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HISTORIC HAVENS by Lori Draz

Lauriston Estate



It is no secret that Rumson is home to some of the most magnificent estates and historic homes in New Jersey. Among them is the Colonial Revival mansion, called “Lauriston.” The home was designed by Red Bank and New York architect Leon Cubberly as the summer home for banker Henry A. Ceasar and his second wife, Laura Unger Ceasar. Cubberly’s marble foyer and spacious entrance hall leading to the unique dual bowed staircase is just one component of the outstanding architectural features. In total, the home has three separate entrances and many windows to enjoy the exquisite views. It is listed on the National Historic Registry and is registered with the Rumson Borough Historic Preservation Commission. It is sometimes referred to as “The White House” for its impressive architecture.

Lauriston was actually named for Ceasar’s wife, Laura. The house was originally on 39 acres between Osprey Lane and Tuxedo Road. The Ceasars enjoyed the seasonal home and the couple’s youngest son, Charles Unger Ceasar, lived on at Lauriston until the house passed from the family after Laura’s death in 1942. The property then moved through several owners and was subdivided by the 1950s. It currently sits on six acres of well-cultured landscaped gardens with numerous mature trees and plantings and elaborate flowering gardens. It even has an outdoor stair that leads to the garden area. Laura Ceasar was the green thumb and enjoyed showing her plants, while husband Henry was an outdoorsman and an avid big game hunter. The 10,000-square-foot home reflects both their influences, with Laura’s gardens and the more masculine smoking room and wine room with a prohibition cellar.

Cubberly designed the rectangular home in the Colonial Revival style, which was the predominate style of that era. However, in the pure American spirit of innovation, many architects infused their own interpretations of that style. Cubberly incorporated influences of the Italian countryside into the design, giving the Colonial Revival the overarching style of an Italian Renaissance Revival. It is grand on a large scale and includes extraordinary details, as many of the mansions built during the pre-depression area did. The ceilings, moldings, and wood paneling, the porches and oversized windows, the large spaces for entertaining, including an oversized banquet room, all reflect the grandeur of a bygone era.

The formal living room has built-in, glass-fronted, locking bookcases where artwork



Outdoor stairs and garden

was displayed and its own large marble fireplace. Guests could access the patio through six French doors, and the billiard room and smoking room adjoin with an easy elegance. The smoking room includes gargoyles from the “Hunters from Sleepy Hollow” and an impressive, rustic-inspired stone fireplace; a reflection of Henry’s influence. Additionally, the home has two kitchens; a service and a main kitchen. The main kitchen was once the solarium of the original home.

The east and west wings meet at the central library. The west side of the home once housed the music room, which was later converted to the master suite. That room has its own fireplace and a wraparound porch overlooking the serene wooded property. In all, there are six full baths and two half baths and six bedrooms in the main house. There is also a 3,400-square-foot service wing with a lift to the butler pantry. The service wing was also designed with many bedrooms for staff, as well as a separate entrance into a two-story apartment; a lovely suite for visiting guests. All this is a seasonal home. Lauriston is one of Rumson’s opulent homes, and an historic treasure, located at 91 Rumson Road in Rumson.

(Photos courtesy of Lillian LoRusso, Robert DeFalco Realty)



Foyer by famous architect Leon Cubberly



The smoking room features the gargoyles of Sleepy Hollow around the room



Master bedroom



Formal dining room