

Artistry

by

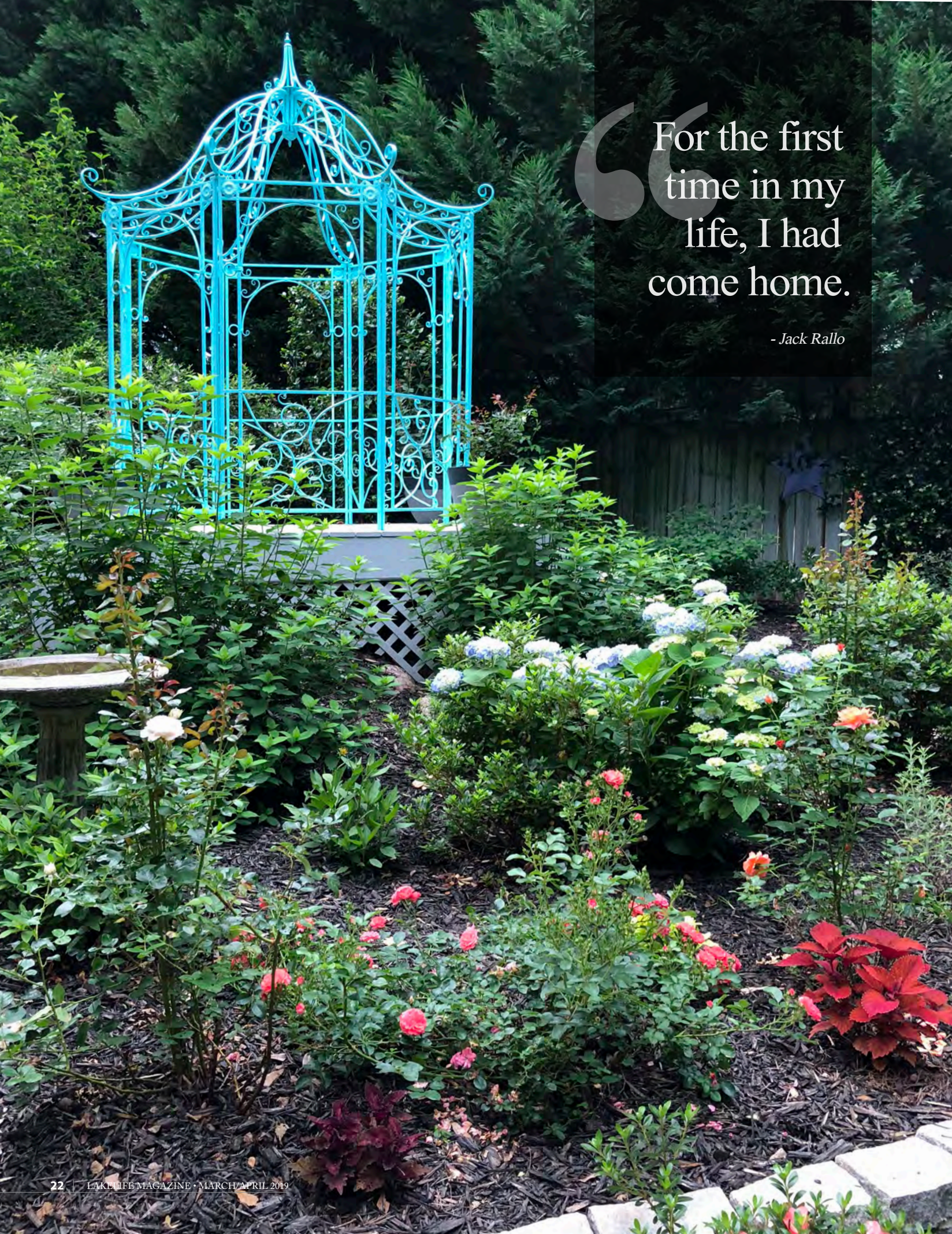
NATURE

Experience paradise on the paths of Highgate estate,
built from the ground up in Greensboro

Story by LEILA SCOGGINS | Photos contributed by HIGHGATE ESTATES



"Birds on the Brink", a sanctuary in Harlem, Ga. for endangered exotic birds, held a one-day-only educational exhibit at Highgate on Feb. 16 that included "Fiona" (above), an eclectic parrot, and "Mango," an umbrella cockatoo (p. 27).



“For the first time in my life, I had come home.”
- Jack Rallo



This IS MY MASTERPIECE,” Highgate Estate and Gardens owner Jack Rallo exclaims.

When Jack and his partner, Jeff Hough, first visited the iconic Greensboro home, there was not much on the property besides several large, old trees, a beaten up garage and the circular driveway. But Jack had the ability to see the potential and knew immediately upon entering the historic grand lady that he would transform it into his masterpiece.

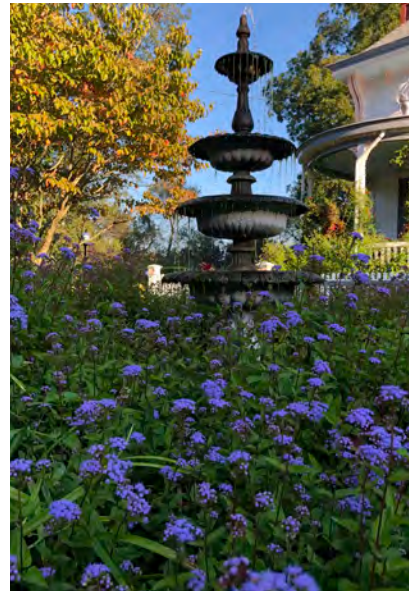
“For the first time in my life, I had come home,” Jack says. “I love to decorate and I love to design gardens, that’s my private joy. Somehow, I got here to be able to do that.”

Jack and Jeff bought the home in 2001 and originally kept the name,

The Higdon House, after the former owners. Initially, Jack decided to use the house as a bed and breakfast. Years later, after listening to some local residents, he chose to transform the first floor into a restaurant. It was during that time that people began asking if they could host weddings on the property.

“It really wasn’t until he closed down the restaurant and we were saying, ‘Well what are we going to do now? Do we just go back to the bed and breakfast? What do you want to do?’” recalls Jeff.

In 2008, Jack decided to go all in and transform the property into the





“There has been a lot of work here over the years... it took a long time to get here.”

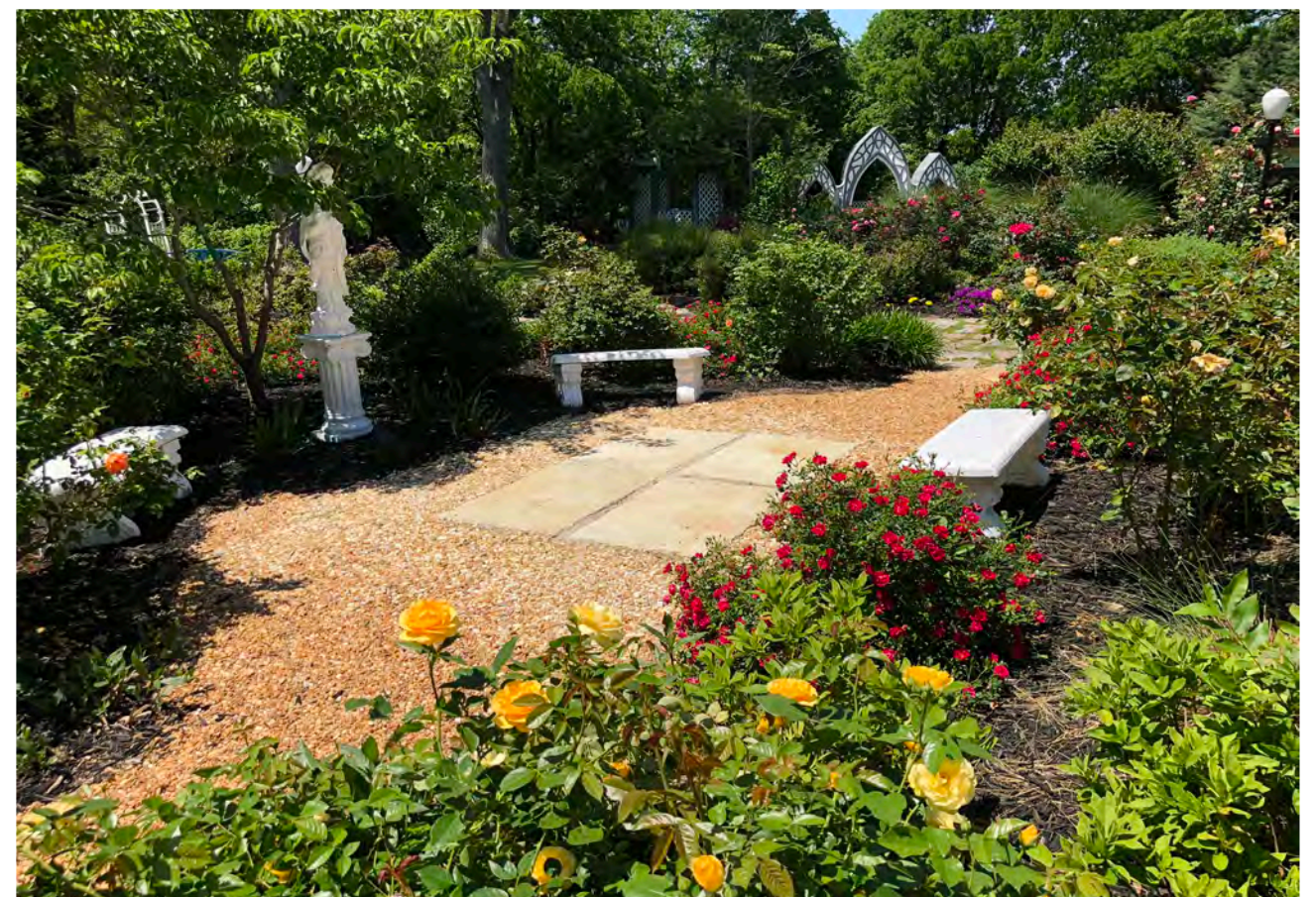
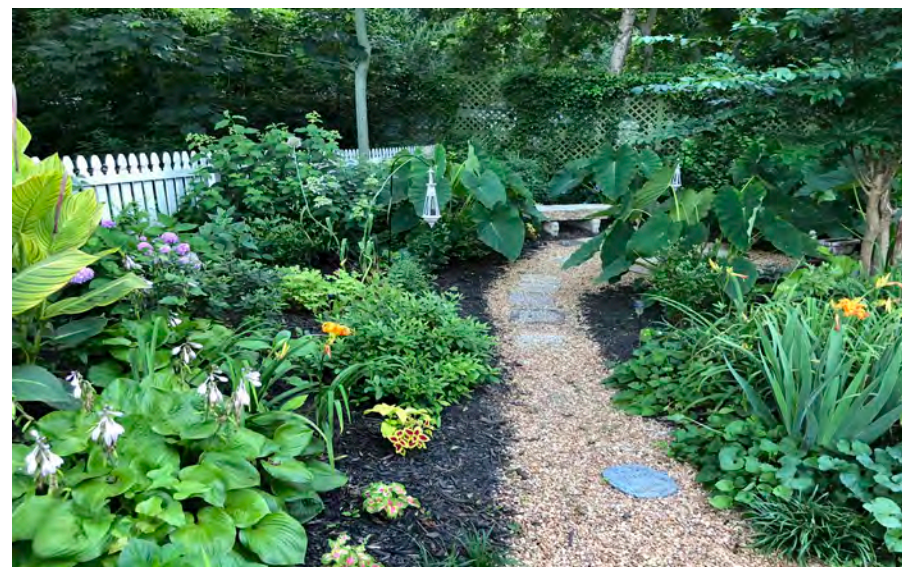
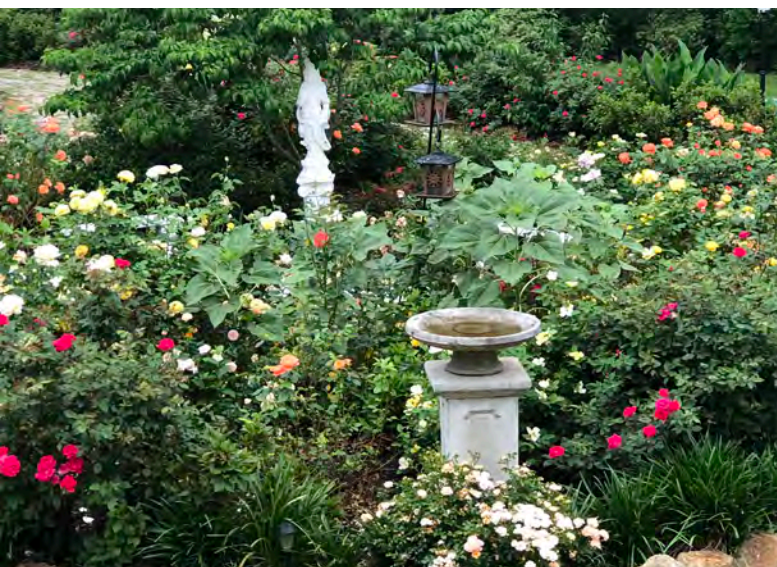
- Jack Rallo

unique wedding venue that it is today, meanwhile returning the home to its former glory as a bed and breakfast. The first thing Jack added was the outdoor wedding chapel. Inspired by the architecture from “The Lord of the Rings,” Jack enlisted the help of master carpenter Oliver Porter to turn his drawings of a three arch wedding chapel into a reality.

Today, the chapel stands tall among some of the most beautiful gardens on the two-and-a-half-acre property. Over the years, Jack and Jeff have added more buildings to better serve their clients’ needs, including an indoor chapel and events space, groom’s quarters and storage buildings for the wedding necessities.

“There has been a lot of work here over the years,” says Jack. “It took a long time to get here.”

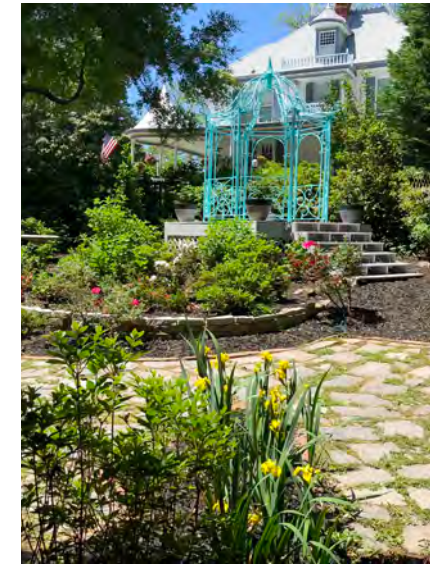
With his health on the decline, Jack had to step away from managing the property. During that time,





Everywhere your eye looks through a gate, you can see another garden, and another garden behind it.

- Jack Rallo



he moved to Maryland to be near Jeff while he received medical care and recovered. When he returned to the Greensboro home in 2016, he had a new lease on life and decided it was time to make a change.

Together, Jack and Jeff decided to give the estate a new name, Highgate. Jack then got to work reinventing the interior of the house and the surrounding grounds. "I would see it in my mind and then I would do it," Jack says. "I wanted color."

Although the house and surrounding structures are works of art themselves, it's Jack's eye for designing gardens that makes Highgate the gem that it is. Planting the Highgate gardens gives Jack the ability to do what he loves the most — create.

"My garden is an English Country Manor Garden," says Jack. "The reason that I chose that is there is no such thing as perfection, it just has to be beautiful." When redesigning the gardens, Jack drew inspiration from his time in Maryland when he would take his dog for walks, so he installed paths through the various areas. The Highgate gardens are meant to be strolled through patiently. Classical music and the sounds of the estate's multiple fountains provide the perfect background sounds. The property is completely enclosed with massive Leyland cypress trees. Jack's hope is that garden visitors use their sense

