

Mansion, Garden, and Family Audio Tour Scripts
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens
2026 Mansion Docent Training
Content Last Updated: January 2024

Document Organization and Audio Guide Reference Notes

- The following content has been re-ordered to correspond with the sequence of reading assignments for the 2026 Mansion Docent Training.
- The audio player often displays images for each stop. Use these images to identify objects. Images are highlighted in the script. In the script, SFX stands for sound effects, denoting the sound alerting listeners to look at the image on their player.

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Due January 12, Marjorie Merriweather Post's Biography and Museum Visitors

300. INTRODUCTION TO MANSION TOUR (Motor Court)

Image: Mansion exterior, porte cochere side

Welcome to Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. I'm Kate Markert, Hillwood's executive director. As you listen to this introduction, you should be in the motor court outside the mansion. This estate was built in the 1920s, but was reconstructed and enlarged after Marjorie Merriweather Post purchased it in 1955. Hillwood wasn't just Marjorie's home. The renovations also accommodated her extraordinary art collection, and she lived here until she died in 1973, surrounded by the treasures she'd spent her life collecting. Marjorie always intended for Hillwood to function as a museum after her death so that her collection would be open to the public. Today Hillwood looks very much like it did in Marjorie's time.

Marjorie was many things: a savvy businesswoman, a philanthropist, a world traveler, an art connoisseur, and, if you were lucky enough to be her guest, you saw her in a very different but no less accomplished role: as an exceptionally generous host. She managed her household like she ran a business, hiring a highly skilled staff who made every visit unforgettable. She loved people and delighted in sharing her life with others.

Joining you on today's tour will be Marjorie's granddaughter Ellen Charles, who will share fond insights about her grandmother. You'll also hear actors reading from oral histories by those who worked for or knew Marjorie well. The mansion tour contains approximately 90 minutes of "stops" or "commentaries." They highlight interior design, Marjorie's life-long passion for collecting, objects from the collection, and the artful lifestyle she created here at Hillwood. You can listen to as few or as many "stops" as you like, in any order. Volunteers and staff, stationed throughout the mansion, will gladly answer any questions. Throughout the tour, images will appear on your player. Listen for the **[SFX]** to know when to look down at your screen. Thank you for joining us. Enjoy your tour.

110. MOTOR COURT

Image: Mansion exterior, porte cochere side

You should now be standing in the walled, circular motor court adjacent to the main entrance to the mansion. Hillwood was originally known as Arbremont. It was built in 1926 as a residence for Colonel and Mrs. Henry Parsons Erwin, with gardens and grounds designed by landscape architects Willard Gebhart and Rose Greely. Marjorie purchased the estate in 1955. She then made a number of alterations to accommodate her exceptional art collection and her artful style of living. Marjorie applied her business acumen to the running of her households, bringing together a highly skilled staff to help her share her life and her art collection with others. Marjorie and her staff made sure the Hillwood experience began as soon as guests drove through the stately front gate and up the winding, uphill driveway that took them through its magnificent gardens. Here to greet the diplomats, politicians, student groups, military servicemen and veterans, people in the arts, DC social figures, and family was a lush and colorful landscape of flowers, plants, and trees.

SFX, Image: Blooming Flowers on Drive

Marjorie added the *porte cochere*—or covered drive—for the convenience and comfort of her guests in bad weather. On arriving, valets ushered them from their cars into the house. Marjorie employed up to four chauffeurs to maintain and drive a fleet of 34 cars used at her three properties: Hillwood; Camp Topridge, her summer home in Upstate New York; and Mar-A-Lago, her winter home in Florida. The vehicles transported her family, staff, and guests to wherever they needed to be. The fleet ranged from station wagons to limousines.

310. ENTRY HALL

Image: Entry Hall

The entry hall provides a wonderful introduction to Marjorie Post's remarkable art collection. In 1970, she wrote that her two interests were "the art of 18th-century France and that of imperial Russia." The objects here represent those collecting interests: the finely crafted commodes, or chests of drawers, are decorative arts from 18th-century France, and the grand array of Romanov portraits on the walls reflect her fascination with imperial Russia. This is also where Marjorie's guests got their first experience of her celebrated hospitality from inside Hillwood.

SFX, Image: Orchids in Entry Hall

When they walked into this entry hall, guests were met with the sight, and smell, of flowers, likely chrysanthemums or orchids, from her greenhouse. Once inside, footmen stationed at the room to the left took the coats of male guests. Female guests were attended to in the powder room just beyond the stairs, behind the door to the right. This room is sometimes closed, but if the door is open today, take a moment to look inside. No single detail escaped Marjorie's, or her staff's, attention. Together, they transformed Hillwood into a picturesque haven amidst the hectic city.

Marjorie's granddaughter, Ellen Charles recalled, "One thing about grandmother, in spite of the grandness of her life and her love of royalty, she was always a child of the Midwest. She was not a snob. And I remember somebody saying at a party a while ago, 'The reason I just loved going to Marjorie Post's for dinner is you never know whether you're going to sit next to the hairdresser or the ambassador from some country.'"

Marjorie began managing a staff and household at age 18. By the time she lived at Hillwood, when she was in her 70s, managing the complexities of her lifestyle—from running multiple homes, to fulfilling her many business and philanthropic activities, to maintaining an elaborate entertaining schedule—felt effortless. She explained, "I like a smoothly running organization and have been blessed with a staff who take pride and pleasure in seeing to it that it is just that. We work out our details meticulously so that matters progress smoothly. That has always been our way."

516. PIANO PHOTOGRAPHS (French Drawing Room)

A philanthropist and hostess to the end, the piano in this room displays the photographs of some of Marjorie's most distinguished guests and acquaintances, whom she met through various diplomatic, charitable, and art connections. Look down at your screen to see the photos as they are described.

SFX, Image: the Kennedys

This is President John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy. Marjorie was acquainted with them through her philanthropic activities in Washington. She was also a friend of the president's mother, Rose. Both women wintered in Palm Beach.

SFX, Image: the Roosevelts

Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt are here, too. Roosevelt appointed Marjorie's third husband, Joseph Davies, the US ambassador to the Soviet Union. When Marjorie lived in the Soviet Union, she corresponded regularly with Eleanor about daily life in that country.

SFX, Image: Grand Duchess Charlotte

This is Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg. During World War Two, when Charlotte and her six children fled to America, Marjorie invited them to stay at her home.

SFX, Image: King Peter

Finally, here's King Peter of Yugoslavia. He ascended to the throne during World War Two after his uncle Paul was overthrown in a coup. When King Peter visited the United States in 1942, Marjorie and her husband entertained him in Washington.

517. MARJORIE POST'S FAMILY BUSINESS AND PHILANTHROPY (First Floor Library) **(Additional content under Stop 371)**

Image: First Floor Library

In the decades after the Second World War, Marjorie remained one of the few large-estate owners to maintain a Gilded Age lifestyle. She had three homes and kept a large staff at each. Her financial and housekeeping savvy helped make this possible, but so did the influence of her parents, whose portraits hang here. On the right is her mother, Ella Merriweather. Marjorie's mother took pleasure in furnishing her own home with lovely things she collected during her travels abroad, a pleasure Marjorie would also enjoy.

On the left is a portrait of her father, C.W. Post. He believed his daughter should understand the family business, so at the age of 11, Marjorie began sitting in on company meetings. Afterward, her father would quiz and tutor her on the company matters discussed. When she began running her first estate, The Boulders in Greenwich, Connecticut, her father insisted she keep a balanced ledger book for managing the property. When her accounting showed she was four cents short, he asked her to identify the mistake.

Born in 1887 and an only child, Marjorie Post inherited the Postum Cereal Company after her parents passed away in the 1910s. The company made key acquisitions in the 1920s, including Hellman's Mayonnaise, Jell-O, Log Cabin Syrup, Maxwell House coffee, and Frosted Foods by Clarence Birdseye. In 1929, the company became General Foods. During her Hillwood years, she was director emerita. Even then Marjorie weighed in on product development and once returned an unsatisfactory box of Sugar Crisp cereal to General Foods' research manager in 1962.

Marjorie, called the most-talked-about millionaire by the *Boston Globe*, was prominent not only in her role at General Foods, but also for her philanthropic fundraising. This often included hosting events for causes as diverse as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts of America, Vietnam veterans groups, and the National Symphony Orchestra. When Marjorie

renovated Hillwood in the mid-1950s, she was running one of the few households in Washington, DC, that required additional outbuildings for staff. Hillwood is more than just a museum of exquisite decorative arts. It's a great private estate that combines the traditions of two centuries and is Marjorie's philanthropic and historic legacy to the public.

518. SEA CLOUD (First Floor Library)

Image: Sea Cloud

On the center table is a model of Marjorie's yacht, the *Sea Cloud*. You'll also see a painting of it hanging over the doorway to the dining room. A commission completed in 1931, the *Sea Cloud* was designed as a grand vessel of the highest caliber. It had four masts and 30 sails. Below deck there was a high-tech diesel-electric power plant. Marjorie meticulously planned the interiors to include paneled walls, eight marble fireplaces, and bathrooms with gold fixtures. Marjorie ran the *Sea Cloud* with a staff of 72.

During World War Two, Marjorie leased the *Sea Cloud* to the Navy for one dollar a year. She believed it was her patriotic duty and explained that because she had no son to fight in the war, she was offering her ship instead.

SFX, Image: Sea Cloud as Battleship

To refit the ship for war, Marjorie had to remove the antiques and other valuables. Then, the interiors were stripped. In their place the Navy installed living quarters for 200 men. The *Sea Cloud* became even more distinguished as the first racially integrated ship with more than 50 African Americans serving. After service, the *Sea Cloud* was returned to Marjorie. Because materials were scarce after the war, it took her another two years to restore the interior to its original glory. In 1953, she sold her yacht.

Marjorie's granddaughter Ellen Charles remembers, "When she sold the *Sea Cloud*, she said, 'When it cost more to run her than it did to build her, I needed to sell her. But I could have done what so many people do, is to put her in a foreign registry and not pay the taxes. And I won't do that. I have what I have because I'm an American. And I will never avoid taxes.'"

The yacht is currently owned by a cruise company and continues its legacy of elegant travels on the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas. The *Sea Cloud* is one of the few remaining grand yachts of its time.

525. MARJORIE POST'S CHILDREN AND LEGACY (Marjorie Post's Bedroom)

Image: Archival Photo of Post's Bedroom

Marjorie had three children—all daughters. With first husband, attorney Edward Close, she had Adelaide and Eleanor in 1908 and 1909. With second spouse, the financier E.F. Hutton, she had her third child, Nedenia, in 1923. Nedenia became the actress Dina Merrill. Marjorie's third husband, Joseph Davies, was American ambassador to the Soviet Union and Belgium, and her fourth husband was businessman Herbert May.

She married four times and with the exception of one six-year marriage, the others lasted 14 to 20 years. She always took a new married name, but after her last divorce, in 1964, she returned to Marjorie Post. A family member reflected on this aspect of Marjorie's life, saying, "I guess you can't have everything, and she certainly did enjoy herself most of the time."

Marjorie's legacy includes many philanthropic endeavors. During World War I, she financed the establishment of a hospital to care for wounded soldiers. In World War II, she donated her yacht to the US Navy. She also generously supported the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Boy Scouts of America, Vietnam veterans groups, and the National Symphony Orchestra, all in addition to leaving Hillwood filled with her exquisite art collection as a museum for the public.

470. MARJORIE POST'S DRESSING ROOM

Image: Archival Photo of Post's Dressing Room

This dressing room, filled with family photographs, is where Marjorie spent her mornings. From the time she awoke until she went downstairs for lunch, she attended to personal, household, and business matters here. Her financial secretary, Betty Canella, recalled her routine, "She did her paperwork three mornings and three evenings [each week]. She took her various board duties seriously, and she planned her schedule, whenever possible, around these duties." On a given day, Marjorie might have to review General Foods board documents, insurance forms, paperwork related to her philanthropic activities, staff requests, and invitations to social engagements. With the help of her butler and her social secretary, she also reviewed guest lists, menus, as well as table linen, porcelain, and silver selections for her elaborate entertaining schedule.

Marjorie's morning activities usually included eating breakfast, enjoying light exercise, meeting with staff, and attending to correspondence. Breakfast always included Post Grape-Nuts cereal. She also met with her head gardener, Earl Loy, every morning. He came to appreciate Marjorie's managerial style, her knowledge of horticulture, as well as her terrific sense of humor, especially when it came to her messy handwriting. In his oral history, Earl said, "Sometimes she would write a note. But she would say, 'Read it back to me.' And I said, 'I'm sorry, I can't read it back to you.' And she was giggling, and she'd say, 'Well, I can't read it either,' and then she would tear it up."

Due January 20, Marjorie Merriweather Post & Staff at Hillwood

340. HALL TO THE PAVILION AND WET BAR

Image: Hall to the Pavilion

Guests passed through this hall on their way to the pavilion. The wet bar at the end is where staff prepared drinks and snacks for events in the pavilion. Fashionable entertaining in Marjorie's time required all manner of cocktails, whether neat, straight up, or on the rocks. Unlike the historic French or Russian table settings Marjorie used for formal dining, here in the wet bar she kept a wide array of contemporary glassware. She was a Christian Scientist but occasionally drank small amounts of alcohol and caffeine. According to her butler, Marjorie's preferred evening cocktail was a small glass of Seagram's V.O. Canadian whiskey and water. Never losing an opportunity to delight the eye, Marjorie filled the passageway with wall cases brimming with Chinese hard stone carvings, porcelain at the end of the hall, and, in the cases opposite, snuff bottles.

Whatever the event, it usually ended by 11 p.m. This was typical of Marjorie's generosity toward her staff. Many other households required staff to work until two in the morning or later. Marjorie employed about 40 people at Hillwood. The inside staff numbered 16 to 18 and included the butler, footmen, and maids. Outdoor staff included 12 to 15 gardeners and 6 security personnel. She took great care to manage her staff fairly, paying them more than other households, giving them perks, and sending them generous gifts. Her financial manager Donald Handelman once

said, "She stood up for her people extremely well. She recognized that the way to run a household was that you had to appease everyone."

350. PAVILION

Image: Pavilion

Marjorie had this pavilion built during renovations in the mid-1950s to accommodate her many entertaining needs. The large paintings you see here came into her collection in the 1960s. They were among her final, major acquisitions as she prepared to open her home as a museum. The paintings' contrasting styles and subjects reflect a major shift in Russia's artistic expression and national identity during the 19th century. Guests would have been able to enjoy these paintings during the meetings, concerts, or luncheons held here.

SFX, Image: Party in Pavilion

Marjorie also used this room for after-dinner entertainment, such as film screenings. Films were shown from Hillwood's state-of-the-art projection booth, which is behind the balcony. You can see an image of it on your player now.

SFX, Image: Projectors

In the ceiling, above the piano, are speakers and a drop-down screen mostly hidden by drapery. In 1970, Marjorie hosted a group of distinguished guests that included a general, a baron, and the ambassador from the Soviet Union. She provided her esteemed guests with a taste of American popular culture when she screened Disney's animated classic *The Jungle Book*. Ever attentive to her guests' needs, Marjorie had the sofas equipped with pop-up trays for drinks and snacks.

SFX, Image: Balcony

Movie night wasn't limited to guests though. Staff could watch from the pavilion balcony in the comfort of the well-upholstered theater chairs Marjorie had installed there.

370. FIRST FLOOR LIBRARY

Image: First Floor Library

Many of the First Floor Library's decorative features are English. The 18th-century pine paneling and marble mantelpiece, 19th-century chandelier, and furniture bring to mind the comfortable atmosphere of a British country house. The objects in the table cases are changed periodically to display a variety of small treasures. This room was a cozy place for Marjorie to gather with family and friends. After dining with a small group, she and her guests would retire here. On quiet evenings, whether she was alone or relaxing with her social secretary, Margaret Voigt, Marjorie came here to read. Some of the people pictured in the family portraits and photographs in this room probably spent time here with Marjorie.

390. BREAKFAST ROOM

Image: Breakfast Room

The design of this breakfast room recalls the breakfast room in Marjorie's 1920s apartment in New York City. The bronze metalwork actually comes from her fashionable Upper East Side residence. The plantings in the window bring elements of the garden inside. You'll find many such interactions of indoor and outdoor spaces at Hillwood.

Today these flowers are tended to by the horticultural staff who change them according to the season. They also provide the flower arrangements on this table as well as in the dining room, often using flowers from the cutting garden. The gilt bronze and green glass chandelier comes from the Catherine Palace, an imperial summer residence outside St. Petersburg favored by Catherine the Great.

Oddly enough, the breakfast room is not where Marjorie ate breakfast, but where she ate lunch or dinner, sometimes with her social secretary, Margaret Voigt, or other guests. It was also the site of many lunches that featured the latest products from General Foods Corporation. As the majority shareholder and director emerita of the family business, Marjorie was very involved in all aspects of the company, including product development. She served Jell-O to guests enthusiastically, saying, "Jell-O is a wonderful product, because of course it's used by all levels of income . . . and it's good for all times."

519. DINNER PARTY PREPARATIONS (Dining Room) (Additional content under Stop 380)

Two of Marjorie's staff members were integral to helping her plan formal dinners: her butler, Gus Modig, and her social secretary, Margaret Voigt. Marjorie gave them the names for the guest list. Margaret kept track of all of Hillwood's menus to make sure a guest wouldn't have the same meal twice. Then, when necessary, a seating arrangement following diplomatic protocol was worked out.

SFX, Image: Linen Books

Marjorie selected the linens, silver, and porcelain for each course herself. Her butler Gus maintained a linen book to confirm that her selections, which she made from memory, were correct. Marjorie was meticulous about caring for the table linens, too.

SFX, Image: Staff in Dining Room

On the morning of a formal dinner, Gus and other staff members set the table. This required measuring each guest's place precisely with a ruler and carefully placing each piece of porcelain, glass, and flatware so that all the place settings were perfectly symmetrical and equidistant. The process took several hours. Marjorie always reviewed the table twice, once in the morning and again after dressing for dinner. She was, as social columnist Betty Beale once recalled, "a perfectionist from the word go."

524. MAR-A-LAGO (Dining Room)

Image: Mar-A-Lago Exterior

The table in the dining room was originally designed for Mar-A-Lago, Marjorie's winter home in Palm Beach, Florida, from 1927 until her death in 1973. Mar-A-Lago was an artful combination of Moorish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian Renaissance, and French influences. So-called because it stood between the sea and the lake—*mar* and *lago* in Italian—Mar-A-Lago, operated with about 75 staff members, roughly half assigned for in-house duties and the rest assigned to care for the grounds. It was a venue for dances and charity events.

As reported in the magazine *Chicago Today*, the home fit Marjorie's standing as "the unchallenged arbiter of who's who and who isn't during the winter season...and the queen bee of Palm Beach." Mar-A-Lago was a unique architectural creation that combined floor plans by architect Marion

Wyeth and fantastical ideas from architect and scenic designer Joseph Urban. The dining room was inspired by a room in the Chigi Palace in Rome. You can see a photograph of it on your player now.

SFX, Image: Mar-A-Lago Dining Room

Mar-A-Lago's superintendent, Jimmy Griffin, once said that Marjorie's parties were "occasions," with dinners for 75 people followed by dancing. Dancing, in fact, was one of Marjorie's favorite entertaining activities, whether it was the tango, the paso doble, or square dancing. Because spiked heels dented and scratched the polished floor, Marjorie distributed heel protectors to her female guests, and, she instructed her staff to check women's shoes to help them comply. Marjorie's interest in conserving floors was not limited to her own estates. In 1964, she sent heel protectors to President Lyndon B. Johnson's wife, Lady Bird, for use at the White House.

As the *Palm Beach Post* once announced, "You go to Mrs. Post's to dance or you stay home." This was true for even the most distinguished of guests. After one evening of dancing, Marjorie wrote to Rose Kennedy, "What a joy it was to see you bouncing around...I am amazed to learn from your letter that it was the first time you ever square danced." Rose Kennedy returned the compliment, saying that she had "not had so many attractive dancing partners since I was a debutante."

400. BEHIND THE SCENES: PANTRY

Image: Staff in Pantry

This butler's pantry was the nerve center for the household staff, equipped with telephones, a clock, a calendar, a corkboard, and a chalkboard. This space was remodeled in the 1950s, during Marjorie's initial renovations, and it featured the most up-to-date lighting, appliances, and color scheme. The resulting mid-20th-century American style provides a contrast with the European-inspired period rooms throughout the rest of the house. Footmen polished the silver here and stored it in the nearby walk-in silver safe, which is behind the large, dark gray door. The dumbwaiter you see next to the stainless steel refrigerator was used to transport the porcelain and glass from the basement storage area. To the right of the swinging kitchen door is a food warming cabinet. Above the counters are cupboards displaying and storing portions of the tableware Marjorie used on a regular basis.

Every morning around 10 o'clock, Marjorie's personal maid called down to this pantry from her dressing room with Marjorie's breakfast order. It was prepared here. Around the same time, the staff enjoyed a coffee and hot bun break. During the cocktail hour that preceded formal dinners, the cocktail waiter prepared drinks here. Because Marjorie's treasured decorative arts collection made up the table settings at her elaborate dinners, Hillwood staff members washed every piece of porcelain, glass, and silver by hand in the sinks and then dried them one by one, too! Be sure to take a moment to explore the staff dining room, where you'll learn more about the staff at Hillwood and Marjorie's other homes. To find it, just walk through the double doors near the entrance to the kitchen.

410. BEHIND THE SCENES: KITCHEN

Image: Staff in Kitchen

Unlike the period rooms throughout the house, the kitchen and pantry reflect typical American design of the 1950s, down to the pastel colors. Next to the door, the Sta-Kold freezer recalls Marjorie's ownership of Birds Eye Frosted Foods, purchased by the Postum Cereal Company in 1929. This transaction was one of several important acquisitions, along with Jell-O and Maxwell

House coffee, that transformed the family's Postum Cereal Company into the General Foods Corporation. To the left, the eight stainless steel doors open up the refrigerators. The only thing missing here is a dishwasher, because all the tableware was washed by hand in the sinks! This is just one example of the extraordinary effort required for Marjorie's elaborate entertaining schedule. Each season at Hillwood included: one monthly dinner; three luncheons each serving 125 people; and a series of garden teas over a long weekend, with all the cooking done at Hillwood. But Marjorie's expert leadership, together with the staff's exceptional skill, made the work seem easy.

Three cooks prepared three meals each day for Marjorie and the staff, and the menus featured American cuisine. The cooks were exceptional, and their presentation of the food was unforgettable. Her granddaughter Ellen Charles recalled the French green beans: "I used to just be absolutely fascinated that they would have wonderful *haricots verts*. They were all stacked perfectly. Somebody made sure that they were all just like soldiers in a row."

Marjorie's employees were always known as "staff," never servants. Always mindful of expressing thanks, at the end of an evening's entertainment, she stopped by the kitchen to thank the cooks personally, sometimes even bringing along the guest of honor.

Be sure to take a moment to explore the staff dining room, where you'll learn more about the staff at Hillwood and Marjorie's other homes. To find it, just walk through the double doors near the entrance to the kitchen.

440. SECOND FLOOR LIBRARY

Image: Second Floor Library

As in the larger downstairs library, this room's 18th-century British décor evokes English country houses. To the right of the fireplace is a mid-18th-century card table. To the right of the entry is a portrait of Winston Churchill, the British prime minister during World War Two.

The small scale and exquisite décor of this library are a testament both to Marjorie's taste and her approach to interior decoration. As her granddaughter Ellen Charles recalls, "Grandmother was very interested in how a room was. That it was not only comfortable, but it was practical. That the things you needed were in the right places. That the light was good to read by. That the chair was comfortable. And that it was all visually attractive."

This room had a television that Marjorie watched when her youngest daughter, the actress Dina Merrill, appeared on television. You can see an image of the room from that time, with the TV in the bottom right corner, on your player now.

SFX, Image: Library with TV

In 1968, Dina played the Western-themed character Calamity Jan [sic], alongside villains Shame [sic] and Frontier Fanny on *Batman*. She also appeared on *Bonanza* in 1966. Walk over to the passageway window, with the shade pulled up, and you'll see a grand view of the Lunar Lawn. Beyond that is the wooded valley of Rock Creek Park. The Washington Monument is less than five miles to the south.

450. ADAM BEDROOM SUITE

Image: Adam Bedroom

This bedroom is decorated in the Adam style, so named for the Scottish architects and designers, brothers Robert and James Adam, who popularized it. The style was fashionable in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in both England and America, and became popular again in this country in the early 20th century.

The Adams were celebrated for their use of pastel colors, seen here in the warm yellow silk bedspreads, light blue and white medallions over the doors, and Wedgwood ceramics scattered around the room. The elaborate circular and elliptical designs on the carpet and the ceiling exemplify the striking geometric motifs popularized by the Adams' firm.

A large walk-in closet and a dressing room connect this guest bedroom with the library. While she lived at Hillwood, her houseguests typically were small numbers of friends or family who stayed overnight. Her two other homes, Camp Topridge in Upstate New York, and Mar-A-Lago in Florida, were better suited for entertaining large groups.

470. MARJORIE POST'S DRESSING ROOM

Image: Archival Photo of Post's Dressing Room

This dressing room, filled with family photographs, is where Marjorie spent her mornings. From the time she awoke until she went downstairs for lunch, she attended to personal, household, and business matters here. Her financial secretary, Betty Canella, recalled her routine, "She did her paperwork three mornings and three evenings [each week]. She took her various board duties seriously, and she planned her schedule, whenever possible, around these duties." On a given day, Marjorie might have to review General Foods board documents, insurance forms, paperwork related to her philanthropic activities, staff requests, and invitations to social engagements. With the help of her butler and her social secretary, she also reviewed guest lists, menus, as well as table linen, porcelain, and silver selections for her elaborate entertaining schedule.

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490. THE ENGLISH BEDROOM SUITE

Image: English Bedroom

The English bedroom served as a guest room for Mrs. Post's family members, in particular her youngest of three grown daughters, the actress Dina Merrill. Look across the room to see the hallway leading to two closets and a bathroom, part of the amenities available to overnight guests.

Generally, Mrs. Post did not have overnight guests at Hillwood other than family. When she hosted visitors, such as school groups from C.W. Post College, on Long Island, or from Battle Creek, Michigan, where Post brand cereals were made, they would be her guests at the nearby Shoreham Hotel.

The Chippendale-style bed and chest-on-chest (across the room) were made in England in the 1800s. British sailors of the 19th century hand-stitched these needlework pictures of sailing ships and flags, called sailors wools that served as souvenirs of particular voyages with flags recording the countries visited.

496. EMPRESS ALEXANDRA'S NUPTIAL CROWN (Second Floor Gallery)

The German-born Alexandra wore this crown behind a diamond-studded kokoshnik or Russian-style tiara when she married Tsar Nicholas II in 1894. The wedding, which took place only a week after the burial of the tsar's father, was a subdued affair. The nation was in mourning and there could be no reception or honeymoon.

Bands of diamonds, sewn onto velvet-covered supports, form the base and orb of the crown. A cross made of six larger diamonds rests on top. The diamonds were salvaged from imperial jewels belonging to previous rulers. In fact, these came from a garment worn by Paul I, the son of Catherine the Great.

At the beginning of World War I, Russian officials removed the crown jewels to the Kremlin Armory for safekeeping. After seven years of war and revolution, income was needed to revive the failed economy. The crown jewels were appraised, and this lovely piece was sold at Christie's auction in London in the 1920s. It changed hands several times before Mrs. Post purchased it in 1966 for her collection here at Hillwood.

497. BUCH CHALICE (Second Floor Gallery)

In 1791, Catherine presented this magnificent gold chalice as part of a set of liturgical vessels to the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St. Petersburg at a church service to celebrate recent military victories.

She resurrected the age-old tradition of decorating objects used in religious ritual with intaglios and cameos. She hand-picked the antique precious and semi-precious gems from her own beloved collection.

Catherine had commissioned the Buch Chalice, named after the craftsman who made it, to celebrate military victories over the Ottoman Turks. The empress had further plans for conquest in the area south of Russia. The people who had lived there were Greek-speaking and Orthodox Christians, and the area had been part of the Byzantine Empire.

Russia had inherited its religious and cultural traditions from Byzantium. Catherine and the military commander Grigory Potemkin strategized to conquer Ottoman Turkey. However, such ambitious plans did not come to fruition. At the religious services in which Catherine presented the Buch Chalice, she outwardly commemorated the military triumphs of Potemkin but privately mourned the statesman's recent death as her former lover and lifelong friend.

460. MARJORIE POST'S BEDROOM

Image: Archival Photo of Post's Bedroom

Marjorie's bedroom is decorated in the same French style as many of the rooms downstairs. The nearby table case holds about 50 small objects. They are all made of bloodstone, Marjorie's birthstone. This bedroom suite is where Marjorie often attended to household or personal matters.

For instance, when she had time for a manicure, Rose Dickens from the Elizabeth Arden beauty salon arrived by taxi and attended to Marjorie here. If the appointment ran over lunch, they dined here together.

Across the room are images of Marjorie's three children. The large pastel portrait is of Adelaide and Eleanor, and a photograph of daughter Nedenia, who became known as the actress Dina Merrill, sits below the pastel on the right. Another portrait, this one of Marjorie, hangs above the fireplace on the opposite wall. Marjorie had this portrait painted in 1952 by British artist Douglas Chandor, at the request of her daughter Eleanor, to whom she intended to give the painting on her birthday. Unfortunately, Chandor died before finishing the painting. Out of respect for him, Marjorie and Eleanor accepted the portrait in its unfinished state, and it now hangs here for visitors to enjoy. In earlier years, Marjorie hung a different portrait, not of herself, in this location.

480. MARJORIE POST'S PRIVATE BATHROOM AND CLOSETS

Image: Post's Private Bathroom

Adjacent to this room is Marjorie's private bathroom. She had always loved pink—as is evident throughout the other rooms in the house—but the color became trendy in the 1950s, when this bathroom was renovated. Mamie Eisenhower's 1953 inaugural gown launched a craze for "first lady pink." At the same time, household goods, once only manufactured in utilitarian colors, were now offered in pastel pinks, yellows, and greens. Next to the bathtub is a series of call buttons for the maid, social secretary, the pressing room, and the sewing room. It was just another way for Marjorie to ensure the household ran smoothly. Maintaining the closets fell to Eva Zackrisson, the head personal maid. Most of Marjorie's wardrobe was kept in the ample storage space on the third floor. Every week Eva brought down the clothes Marjorie needed for each occasion in her social calendar. They were stored in the two closets down the hallway. The items there today, many from Marjorie's wardrobe, are changed periodically. On your way to the closets, on your right, you'll see the jewelry safe and a changing display of some of Marjorie's stunning jewelry.

Due February 2, Furniture and Furnishings and Small Precious Objects, and Frameworks

311. TWO COMMODOES OR CHESTS OF DRAWERS (Entry Hall)

Image: Left Commode

Two stately commodes, or chests of drawers, flank the library entrance. These pieces accommodated—thus the name commode—necessities common to aristocratic homes.

To the left of the library door is the earlier commode. It is decorated with marquetry, tiny bits of many-colored wood meticulously combined in an extraordinarily naturalistic still life. The decoration in the center includes a basket of flowers, a pair of turtledoves, a tambourine, a wide-brimmed hat, and sheaves of wheat. To the left and right, you'll find urns brimming with flowers.

Image: Right Commode

Now, please step over to the commode to the right, made a few years later. This commode is embellished with marquetry of equal distinction. A large basket of flowers adorns the central panel, and urn-shaped vases hold flowers on the side panels. Country themes were popular in the 1770s, when these pieces were made. From their elegant residences in Paris, the French aristocracy fantasized about the bliss of country living.

The commode is embellished with gilt bronze decorations. Just below the top of each piece, a patterned frieze conceals shallow drawers. Gilded corner mounts are in the form of male busts. At the bottom, the feet are in the shape of lion's paws, and in the center is a fanciful mask. Such classical motifs reflect the excitement at the discoveries of ancient images at recent excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum. You'll find similar mounts on the commode you just saw.

These commodes are attributed to German-born Jean-Henri Riesener, one of several foreign cabinetmakers working in Paris in the 18th century. Riesener was famed for his exquisitely rendered marquetry, for his distinctive bronze mounts, and for his ingenious locking mechanisms. One turn of the key opens all the commodes' drawers and doors. He was cabinetmaker to Louis XVI, supplying the king with more than 700 pieces of furniture, for which he received extravagant fees.

To see more pieces from Mrs. Post's first collecting passion—French decorative arts—please walk to your right, cross the octagonal room filled with porcelain and enter the French drawing room.

312. BUST OF THE DUCHESSE DE CHÂTEAUXROUX (Entry Hall)

Image: Bust of the Duchess

A white marble portrait bust sits on the long table by the stairs. Like the aristocratic 18th-century ladies in the painted portraits to your left, hanging above the commodes, this sitter wears her hair dressed high, with cascading curls. Here, it's adorned with roses, and a spray of roses enhances her bodice too. Lace peeks out from the top of her brocade bodice, and a dramatic silk wrap frames her shoulders, setting off the heavy pendant on her string of pearls. The anonymous sculptor carefully carved and polished the stone to suggest the varying textures of skin, cloth, and jewelry.

On the base of the bust, a carved inscription identifies the sitter as the Duchesse de Châteauroux, who succeeded two of her sisters as the king's mistress to King Louis XV. The former Madame de la Tournelle was a wealthy young widow said to be majestic, imposing, and calculating. Louis granted her the position of the king's official mistress, or *maîtresse en titre*, made her a duchess, and gave her a house in Paris, jewels, and a lavish monthly allowance. The idea of married men keeping mistresses may conflict with the morals of many modern cultures, but in 18th-century France, mistresses were accepted and even esteemed members of the court, and often came from aristocratic families. They served as companions to noblemen, who, for the most part, chose their wives more for their aristocratic genes or fortunes than for love.

320. FRENCH DRAWING ROOM

Image: French Drawing Room

The objects around you—the furniture, tapestries, and pink and blue Sèvres porcelain in the wall cases—represent the genesis of Marjorie's collecting. They complement the painted and gilt wood paneling and mantel that come from Parisian homes dating to the reign of King Louis XVI. Together, the objects and room décor evoke the splendor of French aristocratic life in the 1700s.

SFX, Image: Post & Gus Modig

Marjorie began her collecting career in the 1920s by acquiring 18th-century French objects for her home in New York City. Like many of her peers at the time, she was drawn to the French arts of that period. Marjorie had this room constructed in the 1950s after she purchased Hillwood. The French drawing room is where Marjorie greeted her guests for dinners and large garden parties. During daytime functions or evening cocktails, the curtained doors on either side of the tapestry might

have been opened so visitors could enjoy the formal gardens outside. Dinners were always formal occasions, and guests arrived dressed appropriately. The evening cocktail hour began promptly at eight o'clock. Tuxedo-clad waiters circulated among the guests, serving drinks. At 8:30 precisely, the butler rang the dinner bell. This was the gentlemen's cue to escort a designated lady into the dining room, yet another thoughtful detail Marjorie and her staff arranged in advance.

SFX, Image: Post & Students

This room is also where Marjorie and her curator, Marvin Ross, held art appreciation classes for high school and college students. Marjorie wanted to give young people a spectacular and educational experience by inviting them here to learn more about the grandeur of 18th-century France as well as imperial Russia. One student said that her visit to Hillwood made her feel "like a fairy princess on a magic carpet." Another felt so inspired that she pursued a path in education and Russian studies.

321. WALL TAPESTRIES AND TAPESTRY-COVERED SOFAS AND CHAIRS (French Drawing Room)

Image: Tapestry

The large tapestry directly opposite the entrance is dated 1736. It comes from a series called *The Italian Festivals* and features two scenes. At the left is "The Quack Doctor." Underneath the red tent, you'll find a turbaned "medicine man" energetically hawking his bottled potions. In the center is "The Peep Show," with a woman and child peeking into a large blue crate. At the side stands a man working ropes that change the views—to the delight of his audience.

Used to decorate royal palaces and aristocratic homes of the 18th century, such tapestries reflect the lively spirit of the times. All three wall tapestries in this room were woven at the Beauvais Factory after designs by the court artist François Boucher. Well-known painters were often commissioned to produce art to be used in other media.

Image: Chair

The two sofas under the large tapestry and five matching chairs—one to the left of the sofas, the others in front of the fireplace—form part of a suite. Their 19th-century frames are upholstered in 18th-century floral tapestries woven at the famed Gobelins Factory. The tapestries were commissioned as diplomatic gifts from Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. As such, they proclaimed France's artistic accomplishment, enticing buyers abroad to seek additional pieces of French manufacture, boosting the French economy and solidifying France's position as arbiter of European taste.

In pre-revolutionary France, luxury arts like these were a collaborative effort, produced by highly specialized guilds. The furniture's frames, for example, are the work of wood carvers; the gold finish was applied by registered gilders; and the tapestries themselves were woven in textile workshops. To hear more about innovations in furniture design, press 522.

323. ROLL-TOP DESK AND SWIVEL CHAIR (French Drawing Room)

Image: Desk

The roll-top desk, shown closed, is located between the two windows, near the piano. This desk is decorated with clusters of musical instruments and implements associated with writing and painting, and is crafted of various woods and gleaming mother-of-pearl. The 18th century was the era of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, and intellectual and artistic pursuits were important

to the aristocracy. This desk, a tour-de-force of cabinet design, served an incredible array of functions—including a dressing table, a library desk, and safe. A lock hidden in the center of the front releases the roll top.

The desk was crafted by a father-and-son team of master cabinetmakers named Abraham and David Roentgen. The mechanical ingenuity of their furniture was renowned, and their workshop was considered among the best in Europe. Patrons from France's Louis XVI to Russia's Catherine the Great kept them occupied with grand and prestigious commissions for years.

On the front of the desk, the elaborate mother-of-pearl monogram surmounted by a crown contains the letters "MA." Long speculated to be the initials of Marie Antoinette, this storied connection has finally been dispelled. The monogram is now thought to be that of Maria Antonia, princess of Bavaria and the electress of Saxony (part of present-day Germany). Maria Antonia was a talented and artistic woman of the 18th century. Not only was she a respected composer and patron of the arts, she also served as regent of Saxony from 1763 to 1768 until her son came of age. The musical instruments and other images on the marquetry reflect her artistic interests and pursuits.

Image: Chair

The round chair in front of the desk, however, did belong to Marie Antoinette. The queen's inventory mark is branded underneath the seat. With its low back and ability to swivel, this chair might remind you of a modern-day hairdresser's chair. That's because it was designed to facilitate the care of elaborate wigs and hair powdering of the period.

510. MARJORIE POST'S EARLY COLLECTING: 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH DECORATIVE ART (French Drawing Room) (Additional content under Stop 320)

Mrs. Post began acquiring French decorative arts in the 1920s for her New York City home, which was decorated in the same style. In those days, French furnishings and luxury arts were considered the epitome of good taste, and collecting French art was key for anyone vying for recognition as a discerning collector.

Mrs. Post made purchases with the guidance of interior designers and influential art dealers, most notably, Sir Joseph Duveen. In the early days of her collecting, at Duveen's recommendation, Mrs. Post developed her "eye" for art by taking courses at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on various subjects including tapestries, porcelains, and furniture. Soon, she began to recognize the importance of her holdings and, at Duveen's urging, decided to commission several scholars to document them in a catalogue. Unfortunately, it was never printed.

Mrs. Post built her collection piecemeal from a wide variety of sources. She bought primarily through dealers and major auction houses in London, Paris, and New York, becoming actively involved as evidenced by correspondence and the notes she made on the bills. Over the years, her taste matured, and she developed three criteria for collecting: beauty, craftsmanship, and historical association.

As early as 1950, Mrs. Post began to entertain the notion of opening her home to the public. Just after purchasing and renovating Hillwood, she decided that after her death the estate would in fact become a museum. She was 68 years old. She hired a full-time curator, Marvin Ross, to help

research and round out her collection that now included both French and Russian art. Mrs. Post directed Ross to acquire additional French furnishings to create an appropriate ambiance for her Russian pieces, mirroring the décor of 18th-century Russian palaces.

522. NEW HOUSEHOLD CONVENIENCES AND COMFORTS EMERGE IN THE 18TH CENTURY (French Drawing Room) (Additional content under Stop 321)

Image: Tapestry-covered Chair

The strict etiquette of the 18th century allowed only the highest-ranking members of society to enjoy the comfort of armchairs and sofas such as the tapestry-covered ones in this room. Newly widened seats and set-back arms accommodated the full skirts favored by fashionable ladies of the day, who appreciated their newfound comfort.

Louis XV's daughter Madame Victoire was once asked if she would follow her sister Louise's lead and enter a convent. Sinking into the depths of an upholstered chair much like these, Victoire replied, "I shall never have Louise's courage. I love the convenience of life too well. This armchair is my downfall."

523. DRESSING THE PART: THE TOILETTE IN 18TH-CENTURY FRANCE (French Drawing Room) (Additional content under Stop 323)

Image: Swivel Chair

Low-backed chairs such as this one indeed facilitated the styling and powdering of hair, one of countless steps in an aristocratic lady's or gentleman's daily dressing routine, or toilette. For ladies, time spent on this lengthy procedure depended in part on their coiffure's height and volume, the complexity of its arrangement, and the amount and variety of adornment desired. The toilette required the services of a number of attendants steeped in the rigorous etiquette of aristocratic 18th-century dress and fashion. At court, the ritual might be repeated as many as five times daily, as one changed clothes and accessories for each obligation or festivity.

The Baroness d'Oberkirch, a friend of Marie Antoinette's, recalled, "This blessed 6th of June I was awakened at the earliest dawn. I was to get my hair dressed and make a grand toilette, in order to go to Versailles, whither the queen had invited the Comtesse du Nord, for whose amusement a comedy was to be performed. These court toilettes are never-ending, and this road from Paris to Versailles very fatiguing, especially when one is in continual fear of rumpling her petticoat and flounces.

"I tried that day, for the first time, a new fashion—I wore in my hair little fat bottles shaped to the curvature of the head; into these a little water was poured, for the purpose of preserving the freshness of the natural flowers worn in the hair, and of which the stems were immersed in the liquid. This did not always succeed, but when it did, the effect was charming. Nothing could be more lovely than the floral wreath crowning the snowy pyramid of powdered hair."

353. BREAD AND SALT PLATE (Pavilion)

Image: Bread and Salt Plate on Right

On either side of the pavilion's entrance hang bread and salt plates. Let's look at the one to the right, made by the firm of the celebrated Russian silversmith Pavel Ovchinnikov.

In the center is Russia's imperial coat of arms—a double-headed eagle on an ermine mantle surmounted by a helmet and an imperial crown. The inscription around it reads, "To Their Imperial Majesties the Sovereign Emperor Alexander III and Sovereign Empress Maria Fedorovna on the Day of Their Blessed Coronation from their Loyal Subjects the Citizens of the Town of Ivanovo-Voznesensk." The plate's ornate rim displays miniature, enameled portraits. At the top is Alexander III, on the right, Maria Feodorovna, and on the left, their son, the future Nicholas II.

In an elaborate ceremony held at the Kremlin Palace, dignitaries attending Alexander III's 1883 coronation presented their sovereign with splendid plates such as this one holding bread and salt, traditional offerings of welcome.

The tradition was not limited to royalty. Today, Russians still place a round loaf of bread and salt on a special plate or cloth to welcome a newcomer, celebrate a wedding, or mark a special occasion. The recipient breaks the bread, dips it in the salt and then eats it in gratitude. In fact, the Russian words for bread and salt—*khleb* and *sol*—are the basis of the Russian word for hospitality, *khlebosolstvo*.

354. PAIR OF LARGE RUSSIAN VASES (Pavilion)

Image: Vase

During the reign of Nicholas I, from 1825 until 1855, the Russian Imperial Porcelain Factory produced numerous vases to decorate the many palaces Nicholas constructed, including a number of large-scale pieces such as these. The scenes of church interiors painted on the vases were based on 17th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings, extremely popular subjects with Russian nobility. The factory's porcelain painters were known for their skill as copyists and often replicated paintings hanging in one of St. Petersburg's palaces or the Hermitage, which was the home of the tsar's private collection and would later become the celebrated museum we know today. These two colossal creations were made in the 1830s, a period of high technical accomplishment. Each vase is made of several sections, held together by an internal rod. Gilt bronze bands conceal the joints of the sections.

355. BUSTS OF PETER THE GREAT AND CATHERINE THE GREAT (Pavilion)

Image: bust of Peter

In front of the room's two side windows stand classically inspired marble busts of Catherine the Great and Peter the Great. Peter is on the right of the large portrait. With his short haircut and decorated armor, this marble bust of Peter the Great looks like an ancient Roman emperor. Peter used this classical likeness to promote his image as a victorious conqueror. The tsars often presented themselves as historical or mythological figures to help secure political power and win public approval.

This bust was probably created in the 1700s by an English artist. An inscription on the right side of the base reads "tsar of Muscovy," an English phrase for the Russian ruler. On the front is a green inscription that translates "In my going down, I went up." It refers to how Peter's apprenticeship as a humble dockhand in England and the Netherlands prepared him for his rise to glory as a tsar who brought sweeping change to Russia. While living in the West, he learned about shipbuilding, which allowed him to build a great Russian navy.

Peter considered his hard work and dedication a model for his subjects. In 1720, he remarked to a naval trainee, "You see, lad, even though I'm the tsar, I have calluses on my hands, all in order to show you an example so that I may see fitting helpers and servants of the fatherland."

The shoulder straps of Peter's armor are adorned with classical figures of sea gods, symbolizing his naval victories and reflecting his nautical experience. His triumph over the Swedes in 1703 won him the marshy lands where the Neva River empties into the Gulf of Finland. There, Peter created an entirely new port that would become his capital city. St. Petersburg would connect Russia to Europe and serve as a conduit for Western ideas and goods.

Image: bust of Catherine

Catherine's marble bust is located to the left of the large painted portrait. The bust depicts the serene and regal empress later in life, radiating the self-assurance she attained over the course of her reign. She wears a simple tiara encircled by the laurel wreath of a legislator who has brought the benefits of reason to the subjects of her vast land.

On the true role of the monarch, Catherine, ever the lawmaker, had this to offer: "Not to deprive people of their natural liberty, but to correct their actions in order to attain the supreme good. The form of government, therefore, which best attains this end, and at the same time sets less bounds than others to natural liberty, is that which coincides with the views and purposes of rational creatures."

366. KOVSHI (Icon Room)

Image: Kovshi

These most lyrical drinking vessels look like swimming birds or Viking ships. The use of a *kovsh* depended on its size. The largest ones were serving bowls, the smaller ones ladles and communal drinking cups.

Early *kovshi* were made of undecorated wood and used for everyday drinking in northern Russia. In the 17th century, however, silversmiths produced large numbers of *kovshi* for wealthy Russians for toasts at ceremonial banquets. At the bottom of these silver-gilt *kovshi* are double-headed eagles. The outside rims are bordered with inscriptions.

In the 18th century, the tsars commissioned elaborate *kovshi* as state gifts for tax collectors and military leaders who had served the empire with distinction. Peter the Great presented *kovshi* to his tax collectors. Huge revenues from taxes charged on vodka, mead, and beer were key to the Russian economy.

430. SECOND FLOOR HALL & SNOOZE ROOM

Image: Second Floor Hall

The elegant stairway is accentuated by portraiture, a French clock case, and, in front of the window, a Russian vase of blue and clear glass. It provides a gracious transition between Hillwood's public and private areas and offers a bird's-eye view of the French-made rock crystal chandelier, which might have hung in a Russian palace. Directly at the top of the stairs is a case of English painted enamels. These enamels were created as more affordable alternatives to the gold boxes made in the 18th century and became popular accessories among wealthy Europeans.

Image: Snooze Room

The doorway at the top of the stairs opens onto the snooze room. Furnished with a daybed, and connected to the English bedroom by a passageway, this room provided the perfect space for a midday nap, followed by freshening up in the adjacent half bath.

461. BEDROOM FURNISHINGS (Marjorie Post's Bedroom)**Image: Oval Table**

In the middle of the room, between the two armchairs is a small oval table with plaques made of Sèvres porcelain. Its wood frame was designed around 1775 as a plant stand by the renowned German-born court cabinetmaker Martin Carlin. A well-known Frenchman, Nicholas Lannuier, transformed it into a table around 1790. A *marchand-mercier*—a middlemen who served as a designer, shopkeeper, and art dealer all at once—was responsible for the table's porcelain embellishments.

The marchands' fashionable Paris shops were filled with exotic goods—oriental porcelains, lacquers, ornate gilt bronzes—but the specialty of the house was embellishment. For example, a marchand might set lacquer panels onto existing furniture or fit porcelains in ornate bronze mounts. These masters of mixed media were shrewd merchants who advertised their new merchandise in popular journals to a clientele eager to hear about their latest creations.

Image: Candlesticks

You'll find other work by marchands-merciers in this room, including the candlesticks with pink shades sitting on tables in front of the mirror. Figurines from Germany's Meissen factory and delicate flowers from Vincennes enliven the gilt bronze structure created in a marchand's workshop.

Image: Roll-top Desk with Clock

To produce the late 18th-century clock sitting on top of the large roll-top desk, a marchand-mercier ordered the porcelain figures from Sèvres, the clock case from a bronze workshop, the works from a clockmaker, and assembled the affair in his shop. The mahogany and gilt bronze desk is by Conrad Mauter, one of many cabinetmakers of German descent working in Paris in the 18th century.

Due February 9, French Porcelain, and Frameworks continued**341. TWO BIRD SERVICES FROM THE SÈVRES FACTORY (Hall to the Pavilion and Wet Bar)****Image: South American Bird Plate**

On either side of the small window are cases brimming with Sèvres porcelain, two services produced after the 1789 French Revolution. Both reflect the increased interest in naturalism and science around 1800. Please step over to the left-hand case to look at the South American Bird Service. These pieces illustrate a new approach to natural subjects.

Each bird is a masterpiece of painting and scientific accuracy. Notice the shape of the birds' bodies, their finely articulated feathers, and naturalistic poses. In a medallion beneath each bird is its scientific name.

In 1826, Alexandre Brongniart, director of the Sèvres Manufactory, engaged the services of the well-known bird artist Madame Knip to make a series of paintings for this striking dessert service. He took her to the King's Garden near Versailles, where they selected birds for her to draw from life—a dramatic departure from the traditional practice of drawing animals from existing illustrations.

For further authenticity, Brongniart directed Sèvres artists to surround the birds with ornament based on actual nuts, berries, and leaves found in their South American habitats. The details are superbly rendered, but restrained, in keeping with the tone of the new republic.

382. PAIR OF CONSOLE TABLES AND TWO TUREENS AND PLATTERS FROM THE SÈVRES FACTORY (Dining Room)

Image: Console Table

The console tables are between the two sets of double doors, on either side of the large commode.

They're made from slabs of richly veined marble atop sumptuous oak bases gilded to look like bronze. The marble is supported by winged dragons with curling tails. On the sides of the frame, you'll find leafy scrolls. At the bottom, in the center, is a shell design. Such fanciful motifs from the natural world and beyond distinguish the art and architecture of the first quarter of the 18th century, when these pieces were made.

Elaborately carved tables like these were often designed to be placed under a mirror, between windows, or opposite a chimneypiece in aristocratic Parisian townhouses. Their wood frames, attached to the wall, became seamless extensions of the room's paneling. Such pieces were made by members of a guild devoted to carved paneling and frames for furniture.

Image: Tureen and Platter

On top of each of the consoles are lidded tureens with matching platters typical of Sèvres factory decoration in the 1770s. They are adorned with motifs associated with country life: gardening implements, woven baskets and metal buckets, and produce intertwined with flowers. Gilt bands and flourishes define the decorated areas and accentuate the scrolling handles.

The tureens were intended to hold a stew of Spanish origin made with a variety of meats and vegetables and presented dramatically to diners as the first of many courses of a formal banquet. Tureens, the most expensive part of a service, were sometimes produced and sold separately for presentation. King Louis XVI himself presented very similar tureens as diplomatic gifts, flaunting France's technological and artistic accomplishments while promoting the market for Sèvres abroad.

Mrs. Post acquired both tureens in a Paris shop in 1949 and one of the platters from another shop on the same trip. In Paris a year later, she spied the second platter in a shop and bought it immediately.

420. FRENCH PORCELAIN ROOM

Image: French Porcelain Room

This room displays Marjorie's collection of French porcelain, which was created at the renowned Sèvres porcelain factory outside of Paris. Marjorie began collecting Sèvres porcelain in the 1920s, and retained a lifelong admiration for the turquoise blue, or *bleu céleste*, style that you see here. When she renovated Hillwood before moving in, she had these built-in, lighted display cases installed here and in almost every first-floor room. She frequently invited high school and college students to visit Hillwood to learn about the collection and her lifestyle. In 1960, for example, Marjorie hosted a group of sorority sisters from C.W. Post College, a college on Long Island named after her father. The young women flew to Washington on the *Merriweather*, Marjorie's private plane, and spent a weekend taking in the sights of the nation's capital, as arranged by Marjorie.

SFX, Image: Post and Students in Icon Room

Her granddaughter Ellen Charles explains the importance her grandmother placed on such occasions: "She enjoyed sharing her home with them, because she felt that her style was a style of life that was rapidly disappearing, and so she wanted to try and keep it going as long as she could, through the young." In her later years, Marjorie said, "I want young Americans to see how someone lived in the 20th century and how this person could collect works of art the way I have...I want to share this with the rest of the world. Maybe it'll be an incentive to some people. Maybe it won't. But at least they'll get a chance to see how I lived."

421. CASE OF "BLEU CÉLESTE" SERVICES (French Porcelain Room)

Image: Case of "Bleu Céleste"

The largest case in the small room is filled entirely with the Sèvres porcelain factory's famed *bleu céleste* or "heavenly blue" wares.

These pieces come from a variety of services made for grand dinners at court in 18th-century Europe in the elaborate and fanciful style favored in France. The saturated colors, with contrasting white areas reserved for decoration, the multicolored floral motifs, and the intricate gilding exemplify the Sèvres style.

Image: Louis de Rohan Plate

Don't miss the plates with the gilt monogram "LPR" painted in their centers. These pieces, and the small ice cups with bird decorations, come from a large and lavish dessert service commissioned by Cardinal Prince Louis de Rohan, French ambassador to Vienna. For this service, Sèvres introduced a new innovation—two tones of gold—for the cardinal prince's cipher.

422. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN CUP AND SAUCER (French Porcelain Room)

Image: B. Franklin Cup and Saucer

Please look in the case to the left of the dining room entrance. On the second shelf from the top, you'll find the dark blue Benjamin Franklin cup and saucer.

Sèvres produced not only dinner and dessert services, but commemorative pieces to mark historic events. To celebrate the signing of the 1778 treaties of amity, commerce, and alliance between France and the US, several cups and saucers were issued featuring a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, who was the American envoy to France during the American Revolution. Their decoration also alluded to the Franco-American alliance of 1777.

On the saucer you can see a shield with three fleurs-de-lis, two spears, a branch of laurel, and two banners, one of which reads "Amerique." Franklin was instrumental in getting France to acknowledge American independence. The French considered him the personification of liberty, and his likeness appeared on all kinds of memorabilia.

Franklin was warmly welcomed in France. On March 28, 1778, Louis XVI received him in an elaborate ceremony at Versailles. After presenting Franklin to the king, the Comte de Vergennes, the French minister of foreign affairs, praised the American's effect in both France and the United States. **COMTE DE VERGENNES (MALE ACTOR):** "Only the man who discovered electricity could have electrified the opposite ends of the earth."

423. PAIR OF REBUS CUPS AND SAUCERS (French Porcelain Room)

Image: Pair of Rebus Cups and Saucers

Please look in the case to the right of the dining room entrance. On the second shelf from the top are two sets of yellow cups and saucers. Hillwood's many cups and saucers illustrate Sèvres' unending pursuit of fresh decorative motifs. Display pieces like these allowed porcelain painters to follow their flights of fancy.

Here, the decorations are actually rebuses, or word and picture puzzles. They were only made in the 1780s. Designed as clever tokens of affection, they are painted with thinly veiled messages of love and desire.

On the cup at the left, the rebus in the white medallion on the front reads, "she is ravishing." You can see a rat, the syllable "vi" and the number 100, or *cent*. Together they make *ravissante* or ravishing. On the reverse is the rebus "her beauty surpasses everything." On the saucer, the other three rebuses translate "You long for her," "She has enflamed me," and "I have discovered her attractions." The cup to the right reads, "And it possesses you" on the front, and on the reverse, "Love everything about her." Two of the saucer's rebuses read, "Love her virtues" and "She knows how to love." The third is unsolved.

424. TUREEN AND PLATTER (French Porcelain Room) (Additional content under Stop 421)

Image: Tureen and Platter

Now, please return to the largest case in the room, the one filled with the "heavenly blue" wares. On the top shelf sits a large platter, and there's a matching tureen on the shelf below.

The tureen and platter were made in 1754. Their curving forms, which mirror the look of 18th-century interior architecture, became another hallmark of Sèvres design. The shapes also recall the work of silversmiths, who had been making pieces like them in metal long before Europeans learned the secrets of making porcelain.

The tureen is one of the first of many new forms Sèvres introduced in response to the period's increasingly sophisticated dining customs. This particular form was developed to hold a Spanish meat and vegetable stew brought to France after Louis XIV married the Spanish princess Maria-Teresa. Soup would have been part of the first course in a new manner of dining known as French service. This new ritual involved a succession of courses, each requiring a new table setting, and the ministrations of a cadre of servants schooled in the complex specifics of the latest dining etiquette.

425. CAMEO ICE CUP (French Porcelain Room) (Additional content under Stop 421)

Image: Cameo Cup

Please return to the largest case in the room, the one filled with the “heavenly blue” wares. On the middle shelf at the left, stands a small urn-shaped ice cup with a tiny black and white cameo design in the top band.

This is one of 116 dessert cups from the celebrated Cameo Service commissioned by Russia’s Catherine the Great in 1778. They were used to serve the novel sorbets and cold custards popular in the dessert courses of stately banquets. Sèvres created new shapes and cameo decoration for this enormous 800-piece dinner and dessert service. It was one of the most expensive services ever produced by the factory in the 18th century—and it took the empress 11 installments over four years to pay for it.

Catherine and other heads of state across the continent—often through their ambassadors posted in Paris—recognized France’s superiority as a producer of luxury arts. They went to great lengths and expense to acquire French porcelain, furniture, tapestries, and other decorative and fine arts objects for their royal households. In doing so they underscored France’s position as the arbiter of taste and its claim to the most accomplished artisans and technicians of the century.

513. THE SÈVRES FACTORY (French Porcelain Room) (Additional content under Stop 420)

Hillwood’s collection of Sèvres porcelain represents a wide range of the factory’s production, from the early 18th century into the early 19th century.

In 1738, two artisans and a financier interested in establishing his own porcelain works opened a workshop in Vincennes. It took some years for them to develop a formula for hard-paste porcelain because not all of the necessary natural resources were available in France. Still, they managed to produce a close facsimile that became known as soft-paste porcelain. It was not as durable or heat resistant as hard-paste, but it yielded distinctive creamy whites and rich colors. The soft-paste formula in hand, the private company later known as the royal Sèvres manufactory was created under the auspices of the crown in 1745.

Easel painters and porcelain painters were lured to the new enterprise. The artistic director and chief designer established the unique character of Sèvres wares, with bright colors on broad areas of white and the lavish gilding. In 1753, King Louis XV became the sole owner of the factory and transferred it to the town of Sèvres. Soon, exports began, and, along with Germany’s Meissen factory, Sèvres became the most prestigious porcelain manufacturer in Europe.

In 1768, the French finally discovered deposits of kaolin, the missing ingredient for hard-paste production, and Sèvres began producing hard-paste porcelain too. Under King Louis XVI, Sèvres developed new colors and decorations to maintain its edge in an increasingly competitive market.

After the French Revolution and the establishment of the republic, the state continued to operate the factory, but there were no more lavish commissions from the court, so the factory turned to dealers, who sold relatively austere designs that reflected the republican spirit of the times to other patrons in France and abroad.

Due February 17, Fabergé

360. ICON ROOM

Image: Icon Room

Mrs. Post recognized the need to set aside space to showcase her collection, particularly the many small, precious objects she adored and liturgical pieces associated with the Russian Orthodox Church. She built this “treasury,” or collector’s cabinet, for them, and called it her icon room. The room is filled with some 400 objects, including creations by the celebrated jeweler to Russia’s imperial rulers Carl Fabergé.

361. TWO IMPERIAL EASTER EGGS BY FABERGÉ (Icon Room)

Image: Catherine the Great Egg

Look down at your screen to see an image of the first egg discussed.

SFX

Tsar Nicholas II presented this pink and gold Catherine the Great egg as a gift to his mother, Maria Feodorovna, on Easter morning 1914. Craftsmen from the celebrated firm of Fabergé created cameo-like vignettes in the pink enamel panels. The largest ones depict allegorical scenes of the arts and sciences. The small ovals are adorned with cherubs representing the four seasons. Between the panels in raised gold are musical instruments and tools used in the arts and sciences. At the top and bottom of the egg are large single diamonds. This egg was named for Catherine the Great, who was known for her patronage of the arts and sciences. The top opened to reveal a miniature figure of the empress seated in a wind-up sedan chair carried by two servants. Unfortunately, this marvelous surprise has long been lost.

SFX, Image: Blue Monogram Egg

Now look at the midnight blue egg in the same case. Nicholas gave it to his mother, following an Easter tradition his father, Tsar Alexander III, had begun in 1885. After Alexander died in 1894, Nicholas began ordering two eggs each year, one for his mother and one for his wife, Alexandra. This stunning dark blue egg is enameled in a technique called *champlevé*. It may look as if the gold is simply painted on top of the dark blue enamel. Only a magnifying glass reveals that areas for the enamel were actually carved out of the gold. When they were filled, they left the delicate gold ribs that form the vines and leaves. Rows of diamonds divide the egg into 12 panels. Within them are the crowned initials of Nicholas’ parents. The surprise the egg once contained is lost.

362. YUSUPOV FAMILY MUSIC BOX BY FABERGÉ (Icon Room)

Image: Music Box

Look down at your screen to see an image of the music box.

SFX

In 1907, Princes Feliks and Nikolai Yusupov—brothers from one of the wealthiest families in imperial Russia—commissioned Fabergé to create this music box. They presented it to their parents, Prince Feliks and Princess Zinaida, as a 25th anniversary gift. Look closely at the clasp and you’ll see the diamond-studded Roman numeral XXV. Perhaps most striking, however, are the architectural scenes on the sides, top, and bottom showing six of the Yusupov family’s many palaces. On the top is Arkhangel’skoe, their summer palace outside Moscow. The front is reserved

for the best known of the Yusupov manors, their palace on the Moika. Today, it is best remembered as the site where the younger Prince Feliks and Grand Duke Dmitrii Pavlovich murdered Gregori Rasputin, the notorious and highly controversial healer who seemingly cured Nicholas II and Alexandra's son, Alexis, of hemophilia.

Fabergé's craftsmen painted the buildings to contrast with the pale background using a technique called *en plein*, or plain enameling. In it, many layers of enamel are built up to create a smooth, glossy finish. Each panel is framed with delicate white enamel beading surrounded by white flowerettes and tiny transparent green leaves. The music box plays *The White Lady*, the tune you hear in the background. It was the march of the senior Prince Yusupov's regiment of the Imperial Horse Guards.

363. EMPRESS ALEXANDRA'S NOTEBOOK BY FABERGÉ (Icon Room)

Image: Notebook

Look down at your screen to see an image of the notebook.

SFX

The notebook is lavishly bordered with leaves and berries in opaque and translucent enamel. In the center, surrounded by diamonds, is a miniature watercolor-on-ivory portrait of Empress Alexandra in court attire. For the background effect, Fabergé's craftsmen used a technique called *guilloché*. The gold was first machine-engraved with a sunburst pattern, then covered with layers of translucent enamel, allowing the pattern to show through. By using different shades of color, the craftsmen achieved the shimmering, translucent effect on the notebook's surface. Fabergé objects were renowned not only for their beauty, but also for their superb craftsmanship.

The hinges and clasps on this notebook still function. The thin, gold emerald-topped pencil suggests that it was actually used, but more likely, the empress just displayed it. Such exquisite objects, scattered across the tables and cabinets of wealthy aristocrats the world over, attested to the status and wealth of their owners.

365. BROOCH AND BOX: IMPERIAL PRESENTATION GIFTS (Icon Room)

Image: Brooch

On this pin, a blue enamel ribbon surrounds a double-headed eagle—a symbol of the Russian empire—below which the arms of Dunkirk, France are displayed. Fabergé made the pin to commemorate a Russian state visit to France during the Franco-Russian Alliance. The Russian imperial family disembarked their yacht at Dunkirk, and greeted the French president there on September 18, 1901.

Image: Presentation Box, SFX

Near the pin is a gold box with blue enamel presented in 1896 by Russian Empress Alexandra.

Delicate diamond-set lilies of the valley, Alexandra's favorite flower, gracefully frame her cipher and crown. The recipient of this gift was Ludvig Ferdinand August Scheele, a Danish master of the horse who had accompanied the young empress on a visit to Denmark. The firm of Hahn, a Russian court jeweler and competitor of Fabergé, made the box.

Both these objects are presentation pieces, official gifts given by the Russian emperor and empress in gratitude for services rendered—like this box—or as diplomatic gifts to Russian and foreign dignitaries, as the brooch may have been. The Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty administered this official gift giving. Each year the Cabinet ordered scores of boxes, brooches, medals, insignia, watches, cufflinks, and stickpins for official presentation. Protocol determined the gift appropriate for each occasion, with the most prestigious gifts being those featuring an imperial portrait or cipher. The revenue generated by the imperial commissions for presentation gifts was very important to official suppliers like Fabergé and Hahn.

367. BELL PUSH & CANE HANDLE: ALEXANDRA'S EVERYDAY LUXURY (Icon Room)

Image: Bell Push

Alexandra, the last empress of Russia, purchased this green egg-shaped bell push from the imperial jeweler Fabergé in 1896.

Bell pushes were familiar household objects in aristocratic homes. This one would have been set on a table, its gold scrolled feet elevating it above the electrical wire attached to its base. When the rounded moonstone at the top was pushed, it would have activated a buzzer or light in the servants' area indicating which room needed assistance. It is a good example of the beautifully crafted, yet utilitarian objects made by Fabergé for the imperial family's daily life.

Image: Cane Handle, SFX

The gracefully curving, green nephrite cane handle nearby is another everyday luxury item that Alexandra purchased. Fabergé set the handle in gold and decorated it delicately with diamond-shaped panels of white enamel, and sparkling rubies and diamonds. It would have topped a cane—a stylish fashion accessory of the time.

Image: Xenia letter, SFX

When Marjorie Post acquired the cane handle in 1927, it was accompanied by a note written by Grand Duchess Xenia, sister of the last emperor, Nicholas II. The letter stated that Xenia had owned the piece. Alexandra may have presented the cane handle to her sister-in-law for her birthday in 1902.

369. TWELVE MONOGRAM EGG'S SURPRISE (Icon Room) (Additional content under Stop 361)

Image: Twelve Monogram Egg

Fabergé made the imperial Easter eggs for Russian Emperor Alexander III to give as presents to his wife, and later for Nicholas II to give to his mother and his wife. Many of these eggs are really two gifts in one—with the egg containing a small, artful object, called a surprise. Unfortunately, both imperial Easter eggs at Hillwood entered the collection without their surprise.

Nicholas II presented the Twelve Monogram Egg to his mother Maria Feodorovna at Easter in 1896. It was the second egg she received from her son after the death of her husband Alexander III in 1894. The dowager empress wrote to thank her son for the poignant gift: "I can't find words to express to you, my dear Nicky, how touched and moved I was on receiving your ideal egg with the charming portraits of your dear, adored Papa. It is all such a beautiful idea, with our monograms above it all."

The reference to those "charming portraits" inspired years of sleuthing. Clues came from sources as disparate as a Fabergé invoice, auction catalogs, and archival photographs.

Image: Wartski's Photo of Surprise Unfolded, SFX

When all the details were synthesized in 2017, the surprise was—at long last—identified. It is a gold frame holding six miniature portraits of Alexander III, which folds into a compact cube, decorated with ten sapphires.

Image: Wartski's Photo of Surprise Closed, SFX

Hillwood staff tested an exact-size plastic replica of the closed frame in the egg. It was so accurate that it fit snugly inside, and the corners precisely matched the four marks on the egg's fabric interior.

One more mystery remains—the whereabouts of the actual surprise—and only time will tell if this mystery will be solved.

373. OPENING THE IMPERIAL EASTER EGGS (Icon Room)**Image: Pink Egg Hinge**

Many of the imperial Easter eggs Fabergé made function as egg-shaped boxes that open to reveal treasures within. Close inspection rewards the viewer with clues as to how Fabergé ingeniously constructed these complex masterpieces.

On the larger of Hillwood's two imperial eggs—the Catherine the Great Egg—one of the large pink panels shows a woman painting at an easel. Above that medallion is the golden hinge.

Image: Pink Egg Open, SFX

When the pink egg is opened, it reveals a golden interior. The inside of the top of the egg is engraved with a basket weave pattern, while the inside of the bottom is simply gleaming, unengraved gold. The edges of the egg's two halves gracefully trace around the pink enamel panels.

The surprise that at one time rested inside the pink Catherine the Great Egg was a mechanical figure of the seated empress. Unfortunately, this surprise has been long lost.

Image: Monogram Egg Hinge, SFX

The nearby Twelve Monogram Egg is another example of the incredibly precise workmanship required to create these objects. Look closely at the horizontal band of diamonds that divides the egg in half. If you follow it around the circumference, you may be able to detect the discretely placed hinge, but note how the seam separating top and bottom is all but invisible.

Image: Monogram Egg Open, SFX

When the egg is opened, instead of having a golden interior, the Twelve Monogram Egg is lined with ivory satin. This egg's surprise was a folding frame holding miniature portraits. Today, its whereabouts are unknown.

374. BOX: FABERGÉ'S COMPETITORS (Icon Room)**Image: Bolin Box**

Art nouveau took inspiration from natural forms and curving lines—and that is clearly seen in this beautifully designed silver box. Notice the sinuous peacock feathers flowing across the top. As in nature, each feather ends in an eyespot represented by either a diamond or pearl surrounded by green enamel.

The box was made in Moscow between 1899 and 1908 by C. E. Bolin, a firm that, like Fabergé, designed and created presentation items and insignia for the Russian court. In fact, until the 1917 Revolution, Bolin was also a leading supplier of jewelry, especially to the imperial family. After the Bolsheviks seized power, the firm set up shop in Stockholm, where the House of Bolin continues to produce jewelry and silverware to this day.

Bolin was one of a handful of jewelers who were significant competitors of the renowned firm of Fabergé. Many of these rival firms catered, as Fabergé did, to a wealthy client base, including monarchs, fulfilling their demand for luxury goods. Some, like Cartier, were influenced by Fabergé's international reputation and produced wares similar in style to Fabergé, embracing historical styles like those of France in the 1700s. Others, like Bolin and Lalique, embraced revolutionary new styles like art nouveau, called by some the first 20th-century modern style.

375. SNUFFBOX: MARJORIE POST, COLLECTOR OF FABERGÉ (Icon Room)

Image: Snuffbox

This small box was Marjorie Post's first Fabergé AND first Russian acquisition. A lid decorated with diamonds and emeralds sits atop a base of amethyst quartz. The lion reclining on the lid is carved from rosy spinel and was probably originally a piece of Indian Mughal turban jewelry. The way all of the elements are seamlessly combined is a testament to Fabergé's unrivaled artistry.

In the 1920s, following the collapse of the Russian empire, Russian émigrés left their homeland, some taking treasures with them to finance their lives in exile. Post had the opportunity to meet many of these Russians, including members of the former imperial family, in Palm Beach and New York. Russian heirlooms and other art objects, including pieces by Fabergé, soon began appearing for sale in the Western art market.

From the jeweler Cartier, Post purchased several treasures that once belonged to the Yusupov family, renowned for their wealth and noble rank. This box was one such treasure and Post acquired it from Cartier's New York shop in 1927. At that time, Fabergé was not identified as the maker. It was many years later that marks of the Russian jeweler and his workmaster were identified on the box.

Post had been drawn to the box because it fit perfectly within her collecting criteria: it is exquisitely crafted of precious materials and possesses a prestigious history. Post's criteria had developed and crystallized during the late 1910s. During this time, she had begun acquiring French furnishings and decorative arts, including gold boxes, and had turned to collecting art seriously.

Image: Scrapbook image of doorman at the former Fabergé store, SFX

In 1937, Post traveled to Moscow with husband Joseph E. Davies, who had been appointed U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. Already familiar with the history of the Romanovs and their jeweler Fabergé, Post embarked on a pilgrimage of sorts to formerly imperial Russia, visiting places connected to the imperial family. Post even went to the former Fabergé shop and took a picture of the "doorman" and, tucking it into one of her scrapbooks, wrote next to it, "The old Fabergé store—the famous jeweler."

Post's passion for Russian imperial art and Fabergé, now ignited, continued for the rest of her life.

376. TABLE CLOCK: AN EMPEROR'S GIFT (Icon Room)

Image: Table Clock

Russian Emperor Alexander III—who began the tradition of commissioning imperial Easter eggs from jeweler Fabergé—gave this ornately decorated pale green bowenite clock to his wife Maria Fedorovna in 1894. The gift celebrated the engagement and forthcoming wedding of their son Nicholas II to Princess Alix of Hesse (the future Empress Alexandra). Fabergé made the clock's base as a miniature chest of drawers, which actually open.

Image: Nicholas II on Clock, SFX

Miniature portraits of Nicholas and his then bride-to-be are hidden behind hinged oval panels on either side of the clock. According to historic images, and before the clock entered Hillwood's collection, a diamond dove holding a pearl once perched on the spire.

Sadly, Alexander III died before his son's wedding. The clock might have been the last gift he presented to his wife, who cherished the piece. "She cannot look at it without emotion," proclaimed a journalist in 1900. The empress kept it close in her study at her favorite palace in St. Petersburg.

Image: MMP Showing Clock, SFX

Many of Fabergé's creations, because of their exquisite beauty and lavishness, were perfect gifts—like this clock—for commemorating both public and private events. Celebrating engagements, weddings, birthdays, and holidays, these tokens of affection inspired and expressed love and strengthened relationships.

Fittingly, at Hillwood, Marjorie Post enjoyed sharing the clock, displaying it in her very public drawing room and enthusiastically showing it to guests.

512. THE FIRM OF CARL FABERGÉ (Icon Room) (Additional content under Stop 360)

Image: Close-up of box

Born in Russia of French Huguenot descent, Peter Carl Fabergé was the son of a goldsmith. He studied jewelerymaking in Germany and traveled in Europe, where he saw jeweled objects dating from the Renaissance through the 18th century. When he returned to St. Petersburg, he apprenticed in his father's goldsmith shop, taking over the family business in 1872, at the age of 26. There, he also appraised and repaired jewelry at the Hermitage, the great museum established by Catherine the Great.

The young man went on to expand his father's business into an international powerhouse. The firm became known as the House of Fabergé, with branches in Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and London. Commissions came not only from the tsars of Russia, but from the kings and queens of Europe, the maharajahs of India, and even the court of Siam.

At its height, the House of Fabergé employed some 500 craftsmen to produce its "objects of fantasy and function"—from cigarette boxes to clocks, picture frames, tiny hardstone animals, jeweled flowers, peasant figurines—and of course, the imperial Easter eggs. Fabergé directed workshops headed by workmasters who specialized in jewelry, silversmithing, or goldsmithing. He supplied the gemstones and precious metals to the workshops and personally approved design sketches, monitored quality, and supervised important commissions.

The Firm produced about 50 spectacular imperial Easter eggs—many of which Fabergé himself delivered in velvet-lined boxes. The grand Easter eggs were made for the Empress and the dowager empress, becoming an enduring symbol of the last tsars of Russia.

526. RECOLLECTIONS OF FABERGÉ (Icon Room) (Additional content under Stop 360)

Image: Wartski Photo of Fabergé's in St. Petersburg

With very few photographs of Peter Carl Fabergé to draw upon, written accounts of Fabergé by his contemporaries provide interesting insights into this most famous Russian jeweler. In his 1919 memoir, Franz Birbaum, Fabergé's chief designer for twenty-five years, offers up anecdotes about Carl Fabergé, often highlighting the jeweler's sense of humor.

Birbaum described Fabergé as "extremely witty" and recalled an amusing story about the busy jeweler. A female customer "from the highest aristocracy" came to Fabergé's shop several weeks before Easter asking if anything "novel could be expected in the Easter eggs" his firm was producing that year. We can imagine Fabergé had been asked this question many times—his firm did produce the imperial Easter eggs for the emperors of Russia for over thirty years. He dryly responded that in two weeks' time he would be finishing work on square eggs. His jest was lost on the woman. Birbaum wrote, "she actually came to the shop" two weeks later to buy those eggs. Probably struggling to keep a straight face, Fabergé explained that, while he had attempted to produce them, he had been unsuccessful.

But Fabergé was not above laughing at himself. Birbaum stated that "[i]n making witty remarks [Fabergé] spared neither himself nor others." Birbaum painted an amusing picture of a multi-tasking Fabergé, saying, "[w]hen Fabergé was taking an order he was always in a hurry and often forgot the details. He would ask all round his employees, looking for anyone who had been standing near him at the time.... Among the employees there was a saying that the person responsible for the order was not the one who took it, but the one who was standing nearby."

Due March 23, Paintings and Portraiture

313. ROMANOV PORTRAITS (Entry Hall)

Image: Stairway

Above the staircase hang portraits of the Romanovs, the dynasty that ruled Russia from 1613 until 1917. The story begins with the fourth Romanov ruler, Peter the Great. During his reign, from 1696 to 1725, Peter moved the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg, on the border with Europe. There, he built an entirely new city and set out to impose Western ideas and styles on a country mired in tastes and traditions that had changed little in centuries.

Image: Elizabeth

On the far left, near the bottom of the staircase, is a portrait of Peter's daughter, the empress Elizabeth. Like her father, Elizabeth admired Western culture. Her taste is reflected in her European laces and brocades. She continued Peter's Westernization of Russia by bringing foreign architects and artisans to St. Petersburg.

Image: Alexandra

Beneath the largest painting here, you'll see a portrait of Nicholas's wife, Alexandra. In 1918, after the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks executed Nicholas, Alexandra, and their entire family.

Image: Catherine the Great

The huge canvas above Alexandra portrays perhaps the most famous of all of the Romanovs—Catherine the Great, who became empress in 1762. After Peter and Elizabeth, she continued to promote Western ideas in Russia.

Image: Peter the Great

Halfway up the stairs, to the lower right of Catherine's portrait, you'll find a small image of Peter the Great himself. His Western tastes are reflected by his European-style armor.

431. PORTRAIT OF CATHERINE THE GREAT (Entry Hall)**Image: Catherine the Great Portrait**

Many portraits of the Russian imperial family grace the walls of the stairwell. The grandest is the magnificent full-length portrait of Catherine II, which resonates with the power of the empress who would come to be known as Catherine the Great. Catherine reigned over Russia for more than 30 years, from 1762 to 1796, an absolute monarch during the time of the American and French Revolutions.

Here, Catherine is dressed in full state regalia. Her crown and white satin dress are trimmed in laurel leaves, representing victory, and her satin cloak is lined with ermine. Look carefully at the chair behind her and you can make out the imperial coat of arms, the double-headed eagle. Catherine wears the insignia of two of Russia's elite honorary orders: the collar of the Order of St. Andrew, encrusted in diamonds, and the orange and black sash and badge of the Order of St. George. She uses her jeweled scepter to draw attention to the jeweled crown and orb beside her, and to a bust of Peter the Great, hidden in the shadows. Above Peter, written in Russian are the words "She finishes what he began." Both rulers Westernized and modernized Russia.

Catherine presented this portrait to her banker in Amsterdam, who had secured large loans for the Russian government to help finance its war with the Ottoman Empire. The artist Dmitrii Levitskii, painted numerous so-called presentation or parade portraits of Catherine. These grand likenesses were given as rewards for service or hung in official departments and institutions.

436. LOUIS XVI SAYING FAREWELL TO HIS FAMILY (Second Floor Hall)**Image: Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family**

To the left of the doorway leading to Mrs. Post's bedroom suite, just above the tall, wooden cabinet, hangs a small painting that is unlike any of the other royal portraits in the collection.

The American artist Mather Brown painted this canvas, one of three nearly identical versions of the scene, in 1793 while living in England. He shows Louis XVI in prison with his distraught queen, Marie Antoinette, their children, and attendants. The Revolutionary Guard are about to take the unfortunate king to the guillotine. As the revolution reached its radical peak that year, the National Convention, France's new ruling body, had voted to execute Louis XVI for treason against the French nation. His execution would be followed in the months to come by those of many of

France's most exalted aristocrats, including the queen herself. Four years earlier, France had been rocked by revolution when the king's absolute right to rule had been questioned for the first time.

Russia's Catherine the Great shared the philosophy of the royal couple. She once wrote to Marie Antoinette, "Kings ought to go their own way without worrying about the cries of the people, as the moon goes on its course without being stopped by the cries of dogs."

Absolute monarchs throughout Europe shuddered at the end of the 18th century, when the voice of the king was drowned out by the cries of the people.

322. PORTRAITS OF THE DUCHESS OF PARMA AND HER DAUGHTER ISABELLE AND THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE (French Drawing Room)

Image: Duchess of Parma

The portraits in this room illustrate styles of court portraiture in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Between the windows hangs a portrait of the Duchess of Parma and her daughter Isabelle posed casually, out of doors. It was painted in 1750 by the fashionable court painter Jean-Marc Nattier. Like most successful portraitists of the day, Nattier called on a style that had been in vogue since the early 17th century. He painted his sitters with an air of dignity, clad in billowing fabrics, in settings anchored on one side by a strong visual element, here a tree. The duchess, the eldest daughter of Louis XV, wears a blue satin cloak tied over a pale gray dress that is held at the waist with a girdle of pearls. Her powdered hair is dressed with flowers. Her daughter presents an apron full of blossoms.

Image: Empress Eugénie

At the opposite end of the room, over the fireplace, you'll find a portrait of the empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III, painted about a century later.

It's from a series of portraits of the empress by the German artist Franz Xavier Winterhalter who painted in a style similar to the painting you just saw. This 18th-century approach suited Eugenie, who was a great admirer of Marie Antoinette and the elegant court style of Louis XVI. Here, she wears an old-fashioned dress of transparent white ruffles trimmed with sky blue ribbons. Her serene expression and the idealized landscape add to the tone of nostalgia.

351. PORTRAIT OF COUNTESS SAMOILOVA, HER FOSTER DAUGHTER, AND A BLACK SERVANT (Pavilion)

Image: Countess Samoilova

The portrait of Countess Samoilova hangs on the right-hand wall as you enter. Apparently, the countess has just entered a luxuriously appointed room from the balcony in the background. She's greeted by her adoring adopted daughter and an eager dog wearing a red collar with bells on it. A young page relieves her of her rich paisley and red cashmere shawls. Around the waist of her crisp blue satin dress is a gold belt studded with precious stones. She also wears an exquisite tiara and a fabulous necklace in archaeological revival style. The picture is filled with sumptuous colors and textures—from fragile transparent curtains at the doorway to the daughter's black velvet bodice and the lush fur hem of her dress.

Nicholas I disapproved of the countess's extravagant lifestyle and Samoilova became a Russian expatriate living in Italy. At her villa near Milan, she entertained luminaries of her day—writers, composers, and artists from both Russia and Italy, including Karl Briullov.

When Briullov painted this scene, Russia aspired to European tastes and values, and the composition reflects portraits by great Western artists. Critics compared Briullov to van Dyck, Rembrandt, and Rubens when this painting made its Italian debut in 1834.

352. A BOYAR WEDDING FEAST (Pavilion)

Image: A Boyar Wedding Feast

The grand painting dominating the left side of this room is called *A Boyar Wedding Feast*. It celebrates the union of two boyar families, Russian nobility of the 16th and 17th centuries. The gentleman in the red mantle with the long white beard raises his golden tumbler to toast the young couple at the end of the table. "Gorko, gorko"—"Bitter, bitter"—he intones. "The wine tastes bitter! Kiss to make it sweet again," but the bride seems reluctant. In fact, this is no love match, but an arrangement between two noble families.

The guests are sumptuously attired in heavily embroidered coats and dresses. The women wear traditional pearl-studded *kokoshniki*, or headdresses. The banquet room is lit by candles and filled with gleaming silver and gold. To the left of the couple a woman lifts a boat-shaped traditional drinking vessel called a *kovsh*.

The piece de resistance is a roast swan. The cook has cleaned, stuffed, and baked the delicacy, then replaced its feathers and decorated it with a pink ribbon. It is the last course served before the couple retires to their room.

The artist Konstantin Makovsky painted *A Boyar Wedding Feast* in 1883, 200 years after such an event would have occurred. At the time, Russians were nostalgic for the old traditions, before Peter the Great Westernized their country, resulting in this Russian revival style. It also allowed the artist to showcase his considerable skill in painting light shining off every type of material, from satin, to fur, to gold, and pearls.

364. ICON OF ST. GEORGE (Icon Room)

Image: Icon of St. George

In the corner, to the right of the window, hangs a collection of 16th through 19th century icons. The large one in the center is the icon of St. George.

Rendered here in the flat manner prescribed for all icon painting is the Great Martyr St. George, the Victorious, astride his white stallion. Dressed in gold chain mail armor and a red cloak, the Saint plunges a spear into the mouth of a writhing dragon. According to one version of the story, St. George attacks the dragon to save a princess. Her pagan father is so grateful that he and his entire kingdom convert to Christianity.

Below St. George and on either side of him is a border of saints. At the top, we find Christ in the center, flanked by the Mother of God to the left, and John the Baptist to the right. You can see the archangels Gabriel and Michael in the top corners.

The icon's scale suggests that it comes from a church. It may have been one of many icons that formed an iconostasis, or the towering icon screen separating the congregation from the sanctuary of a Russian Orthodox church. Like stained glass windows, mosaics, and frescos in other church traditions, icons illustrate religious stories for the faithful. Orthodox Russians believe that an icon figure serves as an intermediary between the worshipper and the saint represented. Those who venerate icons feel linked to the world of the spirit. The covers, or *oklads*, you see on some of the icons in this room both protect and glorify the painted figures. You may have noticed that they never conceal the faces or hands.

371. PORTRAITS OF MARJORIE POST'S PARENTS (First Floor Library)

Portraits of Mrs. Post's parents hang opposite one another on the library's end walls. The portrait of her mother, Ella Letitia Merriweather Post, hangs in an elaborate carved wood frame.

Over the fireplace, a picture of her father, C.W. Post, reminds us of the source of her wealth and perhaps also the inspiration for her collecting. Her father established the family fortune with his creation of Grape-Nuts and Post Toasties breakfast cereals and the Postum Cereal Company. But he also instilled business savvy, seldom nurtured in women in the early 20th century, in his only child. He also encouraged the philanthropic spirit expected from those of wealth and social standing. C.W. Post was a collector of Victoriana himself. Through example and educational trips, he may have also contributed to his daughter's passion for collecting.

462. L'ENFANT CHERI AND MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN (Outside Marjorie Post's Bedroom)

Image: L'Enfant Cheri

As you exit the bedroom proper, on the right-hand wall you'll find two French paintings.

The composition to the left, set in a lush park, shows an idealized scene of the pleasures of polite society. It's called *L'Enfant Chéri*, or *Darling Child*. Indeed, a rosy-cheeked baby is the center of attention here, clutching a cat and riding in a red and gold cart propelled by two laughing young women. Two dogs and a boy with a rake run with them.

Intimate domestic scenes of nurtured children and satisfied mothers reflected a strain of thought popularized by such Enlightenment thinkers as Diderot and Rousseau. These philosophers argued that women's true place was not at court or collecting art, but at home, caring for their children and providing their husbands with a restful retreat from the cares of the world. Marguerite Gérard, who painted this work, portrays the young women as utterly fulfilled and contented with the elegant, sentimental domestic activity they're engaged in. Gérard, the sister-in-law and pupil of the famed 18th-century painter Jean-Honoré Fragonard, was one of the few female artists of the day, and one of the most celebrated.

Image: Marie Antoinette and Her Children

The second painting is just to the right, above the small cabinet. *Marie Antoinette and Her Children*, set in a salon at Versailles, shows the queen, first and foremost, as a mother. Dressed in a restrained red gown, she is surrounded by her adoring offspring. One points to the empty cradle, a reference to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette's youngest child, who died while this portrait was being painted.

The picture was painted two years before the revolution, when Marie Antoinette's popularity was at a low. The people blamed the queen for many of France's social and economic problems, and writers of the period often portrayed her as power hungry, scheming, and promiscuous. The picture was, in essence, good publicity. This is a small replica of the original painting, which still hangs at Versailles.

Due April 7, Russian Porcelain and Glass

330. RUSSIAN PORCELAIN ROOM

Image: Russian Porcelain Room

This room is devoted to Russian art, one of Marjorie Post's primary collecting passions. She had a particular fondness for Russian porcelain and glass. Beginning in the 18th century, Russian imperials imitated the dining etiquette of European courts. These customs required enormous services of porcelain, including as many as 4,000 pieces of tableware. Subtle forms of propaganda, these sets were "props" in what you might call the "theatre of self-presentation."

Curator Marvin Ross worked closely with Marjorie to maintain, build, and share the collection with visitors. You can see a photograph of him on your player now, showing visitors a chair from the collection.

SFX, Image: Ross Showing Collection

Ross wrote two books, one on the work of Carl Fabergé and another on Russian porcelain, and Marjorie wrote both forewords. Ross's dedication to the collection was particularly evident one day when a shelf in one of the galleries broke. For more than two hours, he held up the shelf loaded with irreplaceable artworks before a member of staff discovered him and brought help. Thanks to him, the objects were saved!

331. RUSSIAN GLASS (Russian Porcelain Room)

Image: Goblet featuring Empress Anna

The case between the drawing room and the icon room displays some of the oldest glass in the collection. It includes pieces produced in the 18th and 19th centuries by the St. Petersburg Glassworks, which became known as the Imperial Glassworks. Many of the goblets and tumblers were created from the 1730s through the 1760s. Look in the center of the case on the top shelf. To the right, you can see a portrait of Empress Anna etched on one glass, surrounded by cannonballs. The other goblets and tumblers display portraits—adapted from coins and medals—or double-headed eagles, ciphers, and other imperial emblems. The complex shapes of the goblets' stems and bowls were derived from older silver vessels, which long had been displayed at imperial banquets. In the 18th century, people drank from the goblets during a grand imperial banquet and then at the end to toast the health of the emperor or empress.

These pure, colorless glasses are the result of technical advances in glassmaking. In the late 17th century, central and northern European glass workers developed a new formula that produced colorless glass sturdy enough to allow engraving like that on hardstones or precious jewels. The skill of engraving on thin-walled glasses was highly developed in Bohemia, in today's Czech Republic. The Thirty Years' War from 1618 to 1648 encouraged many Bohemian glassmakers and engravers to seek work in more stable environments, including Russia.

332. THE ORDER SERVICES (Russian Porcelain Room)

Image: St. George Service

Many of the cases contain pieces from four striking dessert services commissioned by Catherine the Great in the late 18th century. They are distinguished by stars, badges, and ribbons—the insignia of Russia’s most elite “orders.” These orders were exclusive societies of individuals recognized for distinguished government or military service, similar to England’s Order of the Garter or America’s Congressional Medal of Honor.

Let’s concentrate on the case to the left of the pale blue hallway. These services were used at dinners Catherine and her successors gave once a year for the knights of the four imperial orders named for Russia’s most important saints. Held on each of the four saints’ feast days, the dinners were among the most important court occasions. Each service consists of a variety of special shapes for the elaborate dessert course. Here you can see leaf-shaped dishes for sweets, baskets for fruit, and ice cups for custards and sorbets. The red ribbon bordered in black is the Order of St. Vladimir, given for government service.

The cases to your left are filled with porcelain from the service for the Order of St. George, the highest military order in Russia. These pieces are painted with the orange-and-black-striped ribbon and diamond-shaped gold star containing the motto “For Service and Bravery.” In the center are the Cyrillic letters “SG” for St. George. (03)

Image: St. Nevskii Service

Continue to your left, past the icon room door. The first thin case holds pieces from the service for the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky. They are distinguished by a solid red moiré ribbon and a silver star.

Finally, look at the next narrow case, beside the entry hall door. There, you’ll find pieces from the distinguished Order of St. Andrew service. They are painted with the enameled chain or collar worn by members of this highest order. The award was rarely presented outside the imperial family.

333. MILITARY PLATES AND NAPOLEONIC GLASS (Russian Porcelain Room)

Image: Military Plate

Please look in the cases between the doors to the pale blue hallway and the entry hall. There, you’ll find a number of plates decorated with military themes, many including horses.

First produced in the 1820s and ‘30s, the military plates express a surge in national pride inspired by Russia’s victory over France in the Napoleonic Wars. Many of the images here were taken from volumes illustrating imperial Russian army uniforms. The rim decorations echo the patriotic theme.

Russia’s Imperial Porcelain Factory began to produce these plates during the reign of Tsar Alexander I and created new series for each successive ruler. The plates were initially intended for use as dessert services. Later, they functioned as “cabinet pieces,” used for display only.

Image: Napoleonic Glass

The central section of this case also holds a selection of goblets with decorated medallions on the front. The second and fourth shelves display examples of ribbed goblets with milk-glass ovals. The ovals are decorated with the crowned cipher of Alexander I. The gold Cyrillic inscriptions record such victorious sentiments as "Paris Taken 19 March 1814" or "Rejoice Moscow in the Taking of Paris 19 March 1814." They repeat the spirit of nationalism seen in the plates. Produced in the glassworks of St. Petersburg, they were presented as souvenirs to veterans of the Napoleonic wars or purchased by patriotic citizens.

511. MARJORIE POST'S COLLECTION BROADENS: THE ART OF IMPERIAL RUSSIA (Russian Porcelain Room) (Additional content under Stop 330)

In the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet authorities and citizens began confiscating work from churches. Some precious works of religious art were stored in huge warehouses. Others were destroyed by party workers, who melted them down and sold the resulting silver, gold, and jewels for hard currency.

Noble estates were confiscated, and, in 1918, many manor houses and town palaces were opened to the public as museums. In the late 1920s, some were closed and their contents sold through auction houses and dealers to fund Soviet industrialization. Russians, Western art dealers, and members of the diplomatic corps were allowed to purchase rare and precious objects.

Mrs. Post and her third husband, Joseph Davies, American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, arrived in Moscow in 1937 and frequented Soviet-sponsored shops. During their 18-month tour, the Davies began collecting art and managed to save a number of objects from the wrecking ball of Soviet politics.

Mrs. Post continued to acquire Russian art through international art dealers and at auction for the rest of her life, buying objects that had left the Soviet Union decades before. Mrs. Post acquired exceptional examples of Russian art well before others became fascinated with the Romanov treasures.

In the late 1950s, she hired staff curator Marvin Ross to research her Russian collections. Mrs. Post's notes on memos from Ross and others illustrate her involvement in developing them.

432. ORLOV SERVICE (Second Floor Hall) (Additional content under Stop 514)**Image: Orlov Service**

If you look to your right at the top of the stairs, you'll see a set of porcelain called the Orlov Service. It was manufactured during the Russian Imperial Factory's first decades of operation. The deep midnight blue-on-white set features elaborate gilding. On the coffee pot, distinguishable by its spout and handle, you'll see flags on either side of the central motif. You may even be able to see the pink underglaze showing through. Applying this glaze was an important preparatory step the factory took so the gilding would adhere to the surface. Catherine the Great commissioned this set for Count Grigorii Grigor'evich Orlov, one of her many lovers. His monogram, "GGO," appears on each piece. Decorations include banners, cannon, and tenting—all symbols of Orlov's service in the military. He and his four brothers staged the daring and dramatic coup that placed Catherine on the throne.

The service was designed for use during the morning toilette. The 18th-century aristocratic ritual of being dressed was not a private affair. It included breakfast and entertaining visitors. In addition to the dining pieces you see here, Orlov's service included dental implements and shaving equipment. Marjorie found a number of pieces from this service on one of her many collecting excursions in Europe during the time she lived in Russia.

433. TEA AND COFFEE SERVICE (Second Floor Hall) (Additional content under Stop 515)

Image: Tea and Coffee Service

Pieces from the Gardner tea and coffee service are located in the center of the large mirrored glass case to the right of the archway. Look in the middle of the case, on the second shelf from the top.

These pieces are distinguished by their elongated forms and by their idealized scenes of Russian peasant life. Such subjects were very popular in the 19th century. On the teapot at the left, a woman cuts a little boy's hair... The coffeepot next to it has a group playing blind man's bluff. The sugar bowl to the right shows children playing on a seesaw.

This set was produced in the 1820s by Russia's most prestigious private manufacturer, the Gardner Factory. The pieces include a column that displays the coat of arms of the wealthy family who commissioned it.

434. BARIATINSKII VASE (Second Floor Hall) (Additional content under Stop 514)

Image: Vase

At the balcony rail, a large white vase sits on top of the commode. Tsar Alexander II commissioned this vase for presentation to Prince Aleksandr Bariatinskii, who commanded the Russian troops in the Caucasus during the Crimean War of the 1850s. Alexander honored Bariatinskii's bravery with this vase, decorated with the insignia of the orders that had been bestowed upon him. They include the star of the Order of St. George, encircled by the chain of the Order of St. Andrew, both superimposed on the crossed batons of a field marshal.

You can make out the traces of a crown above. The crown was nearly obliterated by workers who were directed by Soviet officials to deface all references to imperial Russia found on objects produced before the revolution.

435. CORONATION CUP (Second Floor Hall)

Image: Enamel cup

In the large mirrored glass case to the right of the archway are two cups celebrating the coronation of Nicholas II. We'll begin with the one at the far right.

The Russian government produced thousands of enameled metal cups like this one to honor the coronation of Nicholas II in 1896. The date is printed on the bottom band, below the initials of Nicholas and his wife, Alexandra. The red and blue interlacing pattern and Slavonic lettering were inspired by medieval Russian manuscripts, presenting Nicholas as a traditional Russian ruler from before the time of Peter the Great and his Westernizing ideas.

The cup, a loaf of bread, a sausage, and some candy, all tied in a printed scarf, were given out as souvenirs at a great public gathering in Moscow. But according to foreign reporters attending the coronation, the joyous event ended in tragedy. As throngs of people rushed forward to get the

limited number of souvenirs, many were trampled. One British diplomat wrote, “Twelve hundred have been reported as buried, but there is little doubt that the numbers exceed 2,000 and the hospitals are full of the wounded and dying. The Emperor visited them yesterday. We passed the place this morning, and there were still dreadful traces of the struggle—boots, hats, women’s clothing, and the ground torn up as if it had been plowed.”

Image: Glass Cup

Despite its association with tragedy, the cup was copied by prominent glassmakers in France, where Nicholas’ coronation was celebrated in honor of the continued Franco-Russian Alliance. The French version can be seen here at the left.

514. THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL PORCELAIN FACTORY (Second Floor Hall)

In 1744, Empress Elizabeth I founded the Russian Imperial Porcelain Factory, an idea her father Peter the Great had contemplated earlier in the 18th century. Just as the royal factories supplied the courts of Europe, the Imperial Porcelain Factory supplied the tsars with utilitarian and decorative pieces until the revolution of 1917 ended imperial rule.

Catherine the Great reorganized and reinvigorated production. Like Peter the Great, she appropriated many European traditions, including the elaborate dining customs of the French court requiring huge services of porcelain.

In the second quarter of the 19th century, under Nicholas I, the imperial factory was at its height, producing an extraordinary range of wares, from large dinner services, to vases, Easter eggs, and military plates.

From the beginning, the factory’s wares had looked much like those produced in Europe. But after 1850, traditional Russian motifs were revived, primarily for the popular international exhibitions where nations proudly displayed their technical and artistic achievements.

The factory survived the revolution of 1917 and continues to this day.

515. PRIVATE PORCELAIN FACTORIES IN RUSSIA (Second Floor Hall)

In the mid-18th century, the Imperial Porcelain Factory could no longer keep up with the increasing demand for porcelain, and a few private individuals established workshops of their own. Perhaps the most notable was the Gardner Factory, begun outside Moscow in 1766 by the Englishman Francis Gardner. As the 19th century dawned, the Gardner and Imperial Factories were the two primary porcelain manufacturers, but more private factories were soon established, with about 50 surviving to mid-century. About 20 of these are represented in Hillwood’s collection.

Due April 27, Historic Objects and Contemporary Stories and Artists

381. MANTEL CLOCK CASE (Dining Room)

Image: Mantel Clock Case

The cleverly disguised mantel clock case stands in front of the mirror over the fireplace. It looks like a female bust. Made of black lacquered bronze, the exotically dressed woman sits atop an

elaborate pedestal designed to hold a music box. Fabulous as it is, this case has no clock workings or music box mechanism, suggesting that the case never made it from the bronze maker to the clockmaker's shop.

A similar clock was completed for Marie Antoinette. In that case, the movements fit inside the turban. When you pulled one of the figure's pendant earrings—the hour appeared in the eye on the left, and the minutes to the right. Pulling the other earring produced a succession of chimes. Marie Antoinette's clock was exhibited in the window of its maker's shop in Paris, delighting passersby before it was sent to Versailles.

For Your Reference: Garden Audio Tour Script

GARDEN TOUR STOP LIST

100. Introduction to Garden Tour (Motor Court)

110. Motor Court

111. Sculpture in the Garden: Eros (Motor Court)

112. Featured Plant: Dawn Redwood (Motor Court)

120. French Parterre

121. French Garden Tradition (French Parterre)

122. Sculpture in the Garden: Diana, Swan Fountain, and Sphinxes (French Parterre)

123. Featured Plant: Boxwood (French Parterre)

130. Rose Garden

131. Featured Plants: Floribunda and Climbing Roses (Rose Garden)

140. Friendship Walk

141. Four Seasons Overlook

142. Sculpture in the Garden: The Four Seasons (Four Seasons Overlook)

143. Featured Plant: Crape Myrtle (Four Seasons Overlook)

501. A Tribute to Marjorie Post's Generosity (Four Seasons Overlook)

150. Putting Green

151. Featured Plants: Japanese Holly and Japanese Snowball Viburnum (Putting Green)

152. The Lawn Furniture (Putting Green)

160. Lunar Lawn

161. Sculpture in the Garden: The Lion (Lunar Lawn)

162. Featured Plant: The American Elm (Lunar Lawn)

502. Preparing for Marjorie Post's Annual Garden Party (Lunar Lawn)

170. Japanese-style Garden

171. Japanese-style Gardens in America (Japanese-style Garden)

172. Sculpture in the Garden: Hotei (Japanese-style Garden)

173. Featured Plants: Cherry and Black Pine Trees (Japanese-style Garden)

180. Vista Terrace

190. Dog Cemetery

191. Featured Plant: Sweetbox (Dog Cemetery)

200. Dacha

201. Featured Plants: Azaleas and Rhododendrons (Dacha)

210. Adirondack Building

505. Camp Topridge (Adirondack Building)

211. Featured Plant: Dwarf Fothergilla (Adirondack Building)

220. Behind the Scenes: Cutting Garden & Greenhouse

221. Featured Plants: The Orchid Collection (Greenhouse)

504. Flowers for the Mansion (Cutting Garden & Greenhouse)

100. INTRODUCTION TO GARDEN TOUR (Motor Court)

Image: Mansion exterior, porte cochere side

Welcome to Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. I'm Kate Markert, Hillwood's executive director. As you listen to this introduction, you should be in the motor court outside the mansion. After Marjorie Merriweather Post purchased Hillwood in the 1950s, the gardens were redesigned as outdoor "rooms" that featured a wide variety of historical styles combined with contemporary horticultural trends. Marjorie wanted each garden room to have a distinct character, while fitting into the overall design of the estate. An exceptionally generous host, Marjorie often entertained in Hillwood's gardens and wanted her guests to enjoy them in comfort and ease.

The garden tour contains approximately sixty minutes of "stops" or "commentaries." You can listen to as few or as many as you like, in any order. The "stops" highlight each garden's overall design, focus on specific sculpture and plants, and provide historical context. Joining you on today's tour will be Marjorie's granddaughter Ellen Charles, who will share fond insights about her grandmother. You'll also hear actors reading from oral histories and composites from interviews to highlight moments from Marjorie's life. As you listen, you're welcome to relax on the lawn furniture. Throughout the tour, images will appear on your player. Listen for the **[SFX]** to know when to look down at your screen. The first stop on the garden tour is in the motor court where you are now standing. To hear it, just press 110. Thank you for joining us. Enjoy your tour.

110. MOTOR COURT

Image: Mansion exterior, porte cochere side

You should now be standing in the walled, circular motor court adjacent to the main entrance to the mansion. Hillwood was originally known as Arbremont. It was built in 1926 as a residence for Colonel and Mrs. Henry Parsons Erwin, with gardens and grounds designed by landscape architects Willard Gebhart and Rose Greely. Marjorie purchased the estate in 1955. She then made a number of alterations to accommodate her exceptional art collection and her artful style of living. Marjorie applied her business acumen to the running of her households, bringing together a highly skilled staff to help her share her life and her art collection with others. Marjorie and her staff made sure the Hillwood experience began as soon as guests drove through the stately front gate and up the winding, uphill driveway that took them through its magnificent gardens. Here to greet the diplomats, politicians, student groups, military servicemen and veterans, people in the arts, DC social figures, and family was a lush and colorful landscape of flowers, plants, and trees.

SFX, Image: Blooming Flowers on Drive

Marjorie added the *porte cochere*, or covered drive, for the convenience and comfort of her guests in bad weather. On arriving, valets ushered them from their cars into the house. Marjorie employed up to four chauffeurs to maintain and drive a fleet of 34 cars used at her three properties: Hillwood; Camp Topridge, her summer home in Upstate New York; and Mar-A-Lago, her winter home in Florida. The vehicles transported her family, staff, and guests to wherever they needed to be. The fleet ranged from station wagons to limousines—all American made, which Marjorie preferred and chauffeurs appreciated for reasons of practicality. As Frank Del Monte, one of her drivers, explained, "If we had a Rolls Royce, and I broke down somewhere in New England, I'd have to wait until they took it all the way to Washington." Marjorie made necessary modifications to suit her needs, even extending the roof of her 1964 Cadillac Series 75 limousine five inches over her seat to accommodate her tall hats.

111. SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: EROS (Motor Court)

Image: Eros

This 19th-century stone sculpture depicts Eros, called the most handsome of the immortal Greek gods. Here he's seen as a willowy youth protectively holding a kid, a symbol of fertility, while reaching behind him to pull an arrow from his quiver. The ancient Greek poet Hesiod called Eros, who was the son of Aphrodite, the "immortal force of love." Sculpture brings not only beauty but symbolic associations to a garden, often enhanced by where it's situated. Here, Eros faces the driveway where Marjorie's guests entered the estate. Perhaps the welcoming god of love was intended to foreshadow a delightful visit.

112. FEATURED PLANT: DAWN REDWOOD (Motor Court)

Image: Dawn Redwood

When the dawn redwoods were planted in 1960, they were only five feet tall. They now measure over 65 feet. To find them, turn away from the mansion toward the visitor center, then step out into the driveway. On your right is a very tall, vaguely pyramidal tree with a buttressed, or spreading, lower trunk. You can see another to your left.

In the spring and summer, dawn redwoods can be identified by their drooping, feathery foliage, which turns a russet brown in autumn before falling. Millions of years ago, these trees, known scientifically as *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, grew throughout North America and Asia. They were thought to be extinct, but in 1945, a small grove of living dawn redwoods was discovered in a remote area of China. A few years later, packets of seeds were sent to arboreta, institutions that study trees, throughout the United States and Europe. All of the dawn redwoods in this country, including the ones here at Hillwood, owe their existence to those original seeds.

120. FRENCH PARTERRE

Image: French Parterre

Entering the French parterre, you are transported back to a small European garden of the 17th or 18th century. The parterre is a formal garden divided by footpaths. Its plantings are trimmed into short, intricate patterns. The tight, well-maintained design is based on symmetry and geometry and supported by architectural features and decorative sculpture. This garden is laid out on a central axis. Gravel footpaths and channels of moving water, called rills, further divide the garden into four identical quadrants. At one end is a terra-cotta sculpture of Diana, goddess of the hunt, with a hound at her side. At the other end, against the mansion, is a marble swan fountain. You can walk up the steps to get a good look at it, and when you turn around, you'll have an ideal view of the garden. The parterre reflects Marjorie's love of 18th-century French culture and style. She hired landscape architects Innocenti & Webel of Long Island, New York, to design this garden according to French garden traditions. As you face the garden from the swan fountain, imagine you have just stepped out from the French drawing room behind you into this beautiful garden "room" enclosed by walls of English ivy. The pattern of the boxwood was inspired by a 17th-century ironwork design and recalls the organic decoration on many of the French objects found indoors. In the semicircular niches on either side of the garden, you'll find charming, American-made wrought iron glass top tables with sprays of flowers and leaves. Take a moment to sit at the tables and enjoy the beauty around you.

121. FRENCH GARDEN TRADITION (French Parterre) (Additional content under Stop 120)

Image: French Parterre

Hillwood's French parterre incorporates many elements common to French formal gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries, when formalism in garden design reached its peak. Such gardens were geometric and symmetrical, clearly defined by architectural and sculptural features. Evergreens and water enlivened the spaces. Eighteenth-century French formal gardens were defined not by the organic shapes and sizes of their plants, but rather by the way plants were forced into a particular architecture.

This garden is divided into an upper terrace and lower planting beds, which are, in turn, divided and defined by limestone curbing. Within this artificial structure, evergreen plants, such as the ivy walls and boxwood scrolls, provide a constant living presence. A supporting trellis gives the ivy wall its shape. The boxwood parterres are planted in scroll-like shapes. Both the ivy and the boxwood are carefully cropped by our horticulture staff.

Water was considered important to any formal garden. Whether spouting fountains or moving through narrow channels, it enlivened the garden with sound and movement. Walk over and look closely at the long, straight rill. You'll find that the bottom is carved so that the water makes textured patterns as it flows. It's a reminder of man's desire to exert his dominance over nature, a trademark of historical French formal gardens.

122. SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: DIANA, SWAN FOUNTAIN, AND SPHINXES (French Parterre)

Image: Diana

The sculptures in the French parterre direct your attention to the layout of the garden. They also convey symbolic meanings. If you stand on the terrace, facing away from the mansion, your eye will be drawn to the terra-cotta sculpture of Diana. In Roman mythology, she was the maiden goddess of the hunt and moon. Set off by the ivy walls, she seems to be emerging from the woodlands after the hunt with her energetic hound at her side. Walk up to the sculpture and you'll notice the artist has depicted Diana in mid-stride, her back foot about to lift off the ground. She twists to push back a lock of hair. Her robes, blown against her body and legs, emphasize her motion. This sculpture is a late 19th-century copy of a French marble of Diana created in 1710 by Antoine Coysevox, a court sculptor to King Louis XIV. It's actually a portrait of the young Duchess of Bourgogne, the king's daughter-in-law, portrayed as Diana the Huntress.

SFX, Image: Swan and Sphinxes

Now turn back toward the house. You'll find your attention drawn by the central axis of the garden to the Tennessee pink marble swan fountain. The swans are symbols of fidelity and loyalty. Two early 20th-century American-made lamps flank the swan fountain. On either side of the steps are two marble sphinxes. Like the Diana sculpture, the sphinxes—mythical creatures with animal bodies and human heads and torsos—are allegorical portraits. They depict not Egyptian pharaohs, but two 18th-century Parisian ballerinas, complete with ribbons and tightly laced bodices. On their backs, playful cupids with garlands epitomize the lighthearted spirit of 18th-century French culture.

123. FEATURED PLANT: BOXWOOD (French Parterre)

Image: French Parterre

Evergreen boxwood is a staple of many gardens, both formal and informal. It is ideal for this French parterre garden because it grows slowly and responds well to regular pruning into specific shapes. The name of this boxwood is *Buxus microphylla* 'Morris Dwarf'. You may have noticed that the slightly taller clumps of boxwood have leaves edged with yellow.

130. ROSE GARDEN

Image: Rose Garden

The rose garden offers a feast for the senses throughout the spring and summer months. Standing under the wood and brick pergola in April, you may catch the heavy sweet fragrance of the white wisteria. In the summer, floribunda roses delight the eye with a visual bouquet of pink, white, red, coral, and yellow. Sitting in the dappled shade under the pergola provides relief on hot summer afternoons. The rose garden is one of the few places that show how Hillwood's gardens evolved over the 20th century.

In 1956, landscape architect Perry Wheeler, noted for assisting in the design of the White House Rose Garden, took up the challenge of adapting this rose garden for Marjorie's taste. Marjorie directed that the existing pergola with its climbing roses, the stone steps that lead down to the putting green, and the basic round shape of the garden be kept. Wheeler picked up the pergola's brickwork in his intricate trademark paving. The new paths changed the shape of the flower beds. In the center, he created four crown-shaped rose beds, each with a single variety of rose. Boxwood hedges mirror the shape of the pergola, thus completing this circular "room."

Marjorie chose this garden as her final resting place. In November 1974, a little over a year after her death, her ashes were placed in the base of the granite monument in the center of the garden. At the top is an antique urn carved from deep purple porphyry, a rare type of stone. The base bears Marjorie's coat of arms, including the engraved Latin phrase "In me mea spes omnis," which translates to "All my hopes rest in me," a fitting motto for this dynamic and independent woman.

131. FEATURED PLANTS: FLORIBUNDA AND CLIMBING ROSES (Rose Garden)

Image: Rose Garden

The floribunda roses in this garden were originally produced from a cross between a polyantha rose and a hybrid tea rose. They are known for clusters of flowers at the ends of their stems. As you look closer at the rose garden, you will see the long canes of climbing roses gracefully arching over the pergola. The pink American Pillar rambler rose may have been planted before 1955, when Marjorie purchased Hillwood.

Roses were cultivated as early as the 6th century BC. In Asia, they were grown primarily for ornamental purposes. In the West, roses were first cultivated for their fragrance, for perfume, and as an antidote to the many unsavory odors associated with urban living before modern sanitation. Rose species naturally interbreed, a trait that has long been exploited to produce an astonishing array of forms and colors.

140. FRIENDSHIP WALK

Image: Gate of Friendship Walk

You should now be at the wrought iron gates that mark the entrance of the Friendship Walk, a footpath designed in the English tradition of informal landscape gardening. In 1957, four of Marjorie's friends approached her head gardener and one of her landscape architects, Perry Wheeler, with the idea of creating a garden to honor their friendship with Marjorie and her lifetime of generosity through philanthropy. The dedication stone reads, "Friendship Walk – Hillwood, dedicated by her friends as a tribute to Marjorie Merriweather Post for her generous nature, love of beauty, and devotion of human needs." Stop for a moment at the Hush Boy Birdbath, found along the path. Look up and just to the right of the birdhouse to find a small tree: *Styrax japonica*. This charming tree is named Japanese Snowbell for its white bell-shaped fragrant flowers that gracefully hang along its branches in spring. As you continue to the circle, you'll see boxwood, Abelia, Viburnum, rhododendrons, and azaleas along the walk. At the end of the path is the Four Seasons Overlook. It is shaded by southern magnolia, conifers, and American holly trees.

141. FOUR SEASONS OVERLOOK

Image: Four Seasons Overlook

The Friendship Walk ends at a circular overlook surrounded by four lead statues representing the seasons. Around it, you'll find a variety of trees that provide visual splendor from spring through fall: star magnolia and cherry bloom in April and May; crape myrtle blooms in July and has beautiful bark in winter; witch hazel and Japanese maple are glorious in October. The trees, shrubs, and flowers provide a delightful setting for contemplation or conversation. Throughout the garden and the walk leading to it are plaques with the names of people who donated funds, sculpture, and plants. These include several ambassadors, congressmen, and other government officials. In the center, carved in black serpentine Italian marble, an inscription reads, "Friendship outstays the hurrying flight of years and aye abides through laughter and through tears." The quote is taken from a postcard written by Tsaritsa Alexandra Fedorovna, the last empress of Russia, to one of her good friends. In this most thoughtful gift, Marjorie's friends wanted to link her passion for imperial Russian culture with her love of gardens. In fact, inside the mansion, you'll find a number of portraits of the empress Alexandra.

142. SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: THE FOUR SEASONS (Four Seasons Overlook)

Image: Four Seasons Overlook

Encircling the overlook are four lead statues of little boys representing the four seasons. Face the Friendship Walk with its brickwork border and the rose garden beyond. Just to the right of the path is Spring, trailing a garland of flowers. He smiles gently, relieved that winter is finally gone. Moving clockwise around the circle, you'll encounter Summer, who balances a basket on his head, overflowing with sheaves of grain. Beyond the three bronze eagles is Autumn, who wears a low belt and twines grape vines in his hair. Finally, poor Winter huddles in a lion skin, chilled to the bone.

143. FEATURED PLANT: CRAPE MYRTLE (Four Seasons Overlook)

Image: Crape Myrtle

In the heat of late summer, when green is the predominant color around the Four Seasons Overlook, the hot pink blooms of the crape myrtle, or *Lagerstroemia indica*, stand out. As you enter the overlook from the Friendship Walk, crape myrtle is the tall tree just to the right of the three eagles. If you are from a cold climate, you may be unfamiliar with this tree. Its northernmost range is

the mid-Atlantic region of this country. It cannot survive cold northern winters. Crape myrtle doesn't attract much notice in spring when so much else is in bloom. But in August, its bright flowers form six- to eight-inch long clusters, called panicles. The crape myrtle's fall foliage is a blazing orange. In winter, the smooth bark with beautifully mottled browns, grays, and greens takes center stage.

501. A TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE POST'S GENEROSITY (Four Seasons Overlook) (Additional content under Stop 141)

Image: Four Seasons Overlook

Have a seat on the iron furniture in the Four Seasons Overlook and listen to the story of the dedication of this garden. This reminiscence is a composite account of remarks made by Marjorie's friends that appeared in the *Washington Post* in November 1957, when this garden was dedicated:

I remember it clearly. It was a Saturday afternoon, a truly beautiful day. Many of us had agreed to contribute something—shrubs, statuary, or funds. The idea was to give Mrs. Post a very special house-warming present. Adding to her gardens seemed an original and thoughtful surprise, as she has done so much for so many of us over the years. We just wanted, in some small way, to offer a token of our appreciation for her generosity and kindness. Some of Marjorie's closest friends gave short speeches. General Pratt, who coordinated all the monetary contributions, explained how we all conspired to keep the plans a secret from Mrs. Post for so long. Afterward, the dear woman invited us all to stay on for a wonderful buffet supper!

150. PUTTING GREEN

Image: Putting Green

Marjorie enjoyed an active life, walking the gardens of her homes regularly, square dancing and ballroom dancing during evening entertaining, and stretching every morning. She was also a golfing enthusiast and had putting greens at many of her homes. This putting green allowed friends and family to practice their game.

SFX, Image: Post Putting

When Spottswood Dudley was a boy, he visited Marjorie with his family, and made a wager with her: "I remember the day on the putting green she won my five-dollar-a-week allowance from me." Marjorie placed distinctive blue and white shade umbrellas and chairs on the terrace. Cups and numbered pins mark each of the nine holes. The green is covered with bentgrass turf, used for putting greens on many professional golf courses. It requires dedicated care, including frequent watering and clipping by Hillwood's horticulture staff.

During Marjorie's lifetime, 12 to 15 gardeners worked to keep the gardens beautiful. In the early afternoons, she and her head gardener, Earl Loy, toured the garden together. When they walked along the back of the estate, Earl brought along her Sears Roebuck and Company walking shoes, a style contrast from her custom dress shoes. Occasionally, they took time out to putt golf balls. Today Hillwood has approximately 15 professional horticulture staff and 100 volunteers whose invaluable efforts maintain the gardens beautifully and according to Marjorie's high standards.

Along the sides of the green, Japanese hollies and evergreens frame the space, including tall false cypress, a *Loropetalum chinense* tree commonly known as Chinese fringe flower, and Japanese snowball viburnum, with its dramatic May blossoms.

151. FEATURED PLANTS: JAPANESE HOLLY AND JAPANESE SNOWBALL VIBURNUM (Putting Green)

Image: Holly and Viburnum

The name of the plant encircling the putting green is Japanese holly, or *Ilex crenata* cultivar Howard, a slow-growing evergreen holly. The dark lustrous leaves are small and rounded. They've been called box-leafed holly because of the close resemblance to boxwood, but if you look closely at their leaves, you'll see that they have the slightly serrated edges typical of hollies. Japanese holly is often used for hedges and other dense plantings and develops a solid form with minimal pruning.

Between the evergreens surrounding the putting green are several large shrubs known as Japanese snowball viburnums. They get their name from their three-inch rounded clusters of white flowers that bloom in May. Japanese snowball viburnums are often mistaken for hydrangeas. When they aren't in bloom, you can identify these plants by their large upright form and their leaves. Look closely and you'll see that their leaves have distinctive ridges. Their undersides are slightly fuzzy.

Since the flowers of these viburnums have no fragrance, they do not attract pollinating insects. There's no need to, for these particular plants are sterile and cannot reproduce naturally. Horticulturists have to specially propagate or grow new plants from cuttings. They are also known as *Viburnum plicatum* variety *plicatum*.

152. THE LAWN FURNITURE (Putting Green)

Image: Putting Green

Marjorie's blue and white lawn furniture was considered perfect for casual outdoor entertaining in the 1960s. Shade from the umbrellas encouraged guests to linger. You'll find the furniture on the Lunar Lawn, vista terrace, the putting green, and in the niches of the French parterre. In accordance with historical photographs, these pieces are arranged much as they would have been in Marjorie's time. The furniture is periodically restored to keep it in fine condition. It's put away during the winter months to protect it.

160. LUNAR LAWN

Image: Lunar Lawn

If you stand under the portico of the house, you'll have a grand view of the Lunar Lawn. Over the trees, it's possible to see the top of the Washington Monument, less than five miles away. The Lunar Lawn takes its name from its half-moon shape.

The lawn is surrounded by large spreading American elms, false cypresses, and spring blooming azaleas, camellias, dogwoods, and magnolias. Today, Hillwood's gardening staff maintain plantings of tulips in the spring, annuals such as begonias and impatiens in the summer, and chrysanthemums in the fall, to continue Marjorie's tradition of customizing her garden to suit each season.

This was the site of countless weekend teas at Hillwood. Typically in the spring, Marjorie and her staff organized one weekend of three consecutive garden parties. On Saturday and Sunday, she entertained the political and social elite of Washington, as well as groups representing her philanthropic efforts.

SFX, Image: Veterans on Lawn

Mondays, however, became days for entertaining the military. From the late 1960s until her death, Marjorie frequently extended party invitations to veterans, many of whom had been wounded in Vietnam and were being treated at nearby military hospitals. Marjorie's warm welcome to Vietnam veterans was unusual at a time when that war divided the country, and returning veterans could not count on warm receptions at home.

SFX, Image: Flagpole Dedication

In 1962, when Marjorie turned 75, her staff finally had a chance to turn the tables and collaborate to honor her. As Marjorie's granddaughter Ellen Charles recalls, "She had a wonderful staff. They'd worked with her for so long that they knew what she would want." A special ceremony was held—with staff from all of her properties in attendance—to present her with the flagpole you see on this lawn.

The masts of Marjorie's beloved yacht, *Sea Cloud*, inspired the design. The plaques at the flagpole's base list the names of the many staff contributors. Marjorie was deeply moved by this tribute, remarking at the ceremony, "I can't tell you how thrilled I am.... This is the one important item which has been missing at Hillwood."

161. SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: THE LION (Lunar Lawn)**Image: The Lion**

Marjorie purchased this crowned lion sculpture in 1956 with the understanding that it was an 18th-century sculpture that had sat outside of Old Somerset House in London until the mid-1760s, but further research by museum staff calls this into doubt. Whatever his history, this lion has long delighted Hillwood's guests with his friendly yet regal bearing.

162. FEATURED PLANT: THE AMERICAN ELM (Lunar Lawn)**Image: American Elm**

Surrounding the Lunar Lawn and the front of the mansion are majestic American elm trees. Known for its symmetrical vase-shaped form and spreading branches, the American elm, or *Ulmus americana*, was planted extensively along the streets of early America. Elms grow to be from 60 to 80 feet high, with strong arching limbs terminating in slender, pendulous small branches that create pleasant shade. Unfortunately, Dutch elm disease, which came to the United States in the 1930s, destroyed most of these once-common trees. Some of the elms you see here are original to the estate and were mature by the time Marjorie purchased Hillwood. Any of the elms that have had to be removed over the years have been replaced with modern, disease-resistant cultivars. Hillwood's remaining original elms are treated to protect them from the fungus that causes Dutch elm disease.

502. PREPARING FOR MARJORIE POST'S ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY (Lunar Lawn) (Additional content under Stop 160)**Image: Lunar Lawn**

The following reminiscence is a composite based on oral histories given by members of Marjorie's garden staff:

I was on the garden crew for Mrs. Post for almost 20 years here at Hillwood. Every May she would have this large party out on the Lunar Lawn. We worked for weeks to make sure the gardens were

perfect—all the trees trimmed, everything weeded. We made sure that none of the flowers looked wilted or brown.

One of the carpenters on our staff built this moveable dance floor that could be set up and taken down. And the day before one of Mrs. Post's parties, we would bring it out from storage and set it up on the lawn. Then the caterers would come and put up a big white tent, tables for the food, and lots of tables and chairs for the guests.

The house staff was busy too, of course, fixing the tables up with china and silver. They used flowers from the cutting garden and the greenhouses to make centerpieces for every single table. We had some special outdoor furniture, such as large metal candelabra, that we cleaned and set up around the lawn according to Mrs. Post's direction. Of course, she inspected everything before the guests arrived. If something wasn't just perfect, you can bet we would jump to fix it.

170. JAPANESE-STYLE GARDEN

Image: Japanese-style Garden

The ideal place to hear about this garden is at the very bottom, in front of the wooden gate. If you would like to travel there, please press Pause until you get there, then press Play.

You should now be in front of the gates at the bottom of the cascade, giving you an excellent view up the Japanese-style garden. Marjorie hired landscape architect Shogo Myaida to create this garden in 1957. Look down at your player to see an image of the garden from Marjorie's time.

SFX, Image: Archival Image of Lanterns in Garden

Water cascading through the hillside landscape recalls the mountainous terrain of Japan. On the first level down is a series of round millstones crossing a pool. Below it, a typical Japanese bridge crosses a lower pool. Beyond the tiered pagoda is a wooden gate.

As you can see directly in front of you, plants provide contrasts of color and texture. The delicate tracery of the reddish Japanese maple is juxtaposed with the powder blue needles of the Colorado blue spruce and the cascading water between them. Marjorie often brought visitors to this garden when they toured Hillwood. In 1963, she invited a group of sorority sisters to stroll through the Japanese garden, where they walked across the stepping stones in their dress shoes with their purses on their arms.

SFX, Image: Archival Image of Students in Garden

Enjoy wandering through the garden and experiencing its beauty and serenity, just as so many of Marjorie's guests did. Some of the paths are steep and may have no railings, so please watch your step.

171. JAPANESE-STYLE GARDENS IN AMERICA (Japanese-style Garden) (Additional content under Stop 170)

Image: Japanese-style Garden

In traditional Japanese garden design, the landscape architect and gardener work toward a delicate and harmonious balance between nature and man's control of the natural world. Looking up the hillside, it is impossible to find a strong central axis, and yet the garden does not feel unbalanced. That's partly because of the traditional triangular arrangement of features. For

example, look at the pine tree on the island in front of you. Let your eyes follow the straight part of the trunk at the left. It points across the water to a statue that marks the base of another pine tree of the same species. That tree slants back over the waterfall, and its branches almost touch a third pine tree. Follow that third tree's trunk down, and your eye rests on the small pine tree on the island once more. This little pine has been pruned for a windswept effect.

When Shogo Myaida created this garden in 1957, he began by ingeniously arranging more than 400 boulders, which give the garden a mountainside effect in miniature, a traditional aspect of Japanese gardens. However, this garden is actually a blend of Japanese and American traditions.

The Colorado blue spruce, a North American species, is juxtaposed with Asian species like the Japanese maple. The sculptural features, like lanterns, animals, and human figures, are abundant and carefully placed to be appreciated as works of art. Traditionally, these features are used sparingly and have symbolic meaning. This combined approach had been popular in the 1920s and '30s, but these gardens fell out of favor during World War II, when America was fighting with Japan. In the 1950s, many wealthy Americans, including Marjorie, started building such gardens again.

172. SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN: HOTEI (Japanese-style Garden)

Image: Hotei

As you move through the Japanese-style garden, you'll discover many stone figures that reinforce the Japanese atmosphere, but we'll concentrate on one of them: a fat, jolly man named Hotei. If you're at the bottom of the garden, walk up the lawn-side steps to find him. He's in his own shrine-like area about half way up to your left. Please press Pause until you get there. Then press Play to continue.

You should now be with the smiling Hotei, one of the seven Japanese Buddhist gods of luck. Hotei represents happiness and the wisdom of contentment. His large naked belly is symbolic of his large soul. Hotei holds a fan, and over his shoulder, he carries a large sack that never empties and is filled with the precious things in life.

Over the centuries, regional religious traditions throughout Asia have influenced one another. As Buddhism moved from India, through China, and into Japan, it was absorbed and blended into local folk beliefs. The seven gods of luck may have been brought to Japan from China with the introduction of Buddhism. Nevertheless, these gods, including Hotei, are still extremely popular with Japanese people today, as they bring good fortune, wisdom, and happiness to their followers.

173. FEATURED PLANTS: CHERRY AND BLACK PINE TREES (Japanese-style Garden)

Image: Cherry and Black Pine

The best place to hear about the cherry and the black pine trees is on the small island between the two bridges at the bottom of the garden. Please press Pause until you get there.

You should now be on the island. In Japanese gardens, certain traditional plants and plant combinations have symbolic meaning. One such combination is the cherry and the pine tree, which stand for the balance between the transitory and the permanent. On this island is a small black pine with long needles. It represents permanence, partly because it is an evergreen and partly because of the tenacity shown by its windswept shape. It looks as if it battles the elements every day to

survive on this protected shore. Stand with the pine at your left and you'll see the cherry tree just across the water, spreading above you. If it's not in bloom, you can identify it by its long, weeping branches. The cherry symbolizes transience, because its soft pink blossoms appear only briefly, in early April.

180. VISTA TERRACE

Image: Vista Terrace

The vista terrace is in front of the house, across the Lunar Lawn. Vistas, or landscaped views, often enhance landscape designs. This terrace, built in 1926 as part of the original garden design by Willard Gebhart, overlooks a long inclined vista. The vista creates a sense of ample space by leading our eyes into the distance. The view originally encompassed the landscape beyond the estate's borders. Now the trees have grown, and the Washington Monument, once visible above the treetops from this terrace, can only be seen from the mansion. On the edge of the terrace, in the center, is a sundial. On either side sit two charming lead satyrs, mythical creatures with human bodies and goat legs. They play a horn and pipes. To the left and right, flanking the stairs, are four more musical satyrs carved from limestone. They lend an air of whimsy to the garden. The cast stone planters contain many of the same seasonal flowers as the beds in the adjacent Lunar Lawn.

190. DOG CEMETERY

Image: Dog Cemetery

At the entrances to the cemetery, you are greeted by limestone dogs—poodles, spaniels, and hounds—with baskets of flowers. Marjorie Post, as well as her three daughters, all shared a great affection for purebred dogs, and this secluded garden was built to commemorate their pets. Headstones memorialize Post's first schnauzer, Lady Patricia, and Scampi, the schnauzer who lived at Hillwood.

Azaleas and evergreen groundcovers predominate in the dense shade made of ivy, vinca, and sweetbox. If you're here in March, you may notice a pleasant fragrance from the sweetbox itself, a signal that spring and new life are on the way.

191. FEATURED PLANT: SWEETBOX (Dog Cemetery)

Image: Sweetbox

Sweetbox is in the genus *Sarcococca*. This low-growing, shrubby species is closely related to boxwood. Spreading slowly by underground roots, sweetbox makes a delicate and graceful low groundcover in deep shade. In late winter to early spring, the air is filled with an intense sweet fragrance from the aptly named sweetbox. Tiny white flowers nestle in the shiny narrow evergreen foliage.

200. DACHA

Image: Archival Image of Dacha with Screen Door

Marjorie built this dacha in 1969. Today it is used as an exhibition and program space. Take a look at its exterior. Hillwood's dacha, surrounded by rhododendrons and azaleas, was inspired by the small Russian country homes that Marjorie saw when she lived in Russia from 1937 to 1938. Her passion for Russian art and culture was born during these 18 months and continued for the rest of her life.

The dacha evokes traditional Russian country dwellings, sometimes called *izbas*, with their whole logs and intricate carvings. Some details are American adaptations of Russian motifs, such as the multiple bright colors of the window carvings and the onion-shaped domes on the roof. The structure itself is made of masonry clad with California redwood.

201. FEATURED PLANTS: AZALEAS AND RHODODENDRONS (Dacha)

Image: Azaleas and Rhododendrons

The curved flagstone path directly opposite the dacha is known as Rhododendron Walk because of the vast numbers of these flowering shrubs planted by Marjorie. In fact, there are so many rhododendrons and azaleas at Hillwood that many of the varieties have not been identified. When they were originally planted in the 1950s and '60s, detailed lists of specific cultivars were not kept. Three varieties that have been identified are the white flowered 'Snow', the fuchsia 'Hinode Giri', and the lavender spider azalea with divided strap-like petals called 'Koromo Shikibu'.

Both azaleas and rhododendrons are categorized under the genus *Rhododendron*, but they have key differences. Rhododendrons usually have 10 or more stamens extending beyond the petals, whereas azaleas usually have only five. And while rhododendrons typically have large, leathery, paddle-shaped leaves, the leaves of most azaleas are much smaller. Rhododendrons tend to grow into small trees, with flowers blossoming in large clusters. Azaleas are usually more compact, with blossoms spread over the entire shrub.

210. ADIRONDACK BUILDING

Image: Adirondack Building

Built 10 years after Marjorie's death, in 1983, as an exhibition gallery, this rustic building recalls the architectural style of her summer retreat, Camp Topridge, nestled among the great pines of the Adirondack Mountains in Upstate New York.

The landscape design around the Adirondack building was also inspired by Camp Topridge. Woodland wildflowers, graceful ferns, shade trees, blooming shrubs, and a grassy ellipse create the feel of natural woodlands in upstate New York. An umbrella magnolia, *Magnolia tripetala*, planted in the bed left of the entrance, reflects the building's architecture. Above the green awning, you can see the similarities between its branching and the building's rustic branch elements. To the left of the magnolia is a slow-growing native yellow wood, *Cladrastis kentukea*. It has deep roots that allow shade-tolerant plants to grow near it.

On the ground, you'll see a variety of intentionally wild-looking plants. Depending on the season, you may see spring wildflowers, like trillium and shooting star. These give way to the cooling effect of ferns during summer. Left of the yellow wood tree is the Christmas fern, and at the base of the magnolia is a royal fern. Red and blue lobelias add more color mid to late summer, and hydrangea blooms can be seen in the beds to the right of the Adirondack entrance.

505. CAMP TOPRIDGE (Adirondack Building)

Image: Adirondack Building

The rustic Adirondack building recalls the architectural style of Marjorie's summer retreat, Camp Topridge, which was nestled among the great pines of Upstate New York, in the Adirondack Mountains. Camp Topridge occupied more than 100 acres with frontage on Upper St. Regis Lake, as well as Upper and Lower Spectacle Ponds. The camp boasted 23 buildings to accommodate 105

people—including staff. Marjorie arrived in early July, typically along with a social secretary, two personal maids, and a masseur.

SFX, Image: Camp Topridge's Boat House

Marjorie delighted in offering her family and friends—many of whom were hard-working Washington officials—a break from the capital's oppressively hot summers. Visitors flew up on the *Merriweather*, Marjorie's turboprop plane, and limousines brought them from the airport. Guests could go boating, fishing, golfing, swimming, water skiing, hiking, camping, and play tennis, among other outdoor activities. Indoor activities included shuffleboard and ping-pong. Evenings were spent enjoying formal dinners, with square dancing, ballroom dancing, or films to follow. Marjorie and her staff anticipated her guests' every need. Staff arranged boat tours or golf excursions.

One Topridge tradition was called the carry, an all-day adventure in which both guides and guests canoed across several lakes and carried their supplies overland. As a reward for their hard work, guests were treated to a special menu item that Marjorie's granddaughter Ellen Charles recalls vividly: "Adirondack pie is layers made up of pancakes. And each layer is drenched in butter, maple syrup and crunchy, crunchy maple sugar. You always had Adirondack pie at least once when you were at camp."

211. FEATURED PLANT: DWARF FOTHERGILLA (Adirondack Building)

Image: Dwarf Fothergilla

The grassy ellipse in front of the Adirondack building is bordered by shrubs. Go to either end of the planting, and you'll find a native species: the rounded shrubs with broad leaves and slender branches. Press Pause until you see them then press Play.

The shrubs in front of you are the dwarf fothergilla, also known as *Fothergilla gardenii*. In spring, they are covered with honey-scented spiky white flowers that look like small bottlebrushes. The showiest parts of the flowers are actually the stamens, the white filaments with yellow ends. These are the male part of the flowers that contain the pollen. Fothergilla are not just appealing in the spring. In summer, they have dark, bluish-green leaves that are somewhat leathery and have soft, slightly fuzzy undersides. In autumn, their foliage puts on a show for several weeks, starting with yellow and turning orange to brilliant scarlet and burgundy.

Dwarf fothergilla is a slow-growing, trouble-free shrub that spreads by sending out suckers. These shoots sprout close to the original plant, connected by an underground runner, a fast-growing stem that grows across the soil to produce new growth easily.

220. BEHIND THE SCENES: CUTTING GARDEN & GREENHOUSE

Image: Cutting Garden in 2014

Marjorie enjoyed showcasing the cutting garden and greenhouse for her guests. She described both in "The Gardens of Hillwood," a booklet she had printed for distribution to garden clubs, charitable fundraisers, and schools visiting the gardens.

The cutting garden, with its large rectangular beds planted with straight rows of flowers, produces many of the fresh cut blooms used in the arrangements you see throughout the mansion and other buildings on the estate.

SFX, Image: Archival Aerial Shot

The greenhouse beyond was rebuilt in 1996. It now looks the same way it did after Marjorie expanded it in the 1950s. Inside, however, you'll find a modern, working greenhouse with sophisticated climate control systems and other improvements, and a collection of more than 2,000 exotic orchids and other plants. Marjorie enjoyed fresh flowers so much that she often had plants and flowers from this greenhouse shipped to her other residences, Mar-A-Lago and Camp Topridge.

SFX, Image: Archival Image of Old Greenhouse

The greenhouse also produces cut flowers for winter arrangements, especially when the cutting garden is dormant. Here horticulture staff also grow various annual plants, like pansies and petunias, used in the seasonal displays. The staff also cultivate potted plants for display. You're welcome to go in to see the orchids and talk to our horticulture staff. The small brick buildings nearby, currently used for administrative offices, public programs, and the café, functioned as staff quarters, storage, and a garage, all supporting the smooth operation of Hillwood during Marjorie's lifetime.

221. FEATURED PLANTS: THE ORCHID COLLECTION (Greenhouse)**Image: Orchids in Greenhouse**

When you entered the greenhouse, you probably noticed a difference in the temperature and humidity. Orchids thrive in this environment. Marjorie loved orchids so much that she had a collection of over 2,000 orchids. The staff delivered orchids in bloom to the mansion throughout the year, displaying them in Marjorie's bedroom, the foyer, breakfast room, library, and the French drawing room. Marjorie was so fond of her orchids that she often had selections shipped from Hillwood to her other homes, Mar-A-Lago and Camp Topridge, when she was in residence there.

The orchid family is one of the largest in the plant world, with approximately 25,000 species. Orchids exhibit an astonishing variety of shapes and colors and are found on every continent except Antarctica. Some of the largest and most beautiful varieties come from the tropics, where they have evolved surprising forms and fragrances to attract specific insects and ensure pollination.

Orchids became very popular with Western collectors in the 19th century, when they were rare and had to be gathered from their native environments. It wasn't until the early 1900s that scientists were able to grow them from seed. Orchid seeds are very tiny and have no nutrients in them, so scientists had to develop a special glucose solution to grow the seeds in. Since the 1960s, scientists have been able to clone orchids from tiny cells, leading to a resurgence in their popularity and an increase in their availability to the general public.

504. FLOWERS FOR THE MANSION (Cutting Garden and Greenhouse)**Image: Archival Photo of Mansion Flowers**

The flowers you see in the cutting garden and greenhouses are produced exclusively for use in cut flower arrangements and potted plant displays here at Hillwood. Some of the types of flowers grown and used were traditional in formal arrangements of the 1950s and '60s, including snapdragons, zinnias, and gladiolas.

Marjorie stipulated that after her death Hillwood would be opened as a museum to the public and that the tradition of fresh cut flowers would continue. Orchids from Marjorie's collection also were used in many of the floral arrangements for special events that she hosted. Photographs, like the one on your player, taken when Marjorie lived at Hillwood, suggest that flowers were chosen to complement the dinner service and the season. You'll find that same level of attention given to them at Hillwood today.

For Your Reference: Family Audio Tour Script**FAMILY MANSION TOUR STOP LIST*****RUSSIA: STORIES OF HILLWOOD'S RUSSIAN TREASURES***

- 601. Welcome and Introduction (Front of Mansion)
- 602. Who Is Marjorie Post? (At Library Doorway in Entry Hall)
- 603. Portrait of Peter the Great (Entry Hall)
- 604. Portrait of Catherine the Great (Entry Hall)
- 605. Portraits of Nicholas II and Alexander II (Entry Hall)
- 606. Portrait of Alexandra (Entry Hall)
- 607. Catherine the Great Easter Egg (Icon Room)
- 609. Kovshi (Icon Room)
- 610. Russian Orthodox Church Chalice (Icon Room)
- 611. Icon of St. George (Icon Room)
- 612. Russian Figures (Alcove just off the Icon Room)
- 613. Order of St. George Dishes (Russian Porcelain Room)
- 614. A Boyar Wedding Feast (Pavilion)
- 615. Bread and Salt Plate (Pavilion)
- 616. Nicholas II and Alexandra's Family Portraits (Pavilion)
- 608. Alexandra's Wedding Crown (Second Floor Gallery)
- 619. Conclusion

601. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (FRONT OF MANSION)

Image: Mansion exterior, porte cochere side

Anna Hello and welcome to Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. My name is Anna, and I'm going to be your guide today. I come here often because my mom grew up in Russia, and I can look at art and learn about the culture of my family's homeland. The Russian collection here is amazing. In fact, it is one of the best in the world. I love seeing everything here, from the paintings of the rulers of Russia to the jeweled eggs. They help me imagine just how life was in the days when the tsars ruled Russia—so, so different from life in those days in America. On this special tour of Mrs. Post's Russian collection, you will hear voices from the past. I'll tell you who the speakers are as we go.

Before we go inside to see the collection, let's stop and look at the house. This is the house where the art collector Marjorie Merriweather Post lived. Impressive, isn't it? It was big when Mrs. Post bought it in 1955, but she made it even larger, adding a third floor for staff bedrooms, the large room to the right for entertaining, and the covered entry to impress her guests as they arrived.

Can you imagine coming to a party at Hillwood? I hear they were amazing! People remember Mrs. Post both for her art collections and for her fantastic parties. Mrs. Post's estate not only includes this house, but the gardens and buildings you see around it too. Each "stop" on your tour is marked on the map of the house found in your gallery guide. Now let's go in. Enter through the double doors. Press 602, then Play to restart the tour.

602. WHO IS MARJORIE POST? (AT LIBRARY DOORWAY IN ENTRY HALL)

Image: First Floor Library

Anna Please walk through the double doors, and go straight across the entry hall between the columns, to the large doorway directly in front of you. Press Pause until you get there, then Play. Are you standing looking into the big room with the fireplace at one end? I hope so because Mrs. Post would like to greet you.

Marjorie Post I'm Marjorie Merriweather Post. A warm welcome to my home. I was born in 1887. If you look to the right over the fireplace, you'll see a portrait of my father, C.W. Post. On the opposite wall in an incredible carved wood frame hangs a portrait of my mother, Ella Merriweather Post. We moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, when I was a little girl. There, my father invented a hot drink called Postum. It's kind of like coffee, and people really enjoyed it. He also invented the breakfast cereal Grape-Nuts. Maybe you've tried it yourself. He started the Postum Cereal Company and made a great deal of money. When he died in 1914, I became a very wealthy young woman, some said the richest in America.

With the money I inherited, I built magnificent homes and filled them with beautiful art from Europe. In the 1930s, I married Joseph Davies, the American ambassador to the Soviet Union—it's called Russia today. While living in Moscow, the capital city, I became fascinated with Russian objects and history and began collecting art made during the time of the tsars. I went on buying Russian art for the rest of my life. I just loved it!

Anna See, I told you this place was special! Now, please step back into the grand entry hall and we'll begin looking at Russian art. When you are ready, press 603.

603. PORTRAIT OF PETER THE GREAT (ENTRY HALL)

Image: Peter the Great Portrait

Anna I'd like to show you a portrait of one of Russia's rulers—Peter the Great. He was a very tall man, but he's not easy to find. Press Pause and go halfway up the stairs to the landing. Look for the small, square portrait of a man with long hair. When you find it, press Play button, and you'll hear from Peter himself.

Peter the Great Strasvutya! Hello! Are you looking at the small portrait? I am Peter, tsar of all Russia—that's emperor to you! They call me Peter the Great. I ruled Russia from 1682 to 1725. I will be forever known for bringing the culture of Europe to Russia and changing our attitudes forever.

Do you notice anything special about me? I have no beard! What? That does not seem strange to you? Once all Russian men grew long, thick beards, but I banned them. I worked hard to make Russia into a modern country. No beards, no long coats on men. I commanded the nobility to shave and wear suits like Europeans. And artists will not just make religious paintings. They will paint portraits of living people, like the ones you see around me here.

Before me no ruler ever left Russia, except, of course, to wage war, but I went to Europe to learn and see new things. In Amsterdam, in Holland—oh, such a beautiful city—I learned the craft of shipbuilding, and when I returned home, I built the first Russian navy.

Now what do you think of my little portrait? You might not guess that I stand six feet, seven inches tall! What am I wearing? A soldier's armor, because I led Russia in the war against Sweden. I built a magnificent port city on the territory that I won in that war. I called it St. Petersburg, my window to the modern world.

Anna Get a good view of that gigantic painting hanging above the stairs near the portrait of Peter. It shows an older woman in a white satin dress. When you're looking at it, press 604.

604. PORTRAIT OF CATHERINE THE GREAT (ENTRY HALL)

Image: Catherine the Great Portrait

Anna This huge portrait shows Catherine the Great, an amazingly powerful woman:

Catherine the Great Bonjour. Good day. I am Catherine II, better known as Catherine the Great. I ruled Russia as empress for many years at the time of your unfortunate revolution in America, almost half a century after Peter the Great. Like Peter, I have worked hard to make Russia into a modern nation. I too love Europe, especially "la belle France." I decorated my palaces in the style of the French kings and even introduced the French language to my court.

How do you like this grand portrait? See the stripe down the front of my satin dress. That's a band of laurel leaves. They stand for victory. My cloak is lined with precious fur. I wear special awards I give to my knights for distinguished government and military service. The magnificent diamond necklace draping over my shoulders is a symbol of the Order of St. Andrew, an honor reserved mainly for members of my family. Underneath it, I am wearing an orange and black sash with a gold cross dangling from it. These are symbols of the Order of St. George, the highest honor given to the soldiers I command.

What else shows that I am an empress, a tsarina? Notice the scepter in my hand. Just beneath it on the red velvet stool are the orb and my heavy jeweled crown. Behind me, to the right, my chair is decorated with the double-headed eagle. That is the imperial emblem, the symbol of the ruling Romanov family. You will see this symbol over and over again today. Try to keep count of how many double-headed eagles you can find.

Anna Now, stand near the coatroom door. Above the door are paintings of some of Catherine's descendants. To hear from them, press 605.

605. PORTRAITS OF NICHOLAS II AND ALEXANDER II (ENTRY HALL)

Image: Nicholas II Portrait

Nicholas II Greetings! I am Nicholas II, Russia's last tsar. That's me on the left in the dark naval uniform with gold-fringed epaulettes on my shoulders. In the middle is my grandfather Tsar Alexander the II. Can you see the resemblance? My grandfather and I are Romanovs, proud descendants of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great.

Like Catherine, we wear symbols of the orders or honorary societies we belong to. Like most members of our family, the Romanovs, my grandfather wears the blue sash of the Order of St. Andrew. He is called Tsar-Liberator, because he is best remembered for freeing the serfs, poor people who were owned by members of the nobility. He did it in 1861, two years before Abraham Lincoln freed America's slaves.

The cross and star-shaped badge on my chest are only worn by members of the Order of St. Vladimir, who have demonstrated bravery and service. I received it when I was born! But I must be brave, for many challenge my rule. As tsar, I am the absolute monarch of Russia, but peasants and workers alike demonstrate against me. They burn the houses of the wealthy and band together demanding government reform. They even want to establish a duma, or parliament, in which they will be represented. Outrageous! Some of my advisors say I must give the people more power, or they will stop at nothing to overthrow me.

Anna It's true. The people were fed up with the tsars making decisions for them. They wanted to have a say in what happened to them. We'll hear more about that later, but right now, look at the third portrait. It shows Nicholas II's wife, Alexandra. To hear from her, press 606.

606. PORTRAIT OF ALEXANDRA (ENTRY HALL)

Image: Alexandra

Alexandra Yes! I am Tsar Nicholas's wife Alexandra, but in Germany, where I was born, I was Princess Alix of Hesse, the daughter of a German grand duke. I am also the granddaughter of England's Queen Victoria.

I married Tsar Nicholas II in 1894, just a week after his father's funeral. I remember writing in my diary, just after our wedding, "Never did I believe there could be such utter happiness in the world." And I meant it. We had a wonderful marriage, and five beautiful children. You may have heard of our youngest daughter Anastasia, her father called her *Shvibik*, or "imp," for her mischievous behavior. We lived in great splendor. Here, I am wearing a diamond tiara. I also wear the star-shaped badge of the Order of Saint Catherine, a special honor for noblewomen.

Anna Turn around and walk past the staircase. We'll stop in the small octagonal room filled with dishes. When you get there, press 607.

607. CATHERINE THE GREAT EASTER EGG (ICON ROOM)

Image: Catherine the Great Egg

Anna Are you in the room with the eagle on the floor? Take a left into the icon room. Nicholas II has something incredible to show you in there.

Nicholas II Ah, you have discovered a true treasure, the exquisite pink and gold egg that I gave to my mother, Maria Feodorovna, on Easter morning in 1914. Every Easter, I order two special jeweled eggs, one for my mother and one for my wife, Alexandra. Who made them? The most famous jeweler in the world, of course! Carl Fabergé. Fabergé created about 50 of these splendid eggs for my family. His work is so extraordinary that his designs are copied by jewelers from many countries.

Imagine my mother's delight when she opened this Easter present! And then, opened it again, for it was a gift with another one inside. Like all of Fabergé's eggs, it included a surprise. My mother lifted the diamond- and pearl-encrusted top, and there was a little chair with a tiny figurine of Catherine the Great seated in it! Sadly, it has been long lost. But that is why this is called the Catherine the Great Easter egg.

Now, look closely at the larger pink panels. One scene shows the sciences of geography and architecture. The other represents the art of painting. Can you tell which is which? The smaller pink ovals have babies in them. They stand for spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Now look at the smaller dark blue egg. Fabergé made this one for me to give to my mother. It is made of dark blue enamel with intricate golden designs. Rows of diamonds divide it into 12 panels. On them, you can see my mother's and father's initials in diamonds.

609. KOVSHI (ICON ROOM)

Image: Kovshi

Anna Now let's look at the golden objects. They'll take us back in time, nearly two centuries! You'll hear Peter the Great talk about them.

Peter the Great These objects, called *kovshi*, are made only in Russia. Some say that these handsome silver and gold vessels are shaped like Viking ships, others say swimming birds. For centuries, Russians used them as drinking cups. Often, they held an alcoholic drink, made with honey, called mead. It was delicious! As tsar, I often give kovshi as gifts to my trusted servants. As you can see, the center of each *kovsh* is decorated with a double-headed eagle. On the outside, they have words of thanks written in Russian. I present kovshi in gratitude to my tax collectors, who gather money for the royal treasury. Mine is a vast empire. Without money, how could I reign?

Anna In the case to your left, you'll see some more gold covered vessels. This time they're shaped like wine glasses. To hear Mrs. Post tell you about them, press 610.

610. CASE OF RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CHALICES (ICON ROOM)

Image: Case of Chalices

Marjorie Post These cups are called chalices. They're not for ordinary drinking but are to be used during religious services. Let me tell you how I came to purchase these wonderful chalices.

When my husband Ambassador Davies and I moved to Moscow in 1937, we decided to collect art. Mr. Davies was especially interested in religious objects, but we were told that not much was left in the Russian storehouses and shops. You see, after the Russian Revolution in 1917, religious paintings and objects were sold to raise money for the new Soviet government and for other communist revolutions abroad. The Soviets had forbidden organized religion. They placed no value on the beauty and history of these glorious chalices, even though they'd been used in Russian Orthodox Church services for centuries. Communist Party workers actually melted down chalices like these and sold the silver, gold, and jewels for cash.

By the time I was living there, the Russian government had stopped destroying these precious objects. Even so, I fear that if we hadn't bought these treasures, they would have been lost forever. The Soviet government sold these treasures to me for a few cents per ounce. When I found them, they were so tarnished that I had no idea they were silver covered with gold. Then, I took them home and had them polished and these magnificent vessels emerged.

Anna Imagine how excited Mrs. Post must have been! Next, let's look at the paintings in this room. They're religious paintings called icons. As you look at them, press 611 to hear what Peter the Great has to say.

611. ICON OF ST. GEORGE (ICON ROOM)

Image: Icon of St. George

Peter the Great Before I introduced European art to Russia, icons like these were the only kind of painting that Russians knew. Since in my day, most Russians could not read, icons told religious stories in a way all could understand. The people show great love and respect for these icons. The pictures of Christ and the saints are representations on Earth of the heavenly figures that mean so much to us.

Go to the corner by the window to look at the group of icons there. In the center is the biggest one: the icon of St. George. It was made about 100 years before I came to power in 1682.

To save a princess from the claws of a terrible dragon, the Christian knight St. George plunges his spear into the dragon's mouth. The princess' father does not believe in Christ and his miracles. But when he finds out that St. George has saved his precious daughter, he and his subjects decide to become Christians. Below St. George and to either side of him are rows of saints. Above him, in the center, you can see Jesus Christ. Christ's mother, the Virgin Mary, is to the left. To the right is St. John the Baptist. In the top corners are two mighty archangels, Michael and Gabriel.

Anna Icons are painted on wood panels in bright colors. You can see that the icons around St. George have fabulous frames. They're called *oklads*. They protect the icon and show how important the image of each saint really is.

To find our next objects, turn around and walk through the small door into the room with the curved silver walls. When you get there, press 612.

612. RUSSIAN FIGURES (ALCOVE JUST OFF THE ICON ROOM)

Image: Kamchatka Man and Finnish Man

Anna Hey look at all these little people! Some of them once belonged to Catherine the Great.

Catherine the Great These figures represent many different kinds of people from all over the Russian empire. These figures make charming table decorations at my dinner parties. They amused me and the emperors who followed after me. The characters remind us and our guests of the vastness of my empire. Your United States could fit twice within our borders!

Try to find the peasant figure from Finland. Here are some clues: He is small and wears a black hat with a red band and a light blue coat with a red collar. He has a knife stuck in his belt, and he rests a basket of vegetables on a tree stump. He comes from the Western most part of Russia, next to the country of Sweden. Have you found him? He's on the bottom shelf, to the right.

Now look in the case to the right of the closet for the man from Kamchatka, a peninsula some 4,000 miles to the east of Finland. He has long hair, a light brown fur coat, fur boots, and mittens. He holds a dead animal in one hand and a club in the other. It's very cold in Kamchatka, as it is in much of Russia. Most of Russia is farther north than the coldest parts of America.

Anna Wow! Next, go back through the icon room and walk into the room filled with dishes. When you get there, press 613.

613. ORDER OF ST. GEORGE DISHES (RUSSIAN PORCELAIN ROOM)

Image: St. George Plate

Anna The fancy dishes in this room were made in Russia, many of them for Catherine the Great.

Catherine the Great My favorites are the dessert dishes. See if you can find them. There are several different ones in the cases. Look for the green plates shaped like leaves. On them, they have a circle made by an orange ribbon with three black stripes, like the one you saw me wearing in my portrait. In the center of each plate is a gold emblem with a black circle and the Russian words "For service and bravery." I had these dishes specially made for the knights I honored with a special award, the imperial Order of St. George. Once a year they take part in a religious service in honor of this most holy saint and come to my palace for a ceremonial banquet. At dinner, we enjoy our dessert on these splendid dishes.

Image: ice cup

Do you see the cups that have lids with tiny squirrels sitting on them? Those were for sherbets and iced desserts. Because it takes great effort to crack a nut, the squirrel stands for the hard work and determination that was needed for knights to deserve the Order of St. George.

Anna Before we go on, take a quick look at the double-headed eagle on the floor. Right on the middle of the bird's body, you'll see St. George again. He really was important to the Russian people. To reach the next few objects, step into the long light blue hallway and go down the stairs.

At the end of the hall, turn left and enter the large room with velvet walls and lots of purple curtains. When you get there, press 614.

614. A BOYAR WEDDING FEAST (PAVILION)

Image: A Boyar Wedding Feast

Anna In this velvet room, you can't miss the huge painting called *A Boyar Wedding Feast*. It shows a boyar, or member of the noble class, and his family. He's the one with his back to us and his hand on his hip. I think he better tell you what's going on.

The Boyar I am proud to be a boyar, a member of the Russian nobility before Peter the Great came to the throne. Welcome to my home and the grand wedding feast I host for my son and his new wife. At the right, you can see the young couple, just married. The bride seems timid. You may ask, why is she so shy? Well, that is as it should be for a teenage girl. After all, she has just met her new husband for the first time. That is our custom here in old Russia. Behind her, the matchmaker, who found the bride for my son, is trying to cheer her up.

See my friend in the red cloak trimmed with fur, sitting behind me? He is holding up his cup to toast the bride and groom. "Gorko! Gorko!" he says, which means "Bitter! Bitter." That's an old saying: the wine tastes bitter until the bride and groom kiss to make it sweet.

Perhaps this is your first visit to a boyar palace. As you may have guessed from our splendid clothes, we are the wealthiest Russians. Our country, however, is filled with serfs. They are poor and live only to serve us. I hope you are admiring the beauty of our heavy garments and our jewels. Even the old matchmaker wears a cape of the finest fur.

Ah, a servant is bringing the roast swan, a great delicacy. They have baked it and put the feathers back on it so that it seems almost alive. Surely, in a moment, my new daughter-in-law will look up and smile at her good fortune!

Anna That girl looks 15 or 16, about my age. That's pretty young to get married!

Let's look at something else. If you turn to your left, you'll see a large silver plate. It's hanging on this side of the doorway. It belonged to Tsar Nicholas's parents, and he'll tell you about it when you press 615.

615. BREAD AND SALT PLATE (PAVILION)

Image: Bread and Salt Plate

Nicholas II Russian townspeople presented this splendid plate to my parents: Tsar Alexander III—his portrait is at the top—and Maria Feodorovna, hers is on the right. It was given to them on their coronation, the ceremony when they were made tsar and tsarina, in 1883. On the left, you can see me, still a young tsarevich. In the center is our imperial coat-of-arms. Look carefully and you can make out the double-headed eagle. Above it, on a small dome is written in Russian "God Be With Us."

This plate is called a bread and salt plate. For centuries, Russians, both rich and poor, have placed a round loaf of bread and a dish of salt on a special plate to welcome a newcomer, celebrate a wedding, or mark a special occasion. The person being welcomed breaks the bread, dips a piece

into the salt and then eats it in thanks. In fact, the Russian words for bread and salt—*khleb* and *sol*—gave us our word for hospitality, *khlebosolstvo*.

Now, go all the way down to the end of the room to look at the photographs on the piano. I'll tell you about them when you get there. Just press 616.

616. NICHOLAS II AND ALEXANDRA'S FAMILY PORTRAITS (PAVILION)

Image: Piano with Photos

Anna I want to tell you about these photographs on the piano, because in 1917, some of the people shown here—including Nicholas and Alexandra, who have been talking to you—were murdered.

In the dark brown frame, is a photograph of Nicholas. Just in front of him, wearing a traditional Russian headdress, is Alexandra. To the right is Alexandra again, this time holding her youngest child Alexis. At the left, is a picture of his four sisters: Olga, Tatiana, Maria, and Anastasia.

When Alexis was born, Nicholas and Alexandra were thrilled to have a son. But it was so sad because Alexis was born with a disease called hemophilia. His blood did not clot properly. Even the smallest cut or bruise put him in danger of bleeding to death. Alexandra hired a powerful man named Rasputin as the family's healer and advisor, convinced that his prayers would return Alexis to health. But many thought Rasputin was evil, so evil that they killed him.

During this time, the Bolshevik Revolution, led by Vladimir Lenin, was growing. People wanted better living and working conditions. They demanded that the tsar step down and end his rule. People fought in the streets. Both soldiers and citizens were killed. Finally in March of 1917, Tsar Nicholas gave up the throne. He was the very last tsar of Russia.

The Bolsheviks sent members of the Romanov family—including some of the people in these photographs—to Siberia. Nicholas, Alexandra, and their children were all executed. Three hundred years had passed since the first Romanov tsar took power, and now, the empire was over. Several years later, Russia, led by Vladimir Lenin, became known as the Soviet Union.

608. ALEXANDRA'S WEDDING CROWN (SECOND FLOOR GALLERY)

Anna Find the small crown. It belonged to Alexandra, so she'll tell you about it.

Alexandra This is the diamond crown that I wore at my wedding to Tsar Nicholas II in 1894. I loved this crown because it is so petite, it sat so lightly on my head. Those are *real* diamonds sewn onto bands of purple velvet. The cross on top is made of even larger diamonds. Move around and you can see them sparkle as they did when I walked down the aisle.

In 1914, at the beginning of World War I, Russian officials removed the crown from our palace and placed it in an armory for safekeeping. I never saw the crown again.

619. CONCLUSION

Anna This is the end of our Russian tour. I hope you liked all the beautiful things we showed you and maybe you learned some Russian history. Thanks so much for coming with me. Mrs. Post, would like to say goodbye too.

Marjorie Post When I opened Hillwood to the public I wanted to share my collection with people like you. I took such pleasure in learning the history of Russia as I collected the treasures you have seen today. As you leave Hillwood, I hope you have a better understanding of Russia and its people. Pick an object to hold in your mind—something that struck your imagination—maybe the grand portrait of Catherine the Great, maybe one of my marvelous Fabergé eggs, or maybe the inkstand you just saw. Remember it, and let it remind you of my Russian collection and my beloved Hillwood in the years to come. Then, I hope you'll have time to explore my gardens or take a look at some of the other rooms in the house. I'm so glad you could join us today at Hillwood. Do visit again soon. Goodbye now.