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Mark-Ellis Bennett photo

NEW STATUE — Anna, Ben and Sara Fisher were among the first to admire the bronze statues of Cornelia Vanderbilt depicted playing with Cedric, one of the family's St. Bernards.

Bronze Vanderbilt statues unveiled at Antler Hill Village

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Renowned multimedia artist Vadim Bora installed a magnificent pair of bronze statues at Biltmore Estate's Antler Hill Village on Monday. They depict a youthful Cornelia Vanderbilt playing ball with Cedric, one of the family's St. Bernards. Bora's tableau was modeled after several archival photographs of the two. In Cornelia's left hand is a sprig of cucumber magnolia, symbolic of the tree planted by

the Vanderbilts to commemorate her birth. She was the only child of George Washington Vanderbilt III and his wife Edith.

Biltmore House's Chief Curator Darren Poupore said Bora was commissioned for this project not only for his considerable talent, but the fact that he is a local artist was very important to The Biltmore Company too. "We wanted to add historical elements to the new village we have created. This was a wonderful way to say that yes Biltmore House may be the largest house in America, but it was also a home. The Vanderbilts were people just

like everyone else and they were dog lovers as well. Antler Hill Village showcases the fun side of the estate's history, so we wanted the statues to tell not only the story of Cornelia's relationship with Cedric, but also Cornelia's special tree." At 107 years of age the magnolia had reached the end of its life and had to be taken down, but the tree's wood provided material for many of the tables at Cedric's Tavern in the village. At the entrance to the Azalea Garden where the mighty tree once stood a young sprout has appeared — a vestige

Statues continues on 10

of the original tree.

"It has been interesting for me to learn about the history of Biltmore House and the Vanderbilt family. They brought so much to the state and even America. Cornelia's dog was her childhood friend, and now that friendship is immortalized in bronze. I'm proud to have my work included among the art and sculpture of the Biltmore collection," Bora said.

Constance Richards, art gallery director for the Grand Bohemian Hotel in Biltmore Village said, "Beyond the fact that this was a lovely commission — historic, classical, and in such a monumental place in our area's history — this project was particularly significant for both Vadim and me because just up the hill from the sculptures is the historic River Bend Barn. It resembles a European village courtyard overlooking the square where we held our wedding celebration two years ago with family and friends from all over the world."