



For Immediate Release

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The 2009 Secret Gardens Tour®--Experts, Artists & Gardens Galore!

Dedicated to raising awareness and funds for brain injury recovery, this tour features landscape and fine arts artists in exquisite gardens!

NEW ORLEANS – As a fundraiser for brain injury recovery, **THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR® on Friday and Saturday, March 20 & 21, 2009** in Uptown New Orleans is a crowd pleaser. This popular garden tour, which is also a registered, local non-profit, features landscape artists in the gardens they have designed or maintained, as well as, fine arts and crafts artists showcasing their work at The Secret Treasures boutique, the mini-auction, the artistry of the commemorative posters and the lush labyrinth created totally from flowers and plants. Eleven magnificent and private gardens will be on view to locals and visitors alike. Tickets can now be purchased by going to www.secretgardentour.org.

Viewing the gardens as art, designers or maintainers of them will take center stage on Friday and Saturday. Among the landscape artists will be **René Fransen**, known for his variety and artistry with New Orleans “grand old” as well as “new” garden belles. **Alan and Marianne Mumford**, a husband and wife team heading up Landscape Images, Ltd. will be leading some of the private guided tours through their client’s gardens on Friday and will be available for questions on both days. Also at the tour will be horticulturist and landscape “artiste” **Melinda Taylor**, a well-known consultant for flowers and organic gardening in New Orleans. Taylor has participated in both the

previous garden tours answering questions about flower selection in her client's butterfly gardens, wildlife gardens, and organic gardens. Other garden experts include landscape architects **Karl Becnel, Virginia Provosty, Jeannette Roussel**, landscape horticulturists **Tammany Baumgarten and Alan Singerman** and horticulturists **Franklin Andara and Santiago Caldera**.

At The Secret Treasures boutique, this year's Secret Gardens Tour® commemorative poster will be available. The artwork was designed by collectible, local painter **Miriam Hirsch**. The abstract but whimsical piece is in bright acrylic colors, reminiscent of a child's unabashed and joyful use of color, with shapes appearing to be those of garden bugs. The calligraphy on the poster is designed by **Eugenia Uhl**, the tour's longtime photographer. Both Hirsch and Uhl will be at the tour on Saturday and Hirsch will be signing the posters in person. In addition, the ever popular 2004 **SECRET GARDENS TOUR®** poster by artist **Katie Rafferty** and the subsequent 2005 poster, also by **Rafferty** with **Uhl**, will be available.

As in past tours, labyrinth consultant Margaret Nicolson along with Landscape Images, Ltd., will compose an evergreen and floral labyrinth in one of the gardens. Labyrinths, like mazes, are an ancient walking path. But unlike a maze, whose purpose is to trick and fool the walker, a labyrinth's purpose is to center and balance the walker as it is a form of walking meditation. The labyrinth, along with the gardens on the tour, reflect the spirit and purpose of **The Secret Gardens Tour®**: to aid in the recovery of those who have sustained brain injury. Visitors to the Tour will also benefit from the restorative elements of gardens and their healing properties.

Said **Marianne Mumford, 2009 Co-Chair of the Tour**, "We love the idea of staging a garden tour as a fund-raiser for brain injury recovery because we now know the benefits of gardens go beyond being visually attractive. Gardens stimulate all the senses and spending time in them can be restorative. In New Orleans, we are blessed with a temperate climate allowing us to spend most of the year outdoors. Being in a garden, however, can be healing...in a garden, we can relax and recuperate from our collective and personal storms."

The 2009 TOUR, for the first time, will take place on two days but with two very different experiences. For the true gardening enthusiast, **private scheduled tours** are newly available on **Friday, March 20th at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., and 11 a.m.** Led by a guide, these lucky visitors will preview carefully chosen, elegant gardens located between Octavia and State Streets along St. Charles Avenue and have exclusive access to the design experts to ask questions. Tickets can be purchased for \$60 each (or \$50 each for groups of 20 or more, garden clubs and organizations—take note!) at the **TOUR'S**

website www.secretgardenstour.org. Since these tours must be scheduled with Marianne Mumford, email or call her at marianne@landscapeimagesltd.com or, 504.734.8380. These tickets are limited. Call now!

THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR®, opening to the public on **Saturday, March 21**, is the self-guided walking tour first introduced in the spring of 2004 and is now considered a “**must-see**” by horticultural devotees, professionals and amateurs alike. Tickets for this day can also be purchased in advance for \$20 on the web site: www.secretgardenstour.org , or on the day of the event for \$25 at 6000 State Street. Several of the 2009 gardens will feature musicians, one will have a labyrinth, another will offer art and garden accessories in the “Secret Treasures” boutique as well as a mini-auction, and still another will offer boxed lunches and water for sale.

The 2009 SECRET GARDENS TOUR® is open to the public and presented by New Orleans Homes and Lifestyles magazine. Natives and visitors alike are encouraged to consider taking a ride on the historic St. Charles Avenue Streetcar to and from State Street stop #32 for easy access to the **TOUR** locations.

(For tickets for both days, go online to www.secretgardenstour.org. For further information, contact [Beverly Gianna, PR Chair at \(504\) 621.6828,](mailto:Beverly_Gianna@cox.net) bgianna@cox.net or [Kathleen Waring, 2009 Co-Chair, The Secret Gardens Tour® at \(504\) 914.4865, kwaring@ocsbbs.com.](mailto:Kathleen_Waring@ocsbbs.com)

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