

Marjorie Merriweather Post as Manager of Staff and Estates—Interpretive Messages

2024 Garden Docent Training
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

OVERVIEW and HILLWOOD LEGACY

Marjorie Merriweather Post was one of the very few maintaining three amply-staffed home estates – in the Gilded Age style – after the mid-twentieth century. Mar-A-Lago, Marjorie Post's Palm Beach villa completed in 1927, was the only grand mansion of that era still enjoyed by the original owner in the late 1960s. When Post renovated Hillwood from 1955-57, she was running one of the few households in Washington, DC that required additional outbuildings for staff. As her legacy to the public, in addition to a museum of exquisite decorative art and gardens, Hillwood provides a unique behind-the-scenes window into an artful way of life Marjorie Post maintained until she passed in 1973 – a great private estate combining traditions of two centuries.

INTERPRETIVE MESSAGES

Post lived an artful life, literally surrounding herself with superb works of art and gardens, and in practice by utilizing top standards in the domestic arts & entertaining.

Post had the combination of financial and housekeeping savvy to live this kind of life. She had excellent skills in: planning, management, and project conceptualization.

Post could not have accomplished all she did without the work of many dedicated and extremely capable staff members.

The staff was treated well by Post, and many worked for her for decades.

As a private citizen, she entertained at a level and with a consistency comparable to that of heads of state. She enjoyed this immensely, seeing the joy it brought her guests, and the causes she supported.

She moved from one estate to another as the seasons changed (from Hillwood in the spring to Camp Topridge in the summer, to Hillwood again in the fall, and Mar-A-Lago for winter). In short, Hillwood was one of three impeccably run homes.

Source: *Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post*, by Estella Chung (2013)