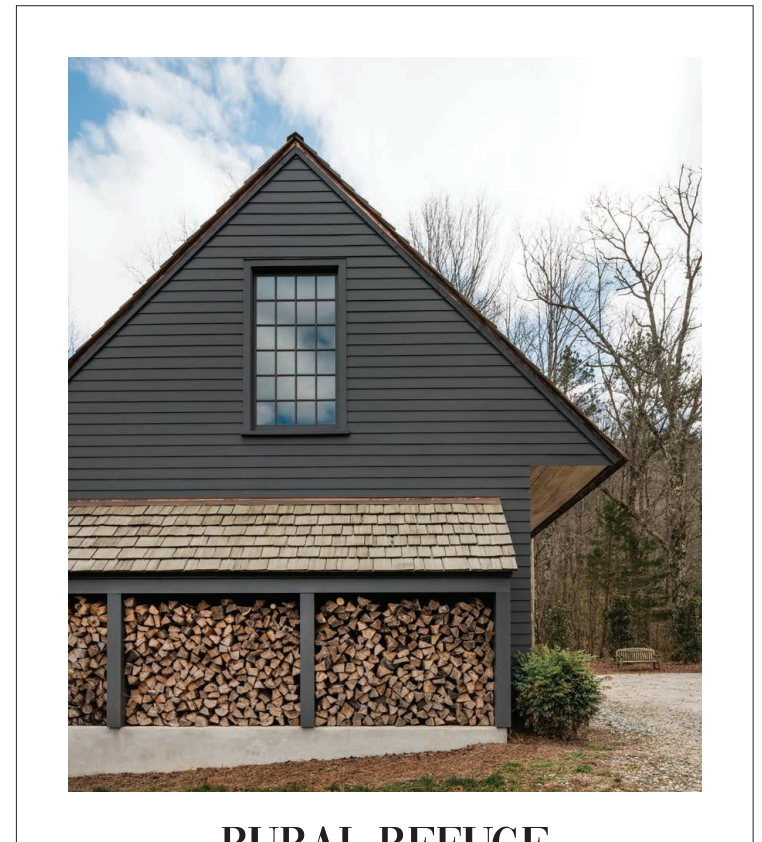




Hundred-year-old trees drew Pam Sessions and Don Donnelly to this North Georgia property, so they nestled their main house and cottages in their midst. The foliage is glorious in summer, but the silhouette of winter trees is equally appealing.



## RURAL REFUGE

THIS NORTH GEORGIA FARM COMPOUND IS NEW BUT LOOKS AS SETTLED AS THE 100-YEAR-OLD TREES AROUND IT

By LISA MOWRY | Photography by RUSTIC WHITE



A mix of building materials on separate cottages, along with thoughtful landscaping, gives this family compound the look of a historic property.

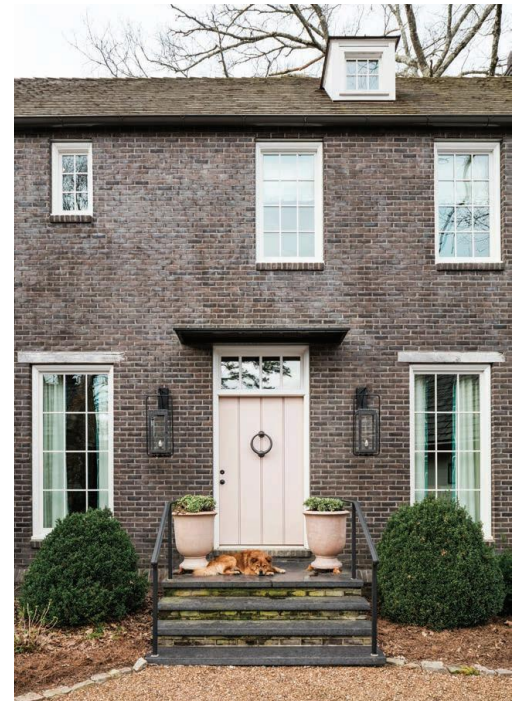
## AS VISIONARIES IN

Atlanta's home-building community, Pam Sessions and her husband, Don Donnelly, have turned their neighborhoods—from Vickery to Summerhill—into laboratories for new designs rooted in classic architecture and history. Their personal second home in the North Georgia mountains takes that philosophy up a notch, with inspiration from Atlanta's Tullie Smith Farm, European kitchens, and historic manor homes in nearby mountain towns. "We like architecture with a Southern vernacular and a strong use of local materials," says Pam. "Our buildings were placed on the original home site within the existing trees to give the feeling it's been there for close to a century."

Pam and Don were drawn to the property because of its proximity to Atlanta but also for the serene natural features spread over 25 acres: a pond, pastures, heritage trees, and mountains. They designed the new-to-look-old main house and cottages compound-style, with a main living room/owner's suite in the larger abode, and smaller guest residences situated nearby. Key to the project were their longtime architectural collaborator Lew Oliver and the couple's own firm, Hedgewood Homes.

The interiors have focal points at every turn, starting with the kitchen and its vaulted cypress ceiling, which frames a mesmerizing painting of a horse by Atlanta artist Michael Dines. Floor-to-ceiling tile on surrounding walls adds a clean look. "I've long admired kitchens with tile walls that we've seen in historic homes in Europe," says Pam, who also incorporated artisan-made cabinets, a zinc range hood, and a vintage dining table. White-oak paneling in the living room is complemented by sultry colors elsewhere in the house—rich greens and charcoal grays—and every room has special pieces of art or handmade items.

Aside from the compound's style quotient, the woody lifestyle is what brings them back. "Covid hit, and the farm was our safe refuge," says Pam, who, with Don, is often joined by adult children Ben and Drew and always their two dogs, Ro and Chewy. A nearby dog they nicknamed Red (with Pam in photo at left) wanders over to play when they're there and lures them back up. "We found ourselves feeling we needed to go to the farm because he would be there," she adds. "He's strongly responsible for getting us to the farm every weekend and has showed us another life that is now very meaningful to us all."





**ABOVE** | Striking features in the working part of the kitchen include backsplash tiles that pay homage to artist M.C. Escher and a custom zinc hood by local company Livingston Metal Works, which also collaborated with Keystone Millworks on the double custom islands.

**TOPRIGHT** | A tucked-in pantry houses essentials such as refrigerators, dishwashers, sink, and storage, enabling the adjacent kitchen area to be more of a living space. Soapstone countertops and cabinets painted in "Rosemary" by Sherwin-Williams reflect Pam's love of texture and the color green.

**BOTTOM RIGHT** | "For the powder bath, I hung the art photography by Trine Sondergaard over this console sink from Waterworks rather than the expected mirror, since it's the most prominent location," says Pam. [An antique mirror is off to the side.]



Window treatments in an abstract pattern by Kelly Wearstler stand out next to stained white-oak walls and bouclé upholstery in the living room. The large, 14 x 19-foot kilim rug is from ABC Home in New York.



**ABOVE** | A vintage sofa reupholstered in pink fabric by Björk Studio plays off the floral black-and-white carpet from Madeline Weinrib in a guest sitting area. The photographs are by Vee Speers.

**OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT** | Inside a little stone cottage is a cozy guest bedroom. A cypress vaulted ceiling presides over twin custom beds made with Zak + Fox fabrics, created by Designs by Sudi, with antique pillows part of the mix.

**OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT** | Pam designed furniture-like vanity cabinets for an earthy look in the primary bath, featuring Kreoo marble sinks, her own line of hardware pulls, vintage mirrors, and wall-mounted faucets. Reclaimed oak floors elsewhere in the house continue here. "I've never shied away from wood floors in the bath, since I enjoy the actual and visual warmth of wood," she adds.

**OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** | A canopy bed by Atlanta metalsmith Charles Calloun almost disappears against dark-gray walls ("Iron Ore" by Sherwin-Williams) in the primary bedroom.

**OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT** | "Thing stools" from R. Hughes are artistic elements in the primary bedroom, sitting under spoon art by artist/sculptor Julian Watts.

**RESOURCES** | **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Pam Sessions, Hedgewood Homes, hedgewoodhomes.com | **BUILDER:** Hedgewood Homes | **ARCHITECTURE:** Lew Oliver, lewolverinc.com | **LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Design Tree Landscapes, (678) 654-7152 | **TO SHOP THIS STORY,** SEE PAGE 64.

