

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

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Antiques & Garden Show of Nashville



CAROLYN THOMBS

Dawn Looney and Paige Hill, co-chairs of the Antiques & Garden Show of Nashville.

If you love antiques, gardening, interior design and taking a fun road trip to Nashville, mark your calendar now for the **Antiques & Garden Show of Nashville** the last weekend of January. This year celebrates the its thirty-fifth anniversary of the show held January 31 to February 2 at Nashville's Music City Center.

The inspiration for this year's theme "Cultivating Home: Life Well Tended," perfectly sums up the weekend's events and notable speakers. Editor Cindy Coopwood caught up with the show's co-chairs, Mississippi native, Dawn Looney, and Paige Hill, to discuss the details and behind the scenes workings of this year's event. Keynote speakers include icons Brooke Shields and Sheryl Crow, who will share their own thoughts on what design elements inspire them or what it takes to transform a house into a home.

With 150 dealers from across the country, visitors will have the opportunity not only to shop but also to hear from the show's expert speakers, such as British floral designers Shane Connolly and Willow Crossley as well as designers Veere Grenney and Rita Konig. Proceeds from the event will support historic Cheekwood Estate & Gardens, Nashville's treasures botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum.

“Nashville is such a fun road trip from anywhere in Mississippi! Whether you're a regular attendee of the Show or have never been and are interested in checking it out, this is going to be a great year to make the trip!” – DAWN LOONEY



WARNER TIDWELL

2024 Antiques & Garden Show Entry Garden

Dawn, being a Mississippi native and Ole Miss Graduate, can you give us a few more details on your Mississippi background and what led you to Nashville and your involvement with the A&G show? What's your hometown? And anything else you want to add!

Dawn: I'm a proud Mississippian—I grew up in Grenada and married a Clarksdale boy! Growing up in Mississippi, ever since I can remember, I've loved the flowers—especially the azaleas, gardenias, garden roses and the state flower, the iconic magnolia blossom—and the natural beauty of the state. That love of nature that was instilled in me early on has been one of the biggest influences on my life and design aesthetic. I also fell in love with McCarty's Pottery in high school and have collected it ever since, which has additionally fueled in me a passion for design and interiors.

I lived in Nashville right after college and fell in love with the city, so when the opportunity arose for my husband to work in Nashville, we jumped at the chance. Attending the Show had been on my bucket

list for years before I moved to Nashville, and then once I was here, I organically got involved through a friend in various volunteer roles.

How has the Show grown and changed over its 35-year history?

Dawn: The Antiques & Garden Show started small and has truly become one of the most loved and well-respected events of its kind in the country with a reputation that's internationally known!

Paige: The Show has also been able to drastically increase its contributions to its beneficiaries year after year—especially in the last five years—totaling an amount of \$11 million since 1990.

How far and wide is the reach for the Show's dealers? Specifically, are any from Mississippi?

Dawn: The dealers that exhibit at our Show come from across the country and as far as the UK! We're excited to have Lina's Interiors & Antiques from Leland, Mississippi at the 2025 Show.



2024 AGS West Garden

What are some of the most unique offerings?

Paige: When we began planning for the 2025 Show, we decided that we really wanted to lean into the talent that's right here in Music City, so there will be a unique focus on Nashville this year! The Friday afternoon Designing Music City Lecture will feature Sheryl Crow and Lauren Akins, alongside their shared friend and Nashville-based interior designer April Tomlin. We'll also have live music performances from local artists throughout the Show weekend. There's so much creativity in our own city, and we're excited to spotlight that this year.

What can attendees expect that's new and exciting or different about this year's show? What has the response been to Brooke Shields and Sheryl Crow's involvement?

Dawn: There's been an overwhelming response to Brooke and Sheryl's participation! While there's a very public side to them, as with most celebrities, people are really intrigued and excited to get a glimpse into their personal home lives.

Paige: We're hoping to capture a very warm and cozy feel to the Show. We both love English design so much and were excited to incorporate that into the theme this year, as evidenced by the highly revered lecture speakers hailing from the UK.

Tell our readers a little about the process of setting up the garden showcases. How long does it take and what's involved in turning a convention center into a horticultural paradise?

Dawn: Planning for the garden showcases begins in the spring of the



Views of the 2024 AGS show floor.



previous year, so it takes months of planning and designing and coordinating by our Gardens Chair Todd Breyer, landscape architects and a team of volunteers. Their transformation of the Music City Center is an incredible feat each year and a highlight of the Show!

How did the 2025 co-chairs select the signature fabric patterns that inspired the theme for the show? How do they represent current (or classic) design themes or trends?

Dawn: We love designs with layers upon layers of beautiful fabrics that create a feeling of coziness. We will never be minimalists, although we so appreciate and admire people who can be. We are both also drawn to beautiful gardens and are always looking for fun ways to bring the gardens indoors, whether it's through flowers, plants or even a landscape painting.

Paige: The patterns we selected from our partners Fabricut, Jean Monro and Clarence House are reflective of those design themes of creating warm and welcoming spaces through layering. The patterns also evoke

the English countryside and show how we can bring the outdoors in through fabrics and wallpaper.

Cheekwood benefits from the show's proceeds. Please describe its importance to Nashville. Nashville has experienced explosive growth in the past few years. How has that impacted ECON charities and how does the show address that?

Dawn: We're especially honored to serve the Nashville community in our role to help raise proceeds for the Show's two original beneficiaries, Cheekwood and ECON Charities! We're proud to say the Show has raised \$11 million to date for these deserving charities.

Paige: Cheekwood, a preserved country estate, provides the opportunity for thousands of visitors a year to experience wonderful horticultural and educational programs and events. ECON Charities partners with and distributes funds to two organizations, The Family Center and Light a Spark, which are dedicated to enhancing and improving the lives of children and families in the greater Nashville area.