

Local Fine Artist Couple purchases the Masonic Lodge Building

Meet Gail Foster and Thomas Swanston

By: Laurie Searle

In 2005, Gail Foster and Thomas Swanston were living the life most of us only dream about – they lived AND worked in Chatt Hills.

The talented and acclaimed fine artists had previously lived and worked just up the road on a 650-acre farm off Cascade Palmetto Hwy for 25 years, but when that area became overrun by development, they sought a new home.

“We discovered Serenbe when it was only a dirt road in the middle of the woods,” Tom said, “and we soon developed a live-work building there.” All was well until the recession forced the couple to close their Serenbe gallery and consider other options.

They eventually took up residence in the Rico Lake community of Chatt Hills and moved their studios to the King Plow Arts Center in west midtown Atlanta. While King Plow was an exciting opportunity, Gail and Tom often dreamed about finding a work space closer to home to reduce their daily two-hour commute.

A few months ago, they found an opportunity to fulfill that dream when the masonic lodge building in the Rico Community went up for sale.

The building was perfect for the couple, offering enough space for their studios and offices, and a three-mile commute to their home.

By the end of May, the couple made the purchase and will soon, once again, be living the Chatt Hills dream.

About the Artists

Gail is a painter, photographer, and mixed media visual artist who focuses her attention on the issues of the feminine and women in today’s culture: violence, neglect, sexism and gender bias – always from an optimistic perspective of overcoming and succeeding.

Tom’s focus is on raising awareness of cranes and their beauty – their long-term conservation and strategy for actions for their major threats, such as habitat loss. As a company and couple, they give back: they donate each year roughly \$50,000 in artwork to nonprofit auctions that are close to their missions; Chattahoochee River Keepers, Captain Planet, Audubon Society and a host of visual cultural institutions.



Gail Foster and Thomas Swanston, two nationally acclaimed fine artists, recently purchased the masonic lodge building in the Rico Community for their StudioSwan.



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