



Part of the Muttontown Preserve, Chelsea is a wonderfully imaginative architectural vision built during the latter years of the Gold Coast era.

THE GIFT OF CHELSEA

When Mr. Benjamin Moore and Mrs. Alexandra Emery Moore purchased property on Long Island in 1923, they envisioned a family home that would inspire and entertain all who passed through its doors for years to come. More than 80 years later, that dream is still a reality, kept alive by the preservation efforts of those who strive to maintain the estate and its rich heritage.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Chelsea is a 40-room white-washed concrete mansion located on the Muttontown Preserve. Incorporating Chinese, French and English traditions in a harmonious architectural blend, it reflects the luxurious aspirations and design sensibilities that its owners sought to achieve. Guided by the expertise of architect William Delano, of the Delano & Aldrich firm, the house was completed in 1924. It was in essence a Norman-French mansion, but Oriental touches were interspersed throughout the estate, including a courtyard, moat, moon gate, bridges and lotus-filled ponds. Just as the house was a labor of love, so was the landscape design, complete with English gardens.

Even though the Moores and their three children had other homes in New York City and Florida, they spent much of every year at Chelsea. So much did Mrs. Moore care for the estate that, beginning in 1964, she donated nearly 100 acres to the county over a 10-year period, ensuring that it would be spared from developers. Such a generous gift, in addition to previous estate acquisitions, helped create the 550 acres that now belong to the Muttontown Preserve.

Today, visitors to Chelsea find themselves in the presence of a charmingly elegant window to the past. Hidden away, in thick woodlands and past winding roads, it is the fashion story location for this issue of *Elements*. Indoors, Mrs. Moore's discerning influence can be found in every room, many of which pay homage to the couple's traveling days. While the home's carved teak doors come from a Chinese summer palace, the antique pine paneling in the dining room is from the first Duke of Wellington's country house. A chateau in the Loire Valley lends its mark with the Louis XV-period library paneling, a 17th century English pub survives in the flower room's oak walls, and an 85-foot mural by José Maria Sert, muralist for King Alfonso XIII of Spain, is prominently featured in the reception room. Outside, Belgian blocks from the original pavement of West 23rd Street in Manhattan's Chelsea District, after which the house was named, line the moat and the 18th century French fountain.

During the holiday season, when perhaps it is most stunning, a beautifully decorated Chelsea teems with excitement and festivities. This year, the kick-off celebration takes place Thursday, December 6, at 6:30 PM, with the annual Holiday Celebration Cocktail Gala. Throughout the month, tours will be given on weekends and by reservation during the week. Santa Claus will also pay a visit to children for a special reading of "A Visit from St. Nicholas," more commonly known as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and written by Clement Clark Moore, the great, great grandfather of Chelsea's own Mr. Moore.

Truly a Long Island treasure embraced by Nassau County's largest nature preserve, Chelsea continues to draw much admiration from all those who cherish history, architecture and beauty. For those who find it, nestled in the forest, it is a remarkable experience that will have them yearning to visit again and again for years to come.

Chelsea will be open for tours from 12 – 4 PM on December 8, 9, 15, 16, 29 and 30. For special group tours during the week, please call 516.571.7901 or 516.571.8551 for reservations and more information. Tickets for the Holiday Celebration Cocktail Gala are \$50 per person with an RSVP by December 3. Make checks payable to Friends of Nassau Recreation and mail to Chelsea Mansion, 34 Muttontown Lane, East Norwich, NY 11732.

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