Auctioneer Deborah Morrow shouts, 'We got it, we got it!' as she talks on a cell phone to the winning bidder on the Bocage Plantation home Saturday. Morrow placed the winning bid of $2,150,000 — plus a 10-percent buyer’s premium — on behalf of a Texas man who asked to remain anonymous until the sale of the River Road plantation home on River Road near Darrow is final.

Bocage sells for $2,150,000

BY MARK H. HUNTER
Special to The Advocate

DARROW — When Bocage Plantation was built in 1801, long-distance transactions could be completed only as fast as a horse could gallop.

But Saturday morning, one of the River Road’s most-historic ante-bellum plantations was sold for more than $2 million via cellular phone call.

The buyer of the four bedroom, 7,400-square-foot Greek Revival-style mansion and 110 acres of surrounding land was identified only as a physician from Texas, but he outspent 11 other bidders and completed the deal for $2,150,000.

The plantation, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, had for the past three years been advertised for sale for $5.5 million by the owners, Margot Genre Turk, her husband, Milan Turk, and Margot’s sister, Jeanne and her husband, Dr. Phil Lorio.

“We’re pleased with the price but, of course, we would have been more pleased if it sold for 3 or 4 million,” Milan Turk said after an hour-long bidding process. “We’re satisfied we got the market price.”

The auction procedure was witnessed by nearly 200 people waiting to attend an auction later Saturday of the plantation home’s historic furniture and contents.

Mark Anderson, who owns the nearby Poche Plantation, was the last-standing local bidder and finally opted out after his top bid at $2,125,000 was surpassed. “I was disappointed,” Anderson said. “I would have liked to have it as another Louisiana treasure like the Poche.”

Final costs, including taxes and fees totaled $2,365,000, said Milan Turk, and the deal should “close” in early January. The buyer’s identity may be revealed then, auction officials said.

The real estate auction was managed by Albert Burney, Properties of Distinction, and conducted by

For more pictures of the Bocage Plantation auction, go to 2theadvocate.com
Neal Alford, president of Neal's Auction Co. of New Orleans. "We think the bidding went pretty well," said Warren A. Ward, president of Albert Burney, headquartered in Gadsden, Ala. "This (price) dictates where the market is and it tells us that there was a national interest in it."

Deborah Morrow, an Albert Burney employee who bid on behalf of the Texas physician, later reported, "He doesn't know what his plans are" for the property.

The plantation home was built in 1801 by Emanuel Marius Pons Bringier as a wedding present for his daughter, Françoise, and her husband, Christoph Colomb, a distant French relative of Christopher Columbus, according to Bocage Plantation's Web site.

The house was last purchased in 1940 by Dr. Edwin Kohlsdorf and his wife Dr. Anita Crozat, who was Margot Genre Turk's great-aunt.

Margot Genre Turk said she grew up watching her relatives restore both the Bocage and Houmas House plantations, and spent lots of time at Bocage when her parents, Marguerite Crozat Genre and Richard Genre of Port Allen, owned it and used it as a weekend retreat.

"We had lotsofThanksgivings and Christmases and touch football games out on the front lawn, and everybody enjoyed it," Margot Genre Turk said before the auction began. "This is bittersweet for us, but we don't live here anymore and our children don't live here either, so we want somebody to love it like we loved it."

Both she and her husband attended LSU in the early 1960s. They now live in New Canaan, Conn., and their grown children are scattered from California to Ohio to North Carolina.

"It's been in our family for 70 years, but there is a degree of reality we have to face," Milan Turk said.

In the afternoon, more than 200 people crowded into a pavilion to bid on about 400 items of Bocage Plantation antique furnishings, silver and china. Auctioneer Neal Alford estimated the lots' worth between $300,000 and $400,000, including several pieces he called "benchmarks of Louisiana history and culture."

Nathan Chapman of New Orleans purchased for $1,600 an "American Classical Mahogany Library Bergere," a velvet-plush chair with scroll-arms and turned-legs. "I think it's a really good piece that will match the other furniture in my French Quarter home," he said.

"There is some really nice stuff here."