

A Neoclassical Estate in Georgia Steeped in Americana

A midcentury home by architect Philip Shutze employs period details and is surrounded by expansive gardens and a 56-acre lake. It is listed for \$5.02 million. —Adrienne Gaffney

Location: Thomaston, GA
Price: \$5,020,000



Susannah Dobbs was already familiar with WaterCrest, a 740-acre estate located near Thomaston, Ga., having passed by it several times before it came on the market in 2008. When she visited the home, she knew it was the place for her. 'It is a very peaceful and calming place. My stress level went from being through the roof to very low,' she says. Ms. Dobbs purchased a portion of the estate for \$2.5 million. She owns 474 acres, while a relative of the estate's founder owns the hunting grounds.

One of the funny stories that we heard was that the previous owners had a fire in the house one time and the lady of the house would not let anybody in the house without taking their shoes off. She made the firemen take their shoes off before they came in to put the fire out,' Ms. Dobbs recalls.



The home was built in 1947 by the noted neo-classical architect Philip T. Shutze, who was a native of Georgia. It was designed to resemble an early American home.

Ms. Dobbs was familiar with Mr. Shutze's Swan House, an estate in Atlanta, and recognized many characteristics of his work in the home. 'The carvings were very much the same and the layout in the house is very symmetrical, true to Shutze and very classic architecture,' she says.



The kitchen was not very elaborate then,' Ms. Dobbs says of the original house. She redid it in a process that was finished last year.

The rooms are big and the symmetry of the house is unique and it's just a great example of classical architecture,' says Ms. Dobbs.



The lavender-walled master bedroom was designed in 1947 with built-in closets. 'It's hard to believe that they had built-in closets then, just like we love our closets,' Ms. Dobbs says. 'The guy's side had a tie rack that was built in, it had drawers in the closet. All that's original to the house.'



The staircase steps have a smaller than typical rise, something that Ms. Dobbs greatly appreciates. 'It's very easy to move up and down the staircase because the rise is only between five and six inches on each step.'



The property has a 56-acre lake and extensive gardens with a sundial at the middle. 'Even the benches were designed by Shutze,' says Ms. Dobbs, who is 50 and owns an investment company.'



The home has five bedrooms and 6 1/2 bathrooms across 8,604 square feet. It is listed for \$5.02 million with Jon Kohler of Jon Kohler & Associates.



The property's lake and boathouse were built before the main home so the original owners lived in the boathouse during construction.



The boathouse is the fun place, that's where everybody wants to go because it's right on the water and it's just a period correct, old boathouse,' explains Ms. Dobbs.



The boathouse has an outdoor fireplace where Ms. Dobbs used to host cookouts and fish fries. 'It can accommodate a lot of guests,' she adds.



Ms. Dobbs is selling the home in order to downsize and will be moving temporarily to her home in Concord, Georgia. 'I think it's time for somebody else to come in and put their touch on [the house] and make it their own,' she says.