

PLATEAU

February / March 2020

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

Wedding Venues

With Breathtaking Views, Mountains are the Perfect Backdrop for Your Big Day

Space Redux

Renovations to Inspire Your Next Project

Date Night

12 Picks for Valentine's Day Dining

INAUGURAL ISSUE

Fashion

At Home
in Highlands

Mayor
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from the editor



New Beginnings

My pen name is Kat Ford, but my full name is Katherine Ford Richardson. I have a secret (though maybe not so secret now) theory that names act as outlines for lessons, cosmic truths waiting for us to discover. My name loosely means Pure River Crossing, Powerful and Brave. Ford is my great grandmother's maiden name—a ford is the shallow and easily crossable portion of the river. This name came to me from my father's side of the family, who have lived in southern Louisiana, where I was born, for generations. My cousin says that the bayou runs so thick in our family that we can feel it in our veins. I never really knew if I felt the bayou in my veins or not, as I grew up in the desert of New Mexico. I would not matriculate in water's classroom for many years.

When I moved to Western North Carolina I was surrounded by rivers, waterfalls and lakes. It was here that I learned how strong and ferocious the river can be. It was here that I learned the value of a ford. Finally, in this place, I gleaned insights while watching the river. There is a season to roar and there is a season to be still. As profound as those lessons were, the rivers of our plateau still demanded my apprenticeship. This study was one of receiving, abundance, and time. When the rain comes and the snow melts, the river exhibits its most turbulent characteristics. It is in this moment of power that the river is both frightening and dangerous. But it is also during this time, when the river willingly receives the deluge, that it gives its bounty to the streams and creeks. This type

of time, the critical moment when the river both takes and gives, is what the Greeks called *kairos*, an opportune moment to act. For everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose.

While reading articles for this inaugural issue of *Plateau Magazine*, I thought of how our communities are abundant like the river. Not just in the plenitude of life and vegetation, but in the wealth of talent, kindness, community and love. Better yet, we utilize the power of *kairos*, that all-powerful tool of the opportune moment, to extend our resources. This out-pouring shows itself in stories about historical societies who choose to save our past, a mayor who utilizes years of leadership to help steer our economic future, and countless businesses who use their skills and talents to share our paradise with others.

In writing this letter for our premiere issue, I pulled up Merriam-Webster and took a deeper look into the word plateau. There, on line three, was that cosmic wink I was looking for, "a level of attainment or achievement." What better name for a publication aimed at highlighting communities of abundance in both nature and human skill and spirit? We hope you enjoy!

Kat Ford
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WELL STYLED
showhouse

Show and Tell

A behind-the-scenes look at the 2020 Cashiers Historical Society Designer Showhouse

By KAT FORD

The Zachary-Tolbert House after renovations funded by the first two Designer Showhouses.

FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS, residents of the southeast have flocked to the plateau for a treasured experience. They wait with anticipation to wander through a labyrinth of visual homage, a temporary wonderland created in devotion to interior design. I'm talking of course, about the Cashiers Historical Society's Designer Showhouse.

The birth of this event has roots steeped in poetic justice, something new was used to save something old. In 1998, a group of residents interested in preserving the history of the Cashiers Valley came together to create a fundraiser for the restoration of the Zachary-Tolbert House, donated to the historical society that same year by Tom and Wendy Dowden. The inaugural Showhouse was hosted at the Hooper House (built circa 1936 and located in Cashiers), which was dressed by 13 designers from the southeast. Restoring the Zachary-Tolbert

House took several years and consisted of two phases, which were funded by proceeds from the first and second Showhouses. Once restorations were complete, the Zachary-Tolbert House opened a window into the past for museumgoers and lovers of history to learn about the early settlers of this enchanting spot in the Appalachian Mountains. The event's success solidified it as the historical society's main fundraiser, proceeds of which go directly toward the organization's operating budget and help fund the educational outreach programs, historical preservation projects, and upkeep of the awe-inspiring Cashiers Historical Society grounds.

Every year since 1998, design fans look forward to the reveal of which home will

be the next Showhouse. This requires much planning behind the scenes—it truly does take a village to create a dream home. Over the next few issues, Plateau Magazine will follow the events leading up to the 2020 Designer Showhouse, taking our readers through the step-by-step process and revealing a little bit of the magic along the way.

The Zachary-Tolbert House before renovations by Cashiers Historical Society.

Almost as quickly as one Designer Showhouse ends, talks of the next begin. First, the Cashiers Historical Society is approached by a group or homeowner interested in donating their property for use as the following year's Showhouse. Factors that play into the decision go far beyond great bones and a breathtaking location—space for vendors, enough rooms to fit a fair number of designers and ease of access for guests all play into the decision regarding the feasibility of the residence for use as a large fundraiser. Upon inspection, contracts and a variety of other formalities, the Showhouse is chosen and the fun begins.

During the 2019 Showhouse, Silver Run Reserve reached out to the historical society and asked if CHS would be interested in using one of their cottages as the 2020 Designer Showhouse. A private community just 5 minutes from the Cashiers crossroads, Silver Run Reserve offers five distinct residential offerings spread across nearly 300 acres and is flanked by conservation land and the Nantahala National Forest. After careful consideration, Cashiers Historical Society decided that the majestic escape provided by Silver Run Reserve's stunning mountain views and peaceful valley would create a naturally romantic backdrop for this year's Showhouse.

To those of us that call the plateau our home, or home away from home, it is no secret that we live in a type of paradise. This secret was not lost on Ralph and Virginia Neely of Oklahoma, who made a list of 32 requirements to satisfy their desire for the perfect summer retreat. The



Silver Run Reserve is located on nearly 300 acres near Cashiers, NC.

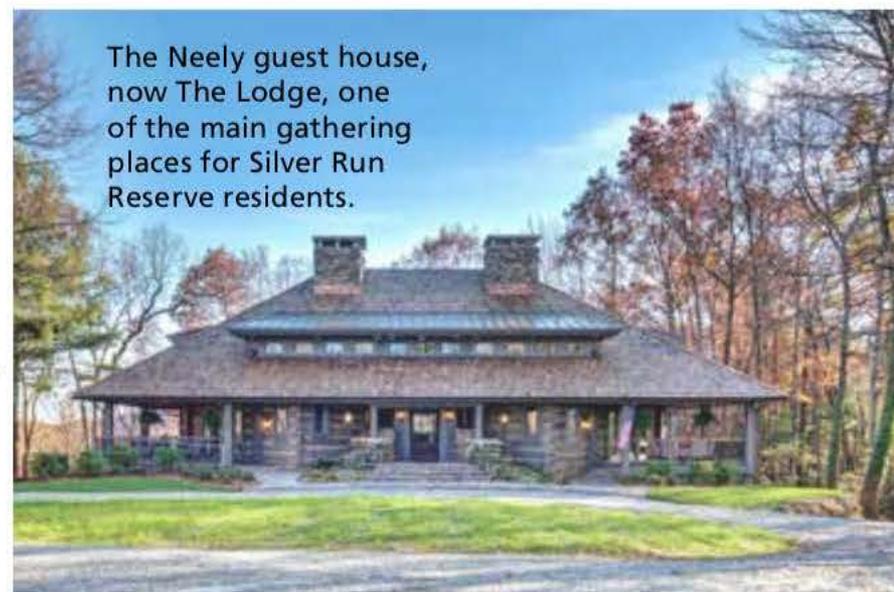
Neely's were able to check off 30 of those boxes when they pieced together an almost 300-acre estate with the purchase of wooded parcels and 3 farms near Cashiers, they named it Silver Run. As time passed, they transformed the property with extraordinary touches, like a large log cabin guest house designed by well-known architect Jim Fox and even a water plant where they bottled water for sale. Today, Silver Run Reserve's owners are taking great care to restore those special elements that the Neely's built while creating their dream. The Neely guest house is now The Lodge, one of the main gathering places for community residents. The plant will be preserved and remodeled into a fitness and activity center named The Water Plant as a nod to the building's past. The Chimney

Garden will be an outdoor destination and feature a still-standing chimney from one of the original 3 farmhouses. Silver Run Reserve has opted to leave the chimney and surround it with a peaceful garden hideout in memory of the land's original use.

Just as the first Designer Showhouse of 1998 was intended to use something new to protect the spirit of something old, Silver Run

Reserve now serves as a steward over a new era of the rolling countryside that held the Neely's hearts for decades. "For almost 40 years, Silver Run was a private family estate available only to a select few, and now as Silver Run Reserve, we look forward to building on the tradition of creating family memories for generations to come, in a peaceful and playful setting," says Jay Hurt, principal owner and developer. When given the opportunity to roam the trails of Silver Run Reserve, memories are most certainly guaranteed. One would be hard-pressed to drive the winding road, looking from one mystic landscape to the next, without a soundtrack to the opening scene of a movie with long, slow, panoramic views playing in your head.

As the countdown to the 2020 Showhouse begins, and the historical society meets with partners to determine the schedule of events, guests can rest assured that Silver Run Reserve's offerings will provide an experience to remember. "Silver Run Reserve is honored to host this year's Showhouse and further our support of the incredible work of the Cashiers Historical Society. We look forward to welcoming attendees to Silver Run and sharing with them not only a beautiful house in a spectacular setting, but also a variety of outdoor and recreational activities that only a piece of property as special and unique as Silver Run can offer," says Hurt. ■



The Neely guest house, now The Lodge, one of the main gathering places for Silver Run Reserve residents.

The Lodge photo Bernard Coulson; Silver Run Reserve photo Alan Rhow