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Demolition begins on Pleasant Hill homes

By Kelly Thurston | Tuesday, January 24, 2017



MACON, Ga. — Houses are being torn down in the Pleasant Hill area of Macon.

Demolition started on Tuesday on 17 homes in the neighborhood. The project is part of a Georgia Department of Transportation plan to widen I-75 and improve the I-55 interchange.

Some homes have already been moved out of the area. Matt Ragdale, a member of the demolition crew, said there could be an added benefit to getting rid of some of the vacant houses.



Woman-owned Demolition Business Named to Bulldog 100

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Posted Monday, March 6, 2017 4:29 pm by SpeedOfCommunications

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ATTACHMENTS

1) Bulldog 100 2017 award ceremony
2) Bulldog 100 2017 award ceremony photo
3) Bulldog 100 2017 award ceremony photo

Atlanta, Ga. – Southern Demolition, LLC (d/b/a Southern Demolition and Environmental), based in Atlanta, Georgia, was recognized as the No. 52 fastest-growing business owned or operated by a University of Georgia graduate during the 2017 Bulldog 100 Celebration February 4 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in downtown Atlanta.

Gina Cembardella Raggsdale (Terry College of Business '07) has put her entrepreneurial spirit to work launching multiple business ventures relating to demolition, deconstruction, and upcycling. Southern Demolition and Environmental, which she runs with her husband, Max Raggsdale, is the flagship business, driving the growth of three other companies: The Deconstructed House, an architectural salvage and antiques shop; Vintage Bricks, supplier of authentic reclaimed brick and brick tile; and Bolton Freight, a neighborhood event facility and salvage design showcase.

"Being named to the Bulldog 100 is affirmation that we are on the right path by providing responsible demolition and abatement services, limiting landfill waste, and participating in documented LEED projects," said Raggsdale, who is both president and co-founder of Southern Demolition and Environmental. "Even though we are in the business of demolition, we focus on opportunities to build up our community, including through our workforce training program for at-risk Atlanta residents."

The Bulldog 100, coordinated by the UGA Alumni Association, recognizes the 100 fastest-growing businesses owned or operated by UGA graduates.

To be considered for the Bulldog 100, each organization must have been in business for at least five years, experienced revenues in excess of \$100,000 for the calendar year 2013, and be owned or operated by a former UGA student. The Bulldog 100 recognizes the fastest-growing businesses regardless of size by focusing on a three-year compounded annual growth rate.

"The UGA Alumni Association is excited to honor our graduates who are founding and leading these prosperous enterprises," Ruth Bertier, president of the UGA Alumni Association board, said. "It is inspiring to see the influence these businesses have on our students. Student participation in Bulldog 100 allows our scholars a unique opportunity to network with these accomplished business leaders, and to observe the best examples of success from people who once were where they are now."

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Alpharetta Rotary is proud to recognize new Paul Harris...

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For Immediate Release

Woman Demolition Business Owner Finds Ways to Build Up Atlanta Community

January 3, 2017 – Atlanta, GA. Gina Ragsdale might earn a living tearing down houses, but she's really in the business of building up her community.

Since she founded Southern Demolition, LLC (d/b/a Southern Demolition and Environmental) (www.southerndemo.com) nearly ten years ago, she has torn down countless derelict houses, abandoned outbuildings, and out-of-date office parks, all in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

But in almost every project, she's found something—or someone—worth saving.

It started with her first side business, The Deconstructed House (TheDeconstructedHouse.com). There, she resells all kinds of items left behind in buildings slated for destruction, including architectural details like old doors and mantelpieces; antique appliances and fixtures; and even old tools, toys, and household items that no one bothered to take with them.

But soon she realized the very foundations of some homes could be preserved—or at least the bricks that were used to build them. And that's when Vintage Bricks (VintageBricks.com) began.

As Gina explains, “The difference between newer bricks and bricks made 50 years ago is the old bricks are solid.” She soon realized that meant she could take the full-size bricks and cut them down to create up to four thin brick tiles from the outer sides of the original brick.

Now, not only are these pieces of Atlanta's architectural history saved from the landfill, but they can find new homes where their one-of-a-kind charm and character can be appreciated.

But Gina isn't just interested in salvaging old homes—she also wants to help people reconstruct their lives. She noticed a woman on the streets of her Riverside neighborhood on the west side of Atlanta, out of work and down on her luck. They struck up a conversation, and soon Gina offered her a job working in her brickyard. Now Marie not only pulls a steady paycheck, but she's able to contribute to Social Security and look ahead to a more stable future. Gina is looking to hire more women like her, who can use these bricks to build a new life for themselves.

Gina also wants to help her community flourish as a whole. She operates her businesses out of three older homes along a stretch of Bolton Road, and has turned an eye into converting one of her properties into an affordable community event facility. Her new venture, Bolton Freight, is housed in a 100-year old home with vintage charm galore, down to original plaster walls, fireplaces, and even a claw-foot tub. Out back, a large shed serves functions from a small stage to an outdoor bar for al fresco dining.

“I'm seeing this as a place where people can get together in the evenings, hear some live music, sit in the garden – just come together as a community,” she says.

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Atlanta



ECOFRIENDLY RETAIL STORES

→ BEE

From imaginative window displays to inventive selections of home goods, jewelry and clothing, saving the planet has never looked so chic. Owner Jillian Pritchard Cooke founded Wellness Within Your Walls, an international organization bringing healthy product standards to the home furnishings industry. Everything in the store, from Cisco Brothers upholstery to Indian textiles, meets WWYW standards. 26 East Andrews Drive, bee-atlanta.com

→ ECOHOMEATLANTA

Opened last fall by Lawton Hall, EcoHome Atlanta offers organic and sustainable linens, gifts, pet accessories, and kitchen and personal care products. Nursery items and baby gifts are particular specialties. Exclusive lines include Living Fresh organic bedding and Serving Slabs repurposed from granite countertops. Hall, who had a long career at AmericasMart, also has a background in energy conservation and historic preservation. 3261 Roswell Road, ecohomeatlanta.com

→ ECODENIZEN

Located in the base of a high-rise at 999 Peachtree, this five-year-old shop is only a half block away from the Midtown MARTA station. The owners have LEED credentials and stock a carefully curated selection, including many local brands like Mark Edge Jewelry and Houston Llew art tiles. Though the store is mostly dedicated to gifts, it also carries home and gourmet food lines such as Backberry Patch condiments. 999 Peachtree Street, ecodenizen.net

REPURPOSE

VINTAGE BRICKS

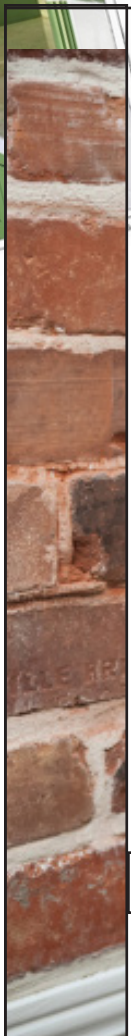
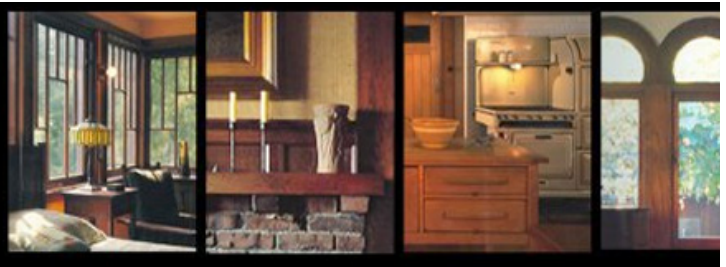
→ Ten years ago, when Gina Ragsdale launched her tear-down firm, Southern Demolition & Environmental, she discovered she hated throwing things away. Soon she was selling so many recycled materials that she opened an architectural salvage store, which drew a surprising business from film crews—especially those from thrillers like *The Walking Dead*. (“I save stuff that looks bombed out, and they love it. It looks like the zombie apocalypse.”) But the product that really took off was salvaged bricks.

Given Georgia’s native red clay, brick is traditionally popular here, for both buildings and landscape. It’s also relatively easy to store and reuse. “My bricks don’t complain when they sit outside in the yard,” notes Ragsdale. Interestingly, she’s heard that brick on Atlanta’s midcentury ranch houses was often already recycled—for example, from commercial buildings that were destroyed by fire in St. Louis. Today’s builders earn LEED points for using such reclaimed materials.

Ragsdale expanded her market by slicing the solid blocks, becoming Atlanta’s largest supplier of genuine thin brick tiles. “They install as easily as tile and can make a wall look 100 years old in an instant,” she says. vistagebricks.com —B.R.



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INSPIRING INSTALLATIONS

Alexis Stephens has always loved old houses. Now she's surrounded by the history of her home and ones that would otherwise be lost.

Alexis Stephens says she's always had "eclectic, antique-y tastes." She may live in her dream house now, but as a newlywed, she was less than thrilled with her husband's existing home. As she describes it, the newly-built split level was finished with "cheap, builder-grade, newer-but-still-ugly" fixtures and details.

Alexis set to work to transform the bathroom with a vintage sink, retro-style tiles, and even a salvaged antique cabinet.

She found that cabinet at The Deconstructed House (TheDeconstructedHouse.com), an architectural salvage store on Atlanta's west side, filled with all kinds of items saved from houses slated for demolition (including, literally, kitchen sinks).

On a return visit, she learned of their sister store, Vintage Bricks (VintageBricks.com). There, bricks reclaimed from those same Atlanta-area demolitions are saved from landfills and cut down into tiles. These tiles retain all the character and markings of the full-sized bricks, giving the look of brick without requiring a mason. They can be applied to any surface that can be tiled, including walls and floors, and even used in outdoor projects.

Last year, Alexis and her husband moved into a house that was listed as being built in 1930. However, in researching the home's history, Alexis has found deeds dating back to the 1890s.

Alexis loves the original period details in her home, including stained glass windows and 10' tall French doors. However, she wanted to add more of these kind of touches while staying true to the house's character.

It was important to her to use materials that fit with her home's history. So when she decided to add a surround to an existing fireplace, she didn't want to use new brick:

"It's too uniform and "matchy-matchy." The variation and characteristics of Vintage Brick tile gave her the perfect look.

She also loved the idea that they were saved from other local houses. Although the original structures they came from could not be saved, she could give these bricks the respect and love they deserved as part of her home. Reusing and repurposing antique brick is also an ecologically-friendly alternative to dumping them in a landfill or expending energy to create new materials.

She remembers the process of installing her tile went "incredibly smoothly." Her only worry was her contractor might get hired away by all the people who admired his work!

Although installing brick tile is similar to installing any other tile, her contractor did remove the drywall and replace it with cement board to support the additional weight. Sealing the brick is also recommended.

Alexis also recommends hosing off any brick dust left over from the cutting process before bringing the tiles inside. (She warns against pressure-washing, which can break the brick.) She realized doing so, "brought out the coolness of all the different colors and variations." She took her time to carefully place the tile to keep that varied look, which she found "kind of fun."

Alexis and her husband were so thrilled with the look of their fireplace, they've already moved on to their next project: a wine cellar lined with Vintage Bricks. Now that they've found a unique building material that fits the look of their home and preserves the history of these original materials, it likely won't be their last project.

