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COUNTY LINES

Your guide to unique places, interesting events, fine dining, great shopping and the special lifestyle of Southeastern Pennsylvania and Northern Delaware

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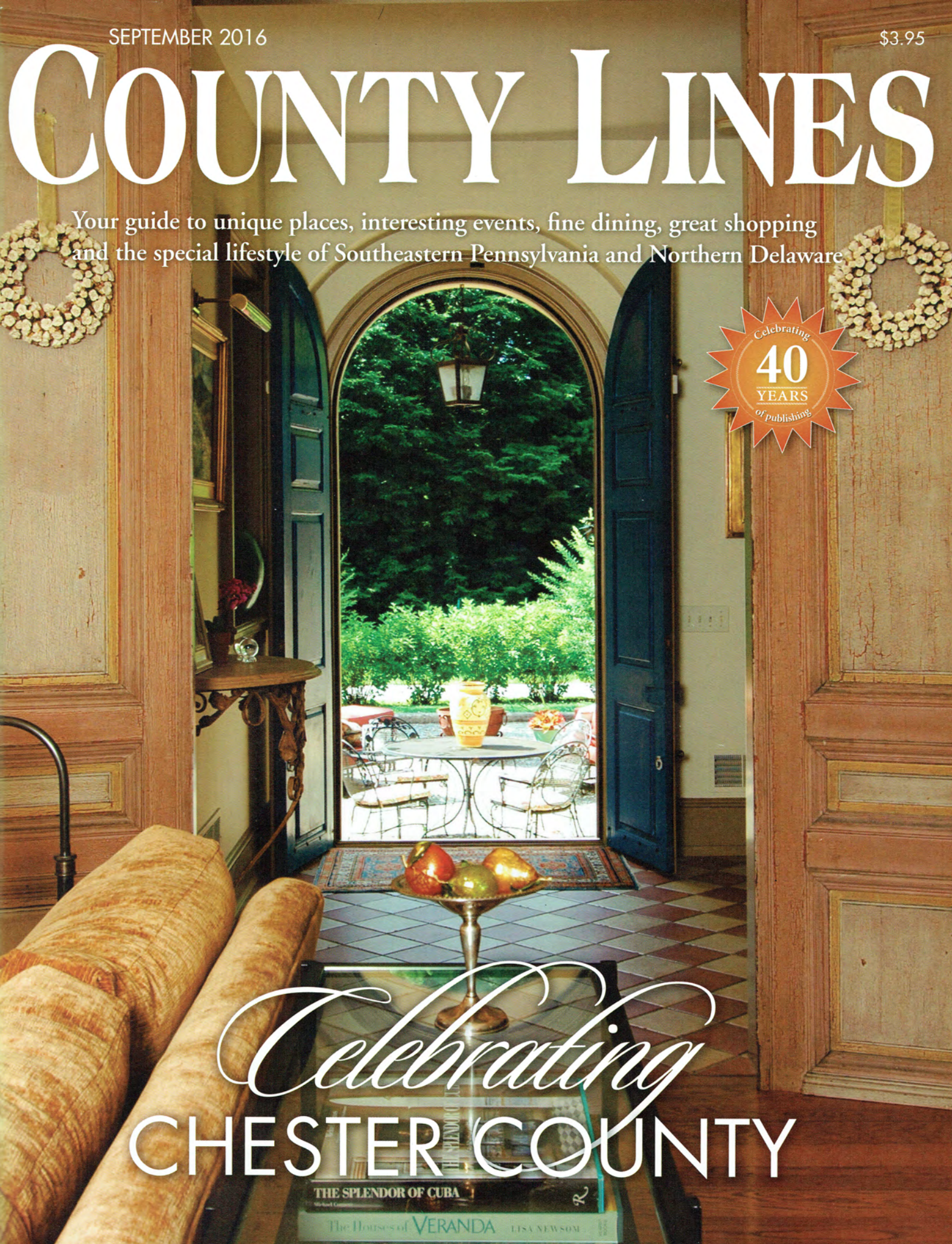
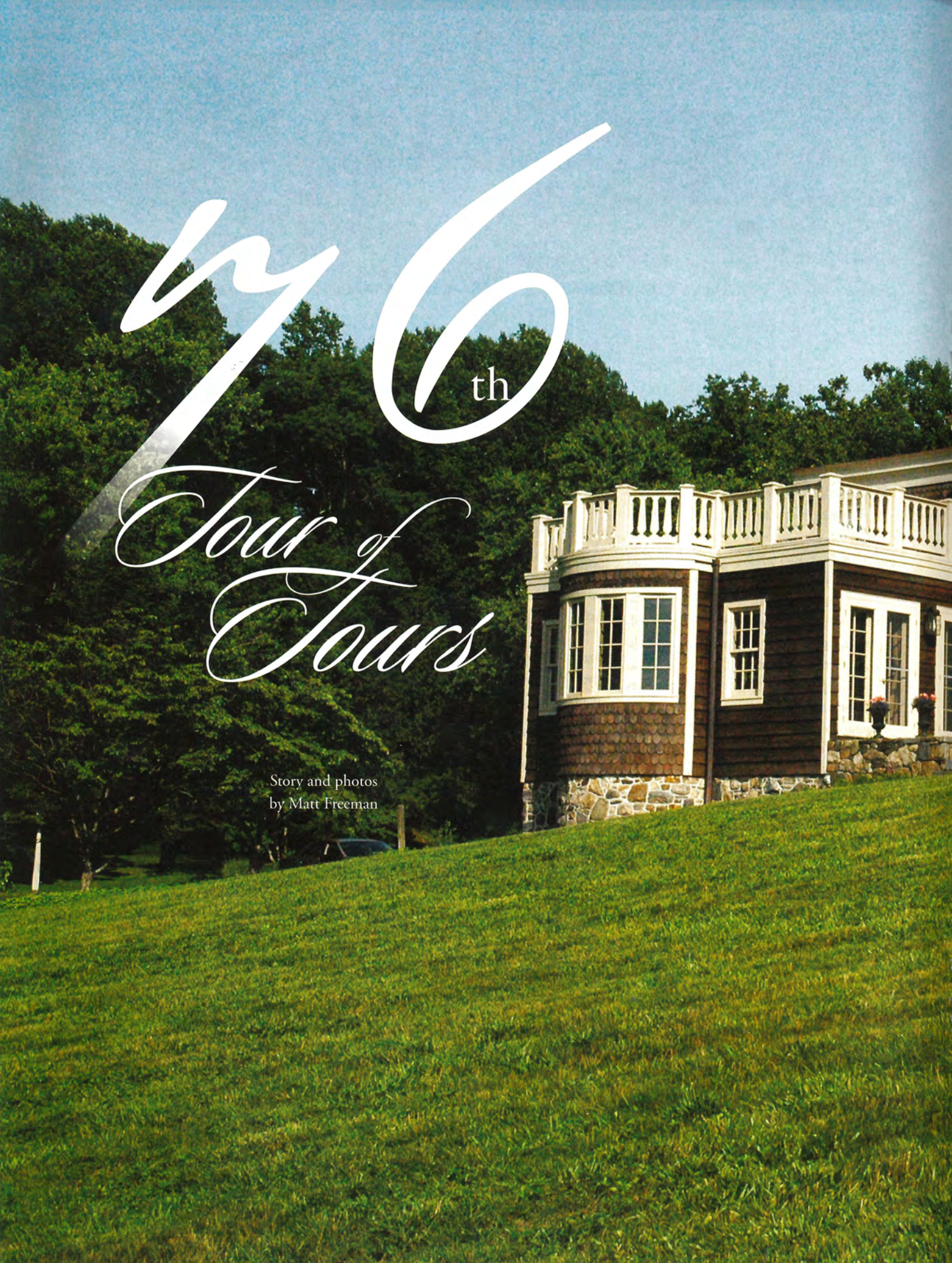


Celebrating CHESTER COUNTY



46th Tour of Tours

Story and photos
by Matt Freeman

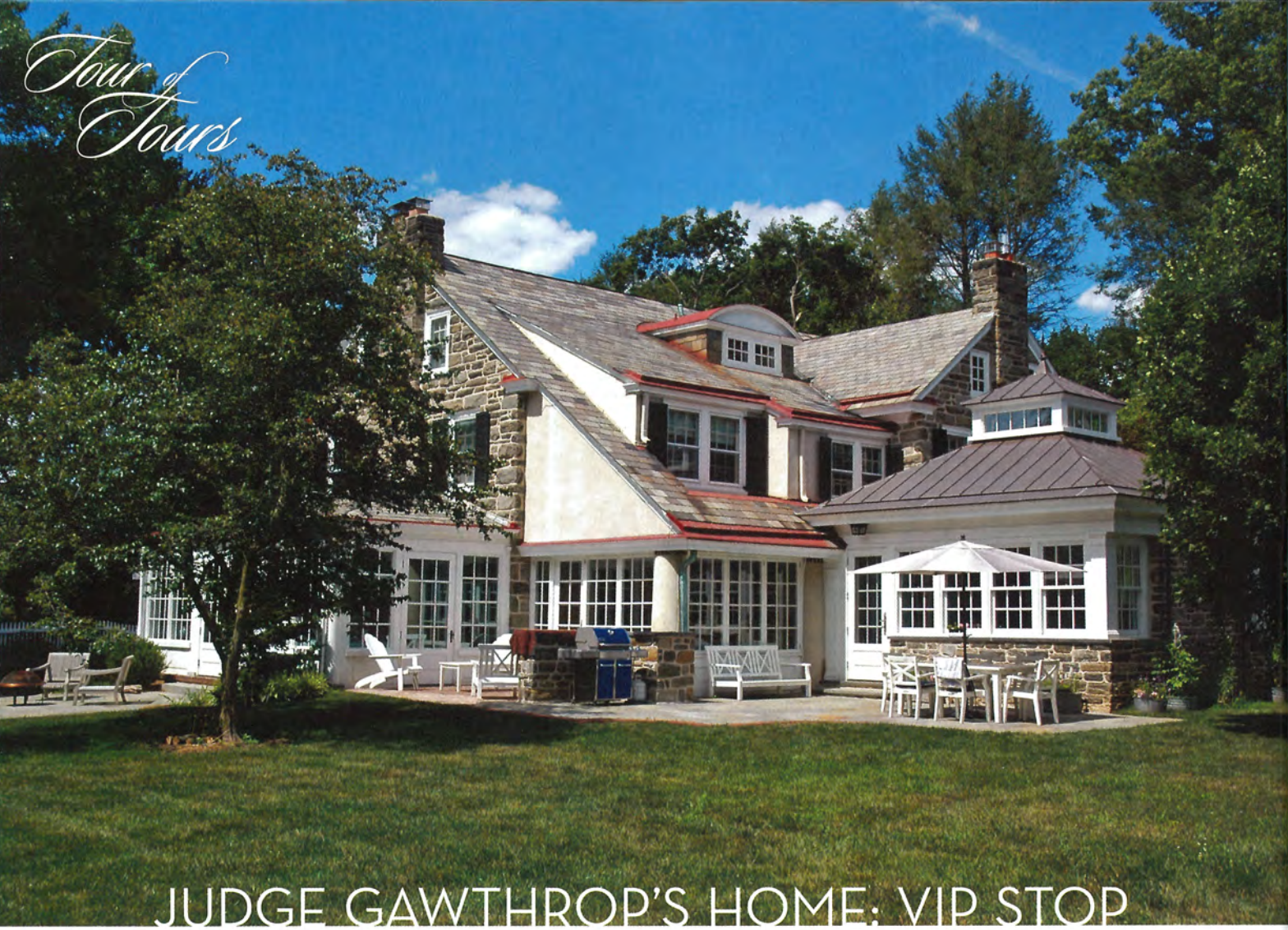
Chester County Day, the longest-running house tour in the country, takes place for the 76th time. And as always, it offers visitors what may be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to visit unique and historic homes and buildings, lovingly preserved and added to over the decades and centuries.

Following tradition, the event is held on the first Saturday in October—this year October 1st. Thousands of visitors from different states and countries will get a chance to appreciate the historic appeal, interest and charm of this region's architecture and its surroundings.

Organized from the beginning by the Women's Auxiliary to the Chester County Hospital, Chester County Day directly benefits the hospital. Tour tickets and VIP passes, available on the hospital website and local shops, help support the hospital's cardiac program. More details are in the Events section of this issue.

The 2016 celebration of Chester County Day focuses on the southwest quadrant of Chester County—sites in the West Chester, Kennett Square, Marshallton and nearby areas. This preview looks at five properties on the tour—four preserved and improved over the years by a series of caring owners, one a newly created interpretation of Tuscan architecture that lends a Mediterranean note to an area known more for its roots in the English Isles.

From views of formal gardens to contemporary art, the preview is just a taste of the ongoing traditions and surprising variety Chester County Day reveals about the region it's named for. Enjoy this armchair preview!



JUDGE GAWTHROP'S HOME: VIP STOP

John and Polly Robbins were relocating to the area from Connecticut three years ago when they heard about the availability of a classic center-hall Colonial home built in 1917 on Sconnelltown Road, just outside West Chester. Polly says her husband was in the area, took a look, and that was that. Entirely by chance, they'd learned of the house close to the instant it was listed and were able to act on it quickly.

Since then, the Robbinses have heard from more than one annoyed neighbor who had been waiting patiently for the home to come on the market. It's known in the neighborhood, in part because it was owned for a time by well-known judge and singer Robert Gawthrop III.

And VIP ticket holders are invited to tour this special property on The Day. Soon it will be open for other events—dinners and small weddings.

The Home: The home has a certain old-world dignity about it, but inside it also has an expansive, open feel. Some renovation work was done by Period Architecture, enclosing open areas and adding a mudroom and spectacular kitchen.

The ground it occupies is level, open and surrounded by trees that screen it from the road.

There are musicians and artists among the Robbins family members, and the furnishings reflect that influence.

And as in many traditional homes, the more modern elements complement and add interest—it's the best of both worlds.

VIP Tickets: VIP ticket holders also enjoy a special Preview Party with the Tour's homeowners at Vickers Restaurant, a chance to tour for the day in a Mini from Otto's Mini of Exton (while they last!), and a gourmet boxed lunch prepared by Montesano Brothers Italian Market and Catering.

VIP Tickets cost $100 and 100% of your contribution benefits The Chester County Hospital. For information, call 610.431.5329.