

Gathering Place

A new lake house in Alabama with plenty of pretty, feminine touches brings together family and friends in style.

A contemporary metal-and-glass table, a lacy modern chandelier, and cheerful floral chairs set the stage for fun just inside the front door of this lakeside retreat. Antique oak timbers culled from a Georgia mill lend timeworn appeal to the ceiling.



This photo: A pair of French-style slipper chairs and a tufted blue sofa form an intimate seating area within the great-room. A custom rug lends warmth to antique French oak floors.

Opposite: The rear exterior's symmetrical design, gabled rooflines, and crisp white trim present a charming countenance enjoyed by all on the lake.



Standing on an empty lot with

nothing but overgrown grass for company, it can be hard to envision just how a new house will look—unless, like Tom Adams, you're a graduate of Auburn University's School of Architecture. The shoreline views from a prime peninsula lot on Lake Martin in Alabama told Adams what the house would need: banks of windows and terraced landscaping leading to the lake's edge, for starters. But Adams also imagined how his family would enjoy the house—not just for today but also for generations to come.

Adams' in-laws, Pat and Ken Robinson, asked him and his business partner Adam Gerndt to create a comfortable home for the two of them that could also serve as a gathering spot for friends and family. "The first house we bought on the lake was so small," Pat says. "When our first grandchild arrived, we realized how thin the walls were. We called an agent the next day."

Several houses—and years—later, the Robinsons were ready to build a forever home, one large enough for everyone. The couple asked their son-in-law for a Nantucket shingle-style home with an air of sophistication. "In our past homes, we had the big, puffy leather furniture that everyone could put their feet on," Pat says. "This time, I wanted something elegant and pretty."

Request granted, the 9,000-square-foot home features a double-height great-room where a citron, blue, and white palette meets the couple's desire for a light and stylish entertaining space. "With this house we started with all new furnishings," Pat says. "It's transitional and modern and classic—everything my house in Birmingham isn't." Furnishings mix glass, metal, and painted wood materials, but lines are clean and simple no matter the genre. Fabric colors and patterns are just bold enough to be playful without any one particular piece taking center stage.

Working with Adams and designer Marie Noojin, Pat anchored the grand space with four distinct living areas: a game table at the entry, an intimate chat zone, a sofa area for lounging,

and a long dining table set along the lakeside bay window. "At first, Pat refused to put a television in the great-room," Adams says. "But Ken teased her and said he would never come to the lake. They compromised with a drop-down screen of a painting that hides the television when not in use."

Still, it's the kitchen and adjoining screen porch that people gravitate to. "Despite the spacious living area, that's the place where everyone hangs out," Adams says. Retractable doors completely open up the kitchen to the screen porch, and vice versa. "They asked for an outdoor kitchen," Adams says. "Instead, we gave them an indoor kitchen connected to an outdoor room."

Easy indoor-outdoor living is further encouraged by access from ground-level rooms to alfresco seating terraces and paths that meander to the lakefront pool via a plethora of French doors. "It really is such a pretty place for all of us to enjoy," Adams says.

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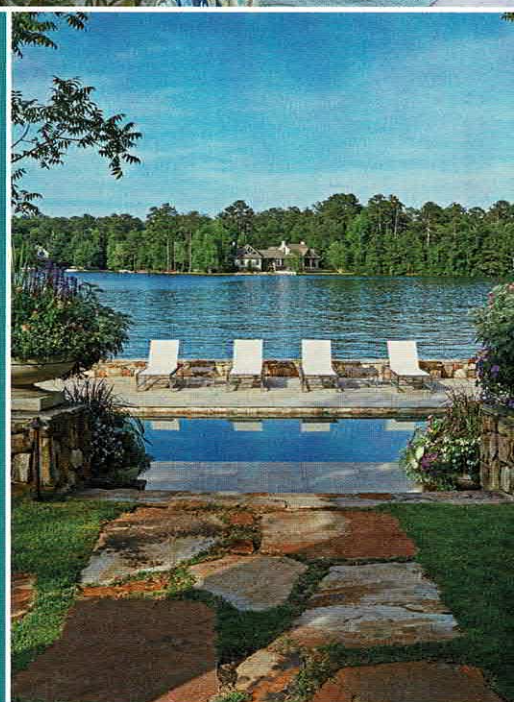


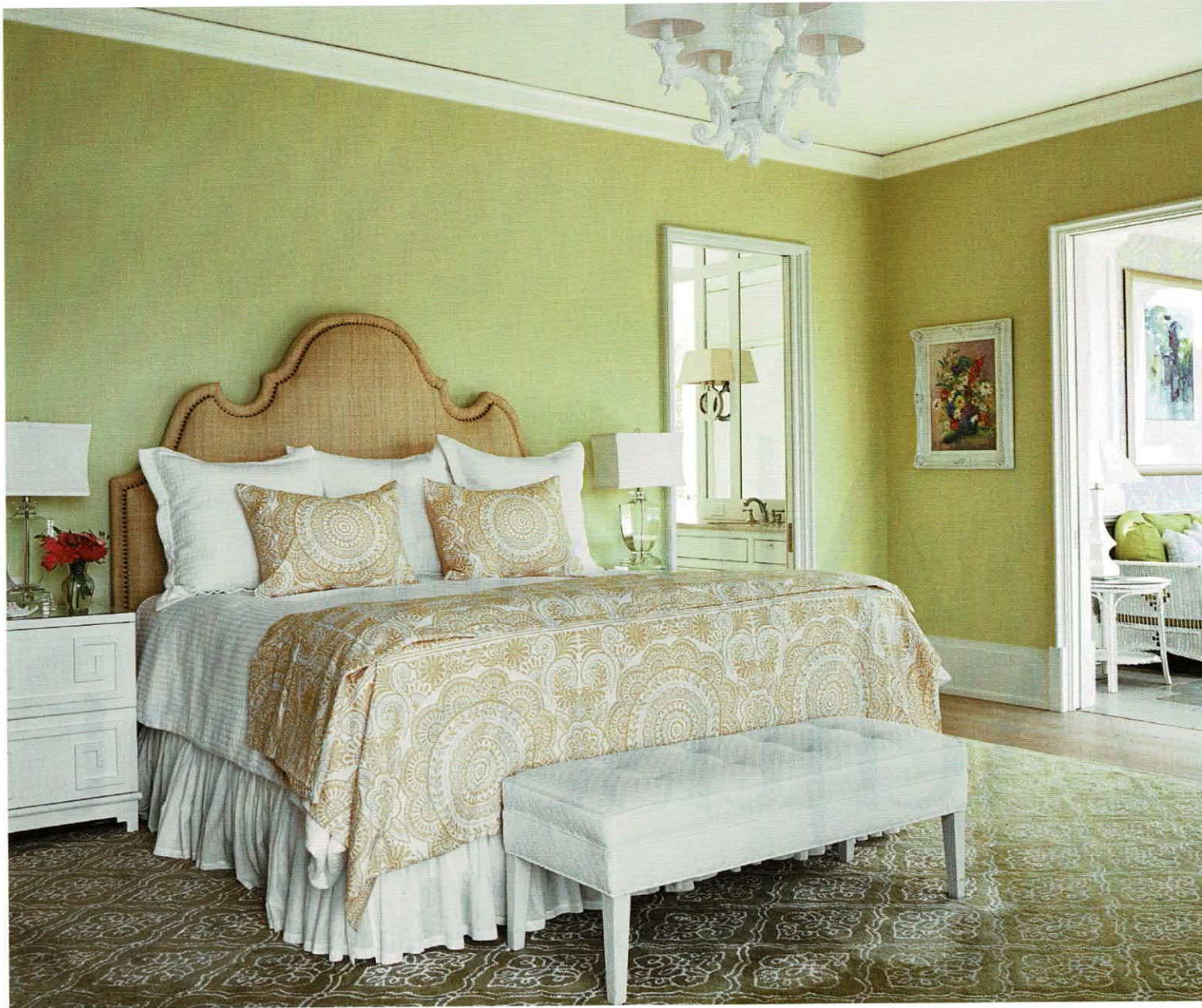


Residential designers Tom Adams and Adam Gerndt called on white cabinetry and a peaked, beamed ceiling in the kitchen to create a sense of airiness. A large island suits the chef with generous prep room and meets guest needs with banquette seating on the opposite side. Slipcovered chairs with dressmaker details and cheerful apple green accent pillows add a touch of femininity.



Clockwise, from top left: Furniture-style vanity details and a petite hexagon marble tile floor instill a sense of timelessness in a guest bath. Antique timbers create a natural, elegant framework for the almost 20-foot-tall banks of windows within the great-room. The pool and lake are just a stone's skip from the main house; views of both are enjoyed from almost every room in the house. A pair of vanities flank a soaking tub tucked within a gracious window bay in the master bath. Adams had the sunroom walls crafted from indigenous stone to blur the line between inside and out; a television above the fireplace showcases lots of football on fall evenings. Each guest room offers a chance to evoke a different mood, such as the ethereal romance of this damask-wallpapered space.





Above: A ground-level master suite fulfills Pat and Ken Robinson's desire for one-level living when it's just the two of them. An attached sunroom floods the space with light. Spring green-color walls and accents pick up on the natural theme. "When designing, I always try to use as much natural light as possible," Adams says. "My goal is to never have to turn on a light during the day."