

Frequently Asked Visitor Questions

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Volunteers are often the first point of contact for our visitors and play a vital role in shaping their experience. Below is an overview of frequently asked questions you may encounter during your shift.

For additional support, the [volunteer website](#) provides a comprehensive collection of information and resources, including training documents, guidelines, and educational materials to help you feel confident and prepared.

Visitor Experience & Amenities

If you have any questions, need clarification, or encounter a situation involving a visitor that requires assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out or direct visitors to front desk in the visitor center.

- **Where can I watch the orientation film?**

The 10-minute orientation film is shown every 15 minutes in the visitor center theater from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The film is also available on Hillwood's website under "[Plan Your Visit](#)" – an ideal option for visitors with limited time.

- **Can I have a picnic at Hillwood?**

Yes, picnic maps are available in the center drawer of the tour desk. The map indicates the most appropriate picnic areas for visitors. Waterproof picnic blankets are available to borrow from the visitor center.

- **A visitor forgot their umbrella. Does Hillwood have any available?**

On rainy days, guests are welcome to borrow an umbrella from Hillwood. Umbrellas are stored outside of the mansion and conservatory entrances for guests to use during their visit. We ask visitors to return umbrellas to visitor services staff or one of the umbrella holders outside of the mansion or conservatory.

- **Is there a courtesy phone on-site I can use?**

Yes, a courtesy phone is located in the hallway to the restrooms in the visitor center. Information is posted near the phone to call a cab.

- **Are wheelchairs available for visitors?**

Yes, wheelchairs are available for guests to use free of charge and are sanitized between each use. Direct visitors who request a wheelchair to the visitor services staff at the front desk.

- We request volunteers to familiarize themselves with Hillwood's estate and mansion guidelines as well as the accessibility guidelines (available on Hillwood's website). **Helpful Tip:** If you need a refresher of the mansion and estate guidelines while stationed at the tour desk, the printed tour brochure features the guidelines in the back of the brochure.

- **Are strollers allowed in the mansion or exhibition?**

Strollers are not permitted in the mansion or exhibition spaces. Instruct visitors with strollers to park their strollers under the porte cochère in front of the mansion and just outside the exhibition spaces.

Reservations & Membership

- **Can I make a reservation on-site for a future visit?**

Yes, visitors are welcome to make a reservation for a future visit via online, by phone, or at the front desk with the visitor services staff. **Please note:** To minimize lines in the visitor center on high volume days, we

recommend guests to visit Hillwood’s website or call the information office to make a reservation for a future visit.

- **Can I purchase a membership while on-site at Hillwood?**

Yes, visitors can purchase a membership from staff at the front desk in the visitor center as well as apply their admission towards a membership. The museum shop is **not** able to apply admission to a membership. **Friendly reminder:** Visitors can purchase a membership via [Hillwood’s website](#).

Visitor Feedback

- **I’m looking for a specific staff member. How can I get in touch with them?**

Business cards for most Hillwood staff members are available at the front desk in the visitor center. Staff contact information is also available on the “Staff Contact” page on Hillwood’s website.

- **A visitor would like to leave a suggestion, compliment, or complaint. What is the best way to handle visitor feedback?**

Direct those visitors to the visitor services staff members at the front desk of the visitor center. Staff will document their feedback and ensure it reaches the relevant department.

- **A visitor would like to share their first-hand connection to Marjorie Post. Who should they contact?**

Direct those visitors to the visitor services staff members at the visitor center front desk. They will provide the visitor with the business card for our archives and special collections department, which runs the oral history program. The visitor can also leave their contact information with the visitor services staff as well.

[For information on who makes a good candidate for Hillwood’s oral history program, please click here to read more.](#)

Marjorie Merriweather Post & Family

For more guidance on Marjorie Post’s biography, please refer to [Thoughts on Interpretative Approaches to Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Biography](#).

- **How many times was Marjorie Post married?**

Marjorie Post was married four times:

- Edward Bennet Close (m. 1905-1919)
- E.F. Hutton (m. 1920-1935)
- Joseph Davies (m. 1935-1955)
- Herbert May (m. 1958-1964)

- **How many children did Marjorie Post have?**

Three daughters: Adelaide (b. 1908), Eleanor (b. 1909), and Nedenia (later known as Dina Merrill) (b. 1923).

- **Did any of the children live with Marjorie Post at Hillwood?**

No, Marjorie Post moved into Hillwood in 1957 at the age of 70. Her daughters had grown families. They and the grandchildren visited here.

- **Are Marjorie Post’s children still alive?**

No, Adelaide died in 1998, Eleanor died in 2006, and Nedenia (Dina Merrill) died in 2017.

- **Did any weddings take place at Hillwood?**

In 1966, Dina Merrill married Cliff Robertson in the French drawing room.

- **Where is Marjorie Post buried?**

Marjorie Post died on September 12, 1973 at the age of 86. She is buried in the rose garden at the base of the obelisk in the center of the garden. Hillwood's horticulture staff places a floral arrangement on the obelisk to honor her birthday date (March 15, 1887) and death date.

Mansion History & Property Information

- **When was Hillwood originally built?**

The original house was called Arbremont by the original owners and built in 1926 for Col. Henry Parsons Erwin. The house was designed by John Deibet.

- **When did Marjorie Post purchase Hillwood?**

Marjorie Post purchased Hillwood in 1955 and spent two years renovating the mansion and gardens. She moved in once the renovations were completed in 1957.

- **How large is the property?**

Hillwood sits on 25 acres near Rock Creek Park. Visitors can explore 13 acres that are open to the public.

- **How many square feet is the house?**

25,000 square feet.

- **How many people worked at Hillwood when Marjorie Post was in residence?**

About 30-35 staff were employed at Hillwood during Post's time. Six security personnel on rotating shifts looked after Post and her property. The inside staff at Hillwood numbered 16-18 including the butler, footmen, and maids who received housing and meals as part of their compensation. Some staff chose to live off the estate. Outside staff numbered about 12-15 gardeners.

- **How many bedrooms and bathrooms are there at Hillwood?**

Based on the 1958 architectural drawings, 13 bedrooms and 15 bathrooms were identified. Most of these spaces were designated for staff, and many have since been converted into office and storage spaces for museum staff today.

Marjorie Post spent about 8-10 weeks at Hillwood during the spring and fall. If Marjorie Post had overnight guests while she was in residence at Hillwood, they would stay at the Shoreham Hotel. She traditionally entertained overnight guests at her other estates, such as Camp Topridge in upstate New York and Mar-A-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida.

- **When and why were locks installed on the kitchen and pantry cabinets?**

Hillwood's Archives and Special Collections staff have not found any records detailing when the locks were installed in the mansion's kitchen and pantry, so the exact date remains unknown. However, our long-term collections staff confirmed that the locks were added when Hillwood became a museum to help safeguard the objects now on display.

- **Why is there no pool or tennis court at Hillwood?**

A pool and tennis court were included at Arbremont. Marjorie Post removed the tennis court for the cutting garden and the pool for the dacha.



- **What is the current status of Marjorie Post's other estates?**
 - Hillwood, Long Island is now part of the Long Island University campus.
 - The Tregaron Conservancy maintains walking paths on the former Tregaron estate. The Washington International School operates its middle and upper schools on 6 acres of the former estate, including the mansion and dacha.
 - Mar-A-Lago is an exclusive club run by Donald Trump.
 - Camp Topridge is privately owned.





Hillwood Today

- **When did Hillwood open as a museum?**
Hillwood opened as a public institution in 1977.
- **Are any of the Post family members involved with Hillwood?**
Yes, Ellen Charles, Post's granddaughter, is actively involved with Hillwood as President Emerita. Ellen served as President of the Board for 25 years.
- **How is Hillwood supported?**
Hillwood is a non-profit museum (classified by the IRS as a 501(c) (3) public charity). Much support comes from our exciting membership program. Encourage interested visitors to join by stopping by the visitor center front desk or visit [Hillwood's website](#).

Eye-catching Objects that Grab Visitors' Attention

The objects listed below are among the pieces that most commonly capture visitors' attention during a visit.

Image	Object Information	Location
	<p>Horn of Plenty Karl Rössler (Austrian silversmith) Vienna, Austria, 1890-1908 Silver, enamel, lapis lazuli, pearls <i>Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.285.1-2)</i></p>	<p>French Drawing Room</p>
	<p>Good Trouble vase Roberto Lugo (American, b. 1981) Philadelphia, PA, 2020 <i>Glazed ceramic, enamel paint</i> <i>Museum purchase, 2021 (2021.4.1-2)</i></p>	<p>French Drawing Room</p>

	<p>Frame with Photograph of King Haakon of Norway New York, NY, mid-20th century Silver, enamel <i>Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (12.273)</i></p>	<p>First Floor Library</p>
	<p>Frame with Photograph of Crown Prince Harald of Norway Unknown date Wood, leather, photograph <i>Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (34.94)</i></p>	<p>First Floor Library</p>
	<p>Ice Pail with Cover and Liner (seau à glace), one of two Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory Sèvres, France, 18th-19th c. Soft paste porcelain <i>Bequest of Marjorie Merriweather Post, 1973 (24.3.1-3)</i></p>	<p>French Porcelain Room</p>
	<p>Bloodstone hardstone display Bloodstone, Marjorie Post's birthstone (March 15), is dark green variety of chalcedony flecked with red jasper. The display includes about 45 objects, such as boxes, bodkin holders, seals, perfume flasks, a hat pin, animal figures, bodkin holder, and several egg-shaped étuis (small decorative container used to hold bodkins (hairpins), toothpicks, or other small tools.</p>	<p>Marjorie Post's Bedroom Suite</p>

	<p>Malachite Table Demidov Lapidary Factory Russia, 1951 Wood, malachite, gilt bronze, metal Museum Purchase in memory of Walter Beach and Eleanor Barzin, 2006 (32.33)</p>	<p>Pavilion</p>
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Questions?

Our doors are always open, and we want to hear about your volunteer experiences. Please direct your questions or feedback to volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org or 202.686.8528.