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The Secret Gardens Tour® Adds New Attractions and Group Benefits to Its 2010 Tour:
Outdoor Art and Wildlife Are Featured

NEW ORLEANS, LA— The Secret Gardens Tour® is proud to announce that several new attractions will take place during its 2010 tour to be held on Friday, March 12 and Saturday, March 13. This year's event, themed *Art in the Garden*, will not only showcase the natural beauty found within 10 private gardens near and along Exposition Boulevard and Audubon Park, but it will also highlight the man-made beauty found in many of the gardens' spectacular outdoor art installations. Bird Island, the man-made island situated in the center of Audubon Park, will be a featured stop on the route as well.

"I believe that this year's tour will be one of our most interesting," says Secret Gardens Tour® co-chair Kathleen Waring. "Aside from the fabulous gardens and outdoor art collections, we will have a number of new attractions such as Bird Island in Audubon Park and an air-conditioned loo, as well as first-time vendors and artists who will be participating in this fun-filled weekend. Also, for the first time, we will be offering discounted tickets to those groups of 10 or more who pre-purchase their tickets online."

New this year is the addition of Secret Gardens Tour® Host Partners consisting of hotels, restaurants, and retailers catering to tour groups. Local hotels including The Inn on Bourbon & the Hampton Inn on St. Charles Avenue are offering special group rates and packages. Tour groups and individual ticket holders will also enjoy the opportunity to dine at several local eateries including Mr. B's Bistro and Ralph's on the Park who will be offering Secret Gardens-inspired menus and discounts or promotions. Those who choose to eat lunch along the tour route can purchase freshly-made, gourmet boxed lunches from Southern Hospitality Catering or walk to the Audubon Golf Club in the Park. Additionally, some local retailers will have Secret Gardens-inspired window displays and further tour-related promotions.

As in previous years, the tour route will be lined with live music from new and returning local musicians including the Country Day String Quartet Ensemble, Hap Pardo, India Stewart and Isabel Strong, Laura Rabito, Loyola University String Ensemble, Mizie Liccardi, Music for New Orleans, New Orleans Banjos, and Wally Kay. The *Secret Treasures* boutique will once again offer a variety of gifts and souvenirs for sale from vendors such as the Acquired Brain Injury Survivor Support Group (ABISS), Bags by Mimi, Clay Creations, Eugenie Jewelry by Liz Sloss, artist Jonell Lombardo, and Longue Vue House & Gardens. The Brain Injury Association of Louisiana (BIALA) and Parkway Partners will also be on hand to provide information on their organizations.

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Private group tours will be available Friday, March 12 with tickets costing \$60 but including entrance for both days. Led by volunteer docents, visitors will have the opportunity to meet the professionals responsible for creating or maintaining each garden. Some of these renowned experts will discuss the project as a “before and after” complete with visuals, while others may discuss the style of the garden, point out its highlights, and answer questions along the way. This year’s experts include Rene Fransen of Rene J.L. Fransen Landscape Architects, LLC; Karl Becnel of Garden Trellis; Marianne and Alan Mumford of Landscape Images, Ltd; George Workman of Landworks Designs; Patrick Grimley of Patrick Grimley Landscaping, LLC; and Tom Mayo. Visitors attending the Friday tour will benefit from a preview of the gardens and exclusive time spent with these professionals along with free return admission for Saturday. Many of these experts, as well as some of the homeowners, will also be on hand on Saturday as well to answer questions and offer insider details on their creations.

Since its inception in 2004, The Secret Gardens Tour® has been revealing the treasures found in the private gardens of Uptown New Orleans, and word of mouth quickly established it as one of the best outdoor garden events in the city. Last year, more than 1,000 locals and tourists attended, and over \$40,000 was raised and allocated to several brain injury recovery programs including [The SGT’s Greater New Orleans Guide to Brain Injury Recovery Resource Guide](#), [Brain Injury Association of Louisiana](#), the [Acquired Brain Injury Survivors Support Group](#) and [St. Andrew’s Village](#), a special community for disabled adults.

The first Secret Gardens Tour® began with a group of New Orleans families who had been personally touched by the challenges and triumphs experienced throughout brain injury recovery. Much like a secret garden, there was little known about brain injury and few resources available to help those navigating the route to brain injury recovery. These families sought a way to provide a variety of information including everything from local traditional healthcare systems to locating alternative healthcare while informing the public about causes and prevention of brain injury. Thus, the seeds were sown for the first Secret Gardens Tour® in March 2004, followed by another successful tour in March 2005 with a four-year break due to Hurricane Katrina. The Secret Gardens Tour® was presented again in March 2009. The 2010 tour is made possible thanks to the generosity of sponsors including *New Orleans Homes & Lifestyles* magazine, Crane Rehab Center, Culicchia Neurological Clinic L.L.C., Hales Pediatrics, *nola baby & family* magazine, Landscape Images Ltd., Seyler Favaloro Ltd., and SOUTHERN Brain & Spine.

Please visit www.secretgardenstour.org, to purchase tickets and for more information including up-to-the-minute event details.

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