucie Monk Carter.



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ART 'N ANTIQUES SHOW & SALE | April 12-14 | Celebrating arts, culture and heritage with fine antique dealers and artists

GARDEN PARTY | April 14 | Stroll through Colonnade Garden with mint juleps and cheese straws

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Soak Up the Sun ...

"Whether you get involved in a community garden, like our Victory Garden, or create a garden in your own backyard, growing your own food will give you a new appreciation for the fresh foods that you eat! Or kick back at a fun, outdoor event, like the Victory Festival (Sunday, March 4). What better way to soak up some much-needed Vitamin D, than enjoying your favorite local food, music, and art while supporting a great cause?"

- TownFolk Collective, hosts of Victory Festival in Lafayette

The Victory Garden, in Lafayette's LaPlace neighborhood, was planted in honor of the late Jillian Johnson. The third annual Victory Festival will also celebrate the groundbreaking of the garden's pavilion. Read more about the event on page 18. Photos courtesy TownFolk Collective.



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