

FURNITURE ISSUE

House Beautiful

APRIL 2007

piece-by-piece
guide to
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LOOKS



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Atlanta-based architect Kirk Burmeister designed this South Carolina lake cottage to capture maximum natural light. He used wide-plank ceilings throughout and also designed the living room fireplace, made from local granite. At the back of the sofa, an 1890s Italian console serves as a base for an antique sculptural horse, probably a French toy. Reproduction bobbin turned-leg chairs are from Jarry Pair. The custom reproduction hooked rug, designed to resemble older rugs throughout the house, is by Laura Fisher.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY BARBARA WESTBROOK

INTERVIEW BY MIMI READ

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIETER ESTERSON

furniture now
American casual





PHOTO LEFT: All the antique American hooked rugs in the house, including these in the entryway, are from Rugs by Robinson, c.2010. **PHOTO MIDDLE:** The breakfast room features an antique French trestle table from Erika Keady and an 1870s French bakery sign from Ainsworth Noah, 1988. Filtered light from the screened porch shows off distressed oak hardwood floors. The pair of Palm Beach wicker sofas came from Walters Wicker in New York.

MIMI READ: You've used so many emblems of traditional country style in this South Carolina lake house: spindle furniture, lanterns, hooked rugs, trestle tables, and folk art. Yet the result isn't a stereotypical country interior. There's a lightness and femininity here, a mix of things that makes it feel smart and fresh. What inspired you?

BARBARA WESTBROOK: The house and setting led to the country motif. It's a rustic English-style cottage set in a cove on Lake Keowee in the mountains of South Carolina. The client and her husband use it as a weekend house for relaxing with their children, who are college-age and above. They're very warm, unpretentious people. Yet I couldn't see them in an interior that felt like a hunting lodge in the mountains, or someplace hogsackin' and burlappy. She's a feminine, polished woman, who wears the most beautifully tailored suits and Manolo beach for work. When I conceive a house, I take my cues from a number of factors, including the way a client dresses.

How did you make rustic antiques feel this sophisticated? In every room, the detailing is delicate, from dressmaker touches on the window treatments to the soft, pleated skirts on the slipcovered chairs in the breakfast room. The upholstery fits well. I used a lot of contrasting textures—for instance,

smooth leather with chenille in the living room, so everything isn't too rustic or too smooth. The color palette also keeps the feeling light—the large rooms are mostly cream and white. The art and accessories are muted and the overall palette is subtle—quiet, inviting, warm.

The furniture in the living room is mostly fine old wooden pieces with lots of wax and patina. They make it feel so warm—especially for a new house. Was that your intention? The house was just completed when we moved everything in, and, yes, the old pieces make the house feel... not quite so new. The armoire is an antique French piece. It has great warmth and casualness. The sculptural horse is French, too. We got it at South of Market, a great little shop in Atlanta with lots of cruddy pieces. A little bit of crud in the most polished houses is wonderful.

That pair of spool chairs in the living room is just the sort of thing one is always looking for. They have a classic feeling, and yet they instantly give the room an interesting personality. Are they reproductions? They are. It's hard to find a pair of old spindle chairs that are sturdy and have the right scale for modern living. But these do. They're comfortable and sculptural.

Why did you use a modern coffee table on the screened porch? I like old furniture to look old and new furniture to look new. And since there is no such thing as an antique coffee table, I tend to like coffee tables that are modern.

Though the entryway is mostly a pass-through space. To me it's one of the warmest, prettiest moments in the house. It's a charming, intimate area that I think could have been forgotten, but I'm glad we didn't. Adding beautiful textures to a new house is key, like the great walnut French buffet and the amazing fishermen's baskets. And of course that antique French grandfather clock has such a beautiful presence.

What do you call the khaki-green room where the smaller trestle table has two antique rush-seat chairs pulled up to it? We call that the study. They're a professional couple, and in theory, they bring their laptops to the country and do work. It's just a room for when they want to go off and read. The rug really makes it. It's a real eye-catcher—the largest American antique hooked rug in the house.

What's the best object in the dining room, in your opinion? I love that French trestle table. It is a fabulous piece of furniture, about 10 feet long and 42 inches wide. It's hard to find an antique table that size that doesn't have a big apron going

around it that makes it hard to sit. It also has a nice patina—lots of lights, darks, and imperfections—and the edges are smooth and rounded from hands pushing away from the table.

In the guest bedroom, you've used such a blunt, chunky version of a four-poster bed. Along with gingham bed linens and the primitive dough bin at the foot of the bed, it makes this room speak country more plainly than the others. I was responding to the fact that the room is under the eaves and it has beadboard wainscoting and beadboard wrapped around the walls horizontally. It has a more casual country feeling. To me this bed has a more contemporary feeling, and we just mixed in one-of-a-kind pieces around it.

The rugs here—and throughout the house—are just incredible. Although they're antique American hooked rugs, they're not the floral or pictorial patterns one sees most often. I don't think I've ever used antique hooked rugs before, but this house needed something to make it feel a little bit dressy, more like a lake or mountain house. I chose geometric ones because they have such a nice graphic quality—an almost modern air. There's no question that they're artworks. I'd hesitate to put them in some houses, but this is a house where I knew they'd be taken care of and valued.

Petite stole botanicals in antique gold-leaf frames were wrapped around the study to create continuity. Walls and trim are painted Benjamin Moore's *Whisper* in a satin finish; the ceiling is Benjamin Moore's *Overcast* in a flat finish. The Fireside wing chair by Dennis & Leon is upholstered in blue and brown herringbone wool from Holland & Sherry. The antique rush-seat desk chairs from Edgar-Reeves in Atlanta wear cushions of Diering Sapphire blue velvet by Rogers & Goffigon. Twisted iron floor lamp and chandelier are from Edgar-Reeves.





"It's a small bathroom, so I wanted everything built-in, precise, and neat. And yet it turned out charming and inviting. You wouldn't believe the number of people who pass through it and say they're dying to get into that bathtub."



OPPOSITE, ABOVE: The beadboard-clad walls and ceiling in the master bath are painted the same shade of cream—Donald Kaufman's DKC-5 in a satin finish, as below. One of the two guest beds, this one, in a guest bedroom under the eaves, a custom bed by Westbrook Interiors has three-quarter-high posts and an antiqued black finish. Bed linen are in a lavender-and-cream checked cotton by Chateau Editions. The Bar Harbor wicker chair, and the dough bin at the foot of the bed, are from Dearing Antiques. Six antique silhouettes of children at play from Edgar-Beavers hang above the headboard.



Creamy white walls painted in Donald Kaufman's DKC in a flat finish give a fresh, light feeling to the master bedroom. The iron canopy bed, a custom piece by Westbrook Interiors, was manufactured by Charles Calhoun Metalworks. The Delta Ivory coverlet came from Susan Shepherd Interiors and the custom duvet is in Acorn & Leaves, a Chelsea Editions cotton. Pillows are antique grain sacks. The Ratchet library chair by Dennis & Leon and the antique bobbin-leg side table are from Jerry Pair. The late-19th-century padded bench came from Linda Hershey Antiques. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.

