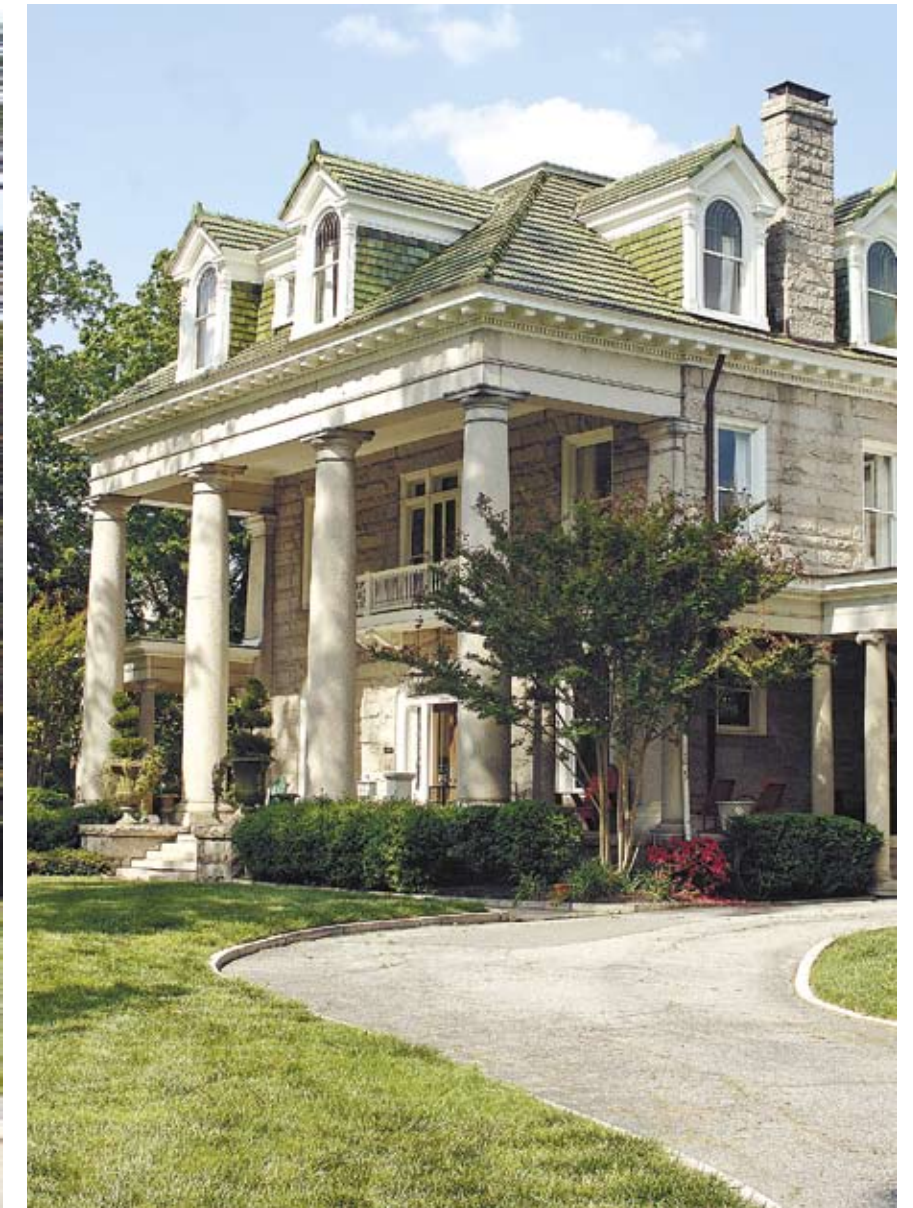


Home & Garden Tour

Ginter Park will host its annual Home and Garden Tour on May 14. Eleven private homes and gardens will be open to the public. This year's theme — Celebrating 100 Years of Architecture and Gardens — acknowledges the centennial of the neighborhood's incorporation as a town in 1912 (Richmond annexed Ginter Park in 1914). For details, visit ginterpark.org.



Ginter Park.

Ginter Park: 'The queen of suburbs'

Doug Childers/Homes Correspondent

Ginter Park, the idyllic North Richmond neighborhood, owes its groundbreaking design to a trip that its founder and namesake made to Melbourne, Australia, in the late 1800s.

Lewis Ginter, a Richmond businessman, was struck by how Melbourne's professionals worked in the city but lived in the more soothing neighborhoods beyond the city limits, said Rebecca Wright Dodson, president of the Ginter Park Residents Association.

Upon his return, Ginter set out to create a similarly soothing, park-like setting for Richmond's businessmen and their families on a tract of land he bought in what was then northern Henrico County.

It was a revolutionary undertaking. With Ginter Park, as it became known, central Virginia got its first master-planned, suburban community.

"Ginter had trees and shrubs planted along the edges of the property lots before the first houses were built," Dodson said. "He had a very strong vision for how his park should look."

Ginter Park. Continued from page 19

Ginter also knew how it should be promoted. He lured Union Theological Seminary to the community with a tract of donated land to give prospective buyers “people they’d want to live next door to,” said Anne Thorn, a longtime Ginter Park resident who is now co-authoring a book about the neighborhood.

“And he gave them a genuine Confederate hero by having A.P. Hill disinterred from Hollywood Cemetery so he could be buried in the middle of the intersection of Hermitage and Laburnum,” she added. “Marketing was Ginter’s genius.”

Ginter died in 1897, when only a handful of houses had been built, but his niece, Grace Arents, took over the project and helped guide his vision to completion.

Construction began in earnest in 1906, and the neighborhood incorporated itself as a town in Henrico County in 1912. (Richmond annexed Ginter Park in 1914.) By 1930, construction in the neighborhood ended. “The Great Depression cut off money, but the neighborhood was pretty much built out by then anyway,” Thorn said.

Today, the community has about 1,200 houses, most of them sitting on lots that are exceptionally large for what is now an urban neighborhood. And its range of architectural styles makes it a standout for the region. “Colonial Revival is the most prominent style,” Thorn said.

The neighborhood also showcases Tudor Revival and Spanish Revival as well as offering classic American foursquares,

and it even has an example of Egyptian Revival. “We don’t have many Queen Anne houses because that style was going out,” Thorn said.

Among the larger houses are cottages originally intended to house the craftsmen who helped build the neighborhood. “They’re highly sought after today,” Dodson said.

Houses in Ginter Park range from 1,700 to more than 6,000 square feet, with an average house being in the 2,200- to 2,400-square-foot range, said Dennis Garza, a real estate agent with Long & Foster who has lived in Ginter Park for 22 years. Prices range from \$250,000 to more than \$1 million.

Amenities include a public library and a recreation center with a pool, as well as tree-lined sidewalks that encourage jogging and dog-walking as well as casual strolls through the neighborhood.

Ginter envisioned his suburban park inhabited by prominent businessmen like himself. Today, the mix of professionals is a little broader.

“Ginter Park is home to mid- to high-income families, with a mix of professionals, politicians, entrepreneurs and artists,” Garza said. (Four Virginia governors, including L. Douglas Wilder and Tim Kaine, have owned homes there.)

As Garza said, citing the neighborhood’s slogan (which dates to 1908), “Ginter Park is the queen of suburbs.”

Details.

Ginter Park.



1.

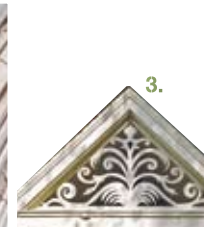
Among the neighborhood’s charms are cottages that originally housed the craftsmen who helped build the neighborhood a century ago.

Pieces Parts

1. Jewel-toned stained glass window graces a Seminary Avenue house. 2. The lofty spire of Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. 3. Whimsical Victorian curlicues accent a neighborhood cottage. 4. Double dormer windows enhance a roofline. 5. Ornamental date plaque and dogwood detailing highlight Westminster Hall at Union Presbyterian Seminary.



5.



3.



2.



4.



Gazing down from the parapet of an Italianate-style house, a bust of Beethoven honors the profession of the house’s former owner.