

This \$9.6 Million Florida Estate Has Its Own Baseball Field



Abby Montanez

On a quiet stretch of Old St. Augustine Road outside Tallahassee, a 100-acre Florida estate has spent decades avoiding the usual fate of large parcels near a growing city. Retired Navy captain Albert Gallatin Neal bought the land in 1960, dug its ponds and planted more than 4,000 trees. After his death, developers repeatedly approached his widow, Margaret, but she turned them down. She wanted the property to stay in family hands or with people who wanted to keep the acreage intact. In 2003, she found the right buyers in David and René Hanselman, who raised their four children here.

The grounds begin to distinguish the property before you even reach the custom residence. Spring-fed ponds stocked with bass, a cypress duck pond, wooded acreage for deer and wild bobwhite quail, orchards, gardens, and a swimming pool spread across the grounds. There's also a full-size baseball field, complete with lights and a batting cage.

That personal connection extends to the 6,000-square-foot house. René designed the molding, doors, and cabinetry with architect Ken Pieper, working from more than 20 pages of custom millwork plans. The front door, created with stained-glass artist Karen Pritzel, features a

large tree motif. A nine-foot magnolia chandelier hangs in the foyer, while original artwork by Paul Tamanian was commissioned specifically for the house.

The property also has a connection to Dick Howser, the former Yankees manager and 1985 World Series-winning manager of the Kansas City Royals. Through a family connection, Howser spent Christmas Eves, holidays, and afternoons at the estate, according to listing agent Lori Bembry Weldon.

The 6,000-square-foot house is just as personal. René designed the molding, doors, and cabinetry with architect Ken Pieper, working from more than 20 pages of custom millwork plans. The front door, created with stained-glass artist Karen Pritzel, features a large tree motif. A nine-foot magnolia chandelier hangs in the foyer, while original artwork by Paul Tamanian was commissioned specifically for the house.

A two-story wing includes an artist's studio with a private office above it, while the main living room rises beneath 25-foot cypress beams and looks out over the grounds. Outside, a wood-fired kitchen and the cook shack, where the family has hosted long lunches and gatherings over the years, add to the property's long tradition of entertaining.

The setting has its own story, too. Old St. Augustine Road dates to the 1680s, when it formed part of the Spanish El Camino Real, and the property sits along the Cody Scarp, an ancient shoreline that helps explain its rolling terrain and natural springs. After 23 years, the Hanselmans are ready to move on. "Our kids are grown," David says. "And so it's just Mama and me and 6,000 square feet and a hundred acres. And it's just time."

Old St. Augustine Hills is asking \$9.6 million and is listed with JON KOHLER & ASSOCIATES.



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