

Appalachia in Atlanta



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Palladian plantations, Georgian townhouses and ‘Stockbroker Tudors’—the city of Margaret Mitchell and *Gone with the Wind* looks to the past for its models of residential architecture. In this tradition-bound city, imagine my surprise to find a mid-century modern gem with a pedigree. Architect-designed and custom-built in the ‘50s, the home is more California than Deep South, less *Mad Men* and more *A Single Man*. Not only that, it also successfully brings a bit of the Appalachian woods to the center of Atlanta. This one-acre retreat is in LaVista Park, an Atlanta neighborhood that is seeing a lot of remodeling of its conventional ranch homes.

Jerome Drown, a freelance photographer whose clients included the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* newspaper and *Southern Homes* magazine, commissioned the house. Completed in 1956, it consists of a terrace-level granite base supporting a high-ceilinged wooden box on the main level. Add in a cantilevered screened porch, and it’s no wonder one architect wag called it a “Frank-Lloyd-Wright-wannabe.”

A nature lover, Mr. Drown allowed only plants native to Appalachia on his property, and even preserved a huge tree by building the large screened porch around it. The back yards of the neighboring houses abut on a wild woodland, which acts as a large nature preserve and attracts many birds, ranging from a resident pair of barred owls to pileated woodpeckers and red-tailed hawks.

Above: Seen from the creek, the downstairs houses a darkroom, wine cellar, office, guest suite and mechanicals. All of the exterior doors are orange and the vertical blinds echo the balustrades of the screened porch; note the tree that bisected the porch (page75) is now gone.