

About Us

The Astin Mansion is one of Bryan/College Station's most popular wedding, reception, and corporate event venues. The beautiful Georgian Revival mansion was built in 1924 and provides an elegant setting for weddings, receptions, rehearsal dinners, vow renewals, and other special events. This historic property and grounds can accommodate everything from intimate family gatherings to weddings with hundreds of guests. Our experienced staff will custom create the special day you've imagined. Come visit the Astin Mansion before choosing your special event location!

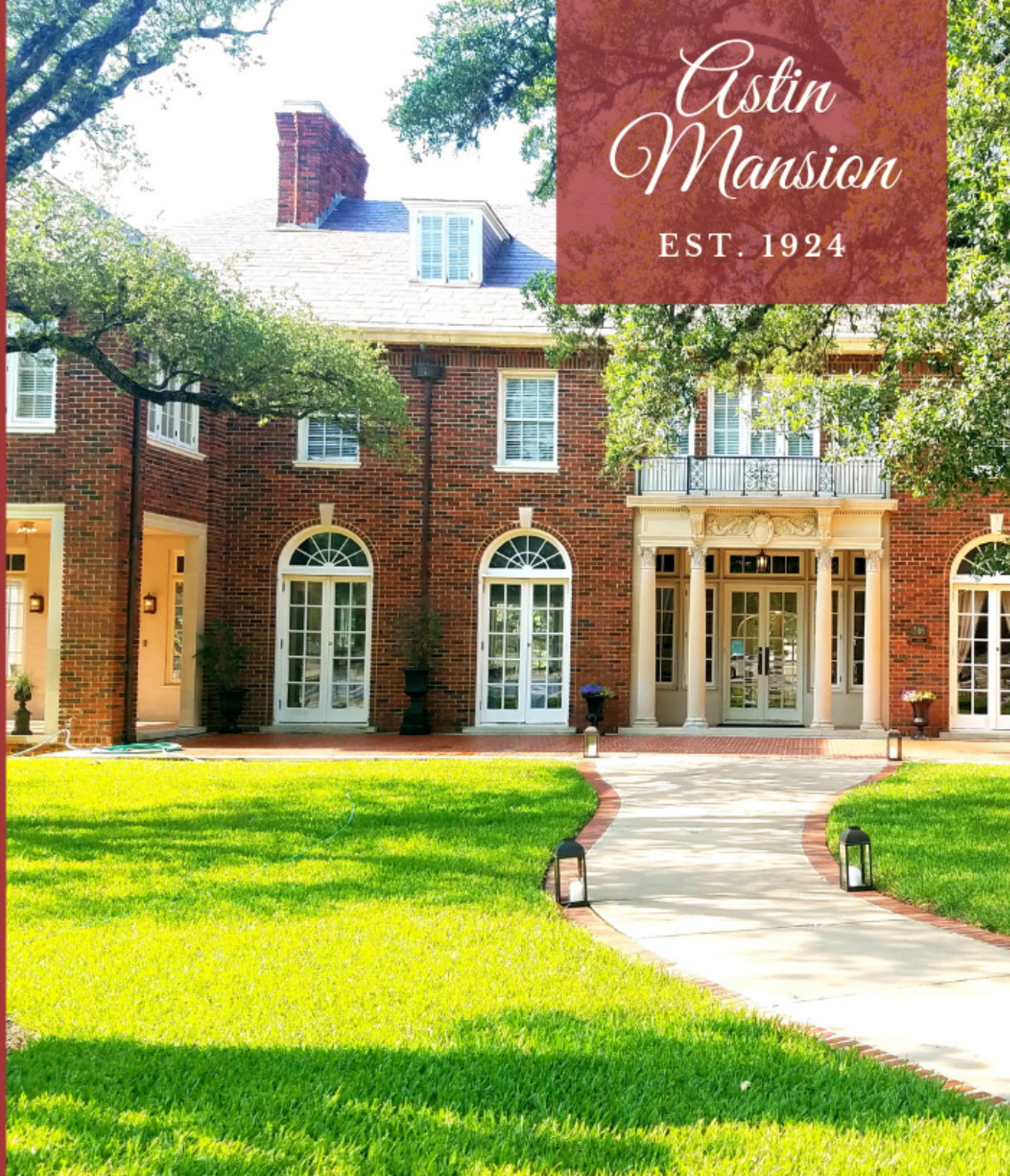
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Astin Mansion


EST. 1924

History

Architect Hal B. Thomson and Master Carpenter Peter Mansbendel completed construction of the Astin Mansion in 1924 for Roger Q. and Nina Heard Astin. The entire project took 2 years to complete. The estate is classified as an Antebellum-Georgian Revival style home. The exterior of the mansion is adorned with the original beautifully weathered copper gutters and down spouts. The interior of mansion boasts seven fireplaces, 16 sets of French doors, and 96 windows. Twenty-seven colors of period appropriate shades are found throughout the entire estate. When construction was completed, the home was state-of-the-art and even years ahead of its time with a built-in vacuum cleaning system, central heating and an intercom system linking several rooms of the estate and the Carriage House. In 1940 the first air conditioning units were installed. The Astin Mansion was inducted into the National Register of Historic Homes in 1987 and has served as a private residence for 80 years.



The Astin Mansion has been a Special Events Venue since 2004. The Astin family was a prominent Bryan family who owned the Rivermist Plantation. Nina Heard Astin came from a prestigious background in McKinney, Texas. Nina's husband, Roger Astin died at age 39, leaving her widowed with 2 small children, John Heard Astin and Nina Bess Astin. Neither of the Astin children had children, so there were no heirs to the Astin estate. Both Nina Heard Astin and Daughter, Nina Bess Astin, were well known for their generosity and community involvement, and bequeathed the Astin estate and their trusts to this community in the form of the Nina Heard Astin and Nina Bess Astin charitable trust. The trust continues to support several of Mrs. Astin's favorite organizations, scholarship programs and our local Boys and Girls Club to this day.



Grand Foyer

The late Mrs. Astin designed most the fixtures including; the torch sconces, the chandelier, the grand staircase railing and the 2nd floor sconces. Those items are one of a kind, created by Old San Antonio Iron Works in Austin, Texas, which is now a BBQ Restaurant. Upon completion all design plans for this estate were burned per Mrs. Astin's request. Throughout the estate the original Oak floors which immediately told guests of the home owner's wealth due to the narrow width of the boards. Each one of the downstairs rooms have uniquely designed ceilings specific to each room. One of the two, 1st floor bathrooms was the original mudroom of the family.



Ball Room

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Conservatory

The Conservatory is also known as a Sun Room or Solarium. This room was designed to reflect all the different aspects of Mrs. Astin's life. The late Mrs. Astin was a native Texan, so the walls of this room are Limestone, which was quarried near Austin, Texas. Mrs. Astin also loved Italy, therefore the floors in this room as well as all of the marble throughout the entire estate is imported white Italian marble. This room is commonly confused as an addition to the home because of its walls, but it is all original. Mrs. Astin's family was from German heritage, so the German Gothic fireplace pays tribute to that. While the vaulted ceiling is decorated with garden fruit and vegetables. This pattern is a style of Della Robia. The Della Robia style of decorating; is the use of fruits and vegetables as décor, this pays homage to Mrs. Astin being a Master Gardener and is another great example of Peter Mansbendel's wood working abilities.

Walnut Room

The Astin's used the Walnut Room as their formal dining room. It is a formal, but warm, solid walnut wood-paneled room. The doors are also made of solid walnut. The brass wall sconces are original to this room and were also designed by Mrs. Astin, however the original chandelier was removed by Mrs. Astin's surviving extended family after her passing. The chandelier that now hangs in this room is period appropriate. On the floor, where the head of the household would be seated at the table, used to be a hidden buzzer that was used to summon the servants from the kitchen during meals.

Butler's Room

The Butler's Pantry was originally designed for servant's usage. There is a servant's spiral staircase that runs from basement to attic. The live-in house staff was not permitted to use the grand staircase in the Foyer. The Butler's Pantry is also equipped with a dumbwaiter that is on the left of the stairs and only accessible to Mr. Astin's bedroom suite. All the cabinets are original to the house and were used for storing supplies for catering dinner parties, much as it is today. It has direct access into the Foyer, Walnut Dining Room, Backyard, Kitchen, Slate Breakfast Room and the Basement.

Slate Room

The Slate Room was originally the Breakfast Room. The original Vermont slate floor also had a buzzer beneath the table to summon the servants during meals. This room is original from floor to ceiling, with more hand carved wood work from Peter Mansbendel on the ceiling and the Chandelier was shipped in from Paris, France. The Slate Room is currently used as a food service room for our events and weddings.



Kitchen

While the kitchen has been completely commercialized, the original brick floors, tile backsplash and iceboxes remain intact. The kitchen has a back door entrance that allowed access to the grocer and iceman, so they could deliver their goods without having to enter the estate through any of the main entrances.



Brown Room

The Brown Room was originally Mr. Astin's bedroom suite. Mr. Astin's bedroom is set up the same way as the children's bedroom, with the bed moving from the front room to the back room according to the seasons. The in the expanded changing area that you first enter on the way to the bathroom still houses Mr. Astin's private wall safe, hidden in the closet. The majority of the fixtures in this room are original. This room now serves are our Groom's Suite. Offer a billiards table for the Groom and his Groomsmen to enjoy while preparing for the wedding ceremony.





Laundry Room

During this time period it was actually considered improper to wash your dirty laundry inside your home, but Mrs. Astin is quoted in saying "I will do my damn laundry inside if I want to!" Now just two years after the mansion was completed, in 1926 there was a small fire in the laundry room and Mrs. Astin and the Children had to be evacuated out the front windows of the house and taken down ladders to escape the fire. The fire was extinguished and did not cause much damage to the property.

Attic

As with most Attics, it was originally used for storage, but now serves as our day-to-day Business Office.

Employee Staircase

The live-in house staff was not permitted to use the grand staircase so they have their own. Even to this day, during our events the staff is not permitted to use the grand staircase.

Linen Closet

This room was originally the Gun Room. The original built-in cabinetry and gun racks are still intact and are now used to house the majority of the linens we use for our events and weddings.



Green Room

The Green Room which is a two room suite, was the originally the Children's room. During the Spring and Summer the Children's beds would be in the front room, because the 270 degrees of windows provided a cooling breeze. While in the Fall and Winter the beds would be moved in to the back room, because of the fireplace. The fireplace mantel in this room is faux painted to look like various types of inlayed marble, but is actually carved wood crafted by Peter Mansbendel. All of the upstairs fireplaces are equipped with trap doors for easy cleaning. The staff would simply sweep the ashes into the trap door and the pipes would transport the ashes to the basement. The large bathroom has original tile and houses the first walk-in shower in the Brazos Valley. The door was added in the 1980's, originally there would just be a curtain across the doorway. This room currently serves as our Honeymoon Suite.

Gold Room

The Gold Room was Mrs. Astin's bedroom. It houses its own private bath which leads to a magnificent mirrored dressing room that women of any century would appreciate. Most of the bathroom fixtures are original to the house, including the dental sink used strictly for brushing teeth, as Mrs. Astin believed washing ones hands in the same sink as you brushed your teeth was unsanitary. The Gold Room currently serves as our Bridal Dressing Suite.



Dressing Room

Mrs. Astin's dressing room includes mirrored doors to conceal closets, drawers, and shoe racks, which are cedar lined. This room is naturally the coldest room in the house, which is essential for storing fine clothing, such as furs. The Chandelier in this room is original to the home. As the name suggests this was where Mrs. Astin dressed, and fittingly where many brides choose to put on their wedding gowns. This room is closets all the way around with the exception of the door to the right of the light switch, which would lead you into the Family Room. All of the upstairs rooms are conjoined rooms. That was for the live-in house staff, so that they could go from one side of the house to the other, tidy up as they went along and avoid using the main hall way as much as possible.





Playhouse

The all masonry house is a 1/10 scale model of the downstairs portion of the mansion, excluding the Butler's Pantry and the Conservatory. It did have running water, a wood burning stove and appropriate sized furniture. The function of a playhouse was to teach your children how to maintain a home. Young ladies were charged with hosting little tea parties, and keeping it tidy, while the young men had to chop wood for the stove and so on. After the Astin children were grown Mrs. Astin turned the playhouse into an Aviary. She would order birds and small parrots, along with food and vitamins from a catalog and they would be delivered to her via the United States Postal Service. The Playhouse is now wired with electricity and still serves as a playhouse for the children in attendance at our events.

Back Doorstep

The back Foyer door steps of the main house was specially designed for the loading and unloading of carriages. Although automobiles were just becoming popular in the twenties, the Astin's did not care for cars and never owned an automobile. They preferred their horse drawn carriages. In the 1960's the city of Bryan had to put a non-motorized vehicle ordinance on Texas Ave. to prevent Mrs. Astin from clogging up traffic with her horse and carriage.



Carriage House Floral Design

The Carriage House is essentially a garage for the Astin's horse drawn carriages and storage. The second floor of the Carriage House is set up as an efficiency apartment for the live-in house staff. Now the bottom portion of the Carriage House is used as a bar space for our events and also houses the work space for Carriage House Floral Design, the Astin Mansion's in-house Floral and Décor department.

Carriage House Floral is happy to accommodate and serve anyone holding events within the Brazos Valley.



Our extremely talented and immensely creative floral designer, Christopher Dodgen, is a 15 year veteran of the floral and wedding industry. There is no design, idea, or color scheme that is too ambitious for us.

Please contact us today to set up your custom floral design meeting.