

# NATURAL HABITAT

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A rambling lakeside home by **BRANDON INGRAM** and **ASHLEY GILBREATH** takes cues from its dynamic homeowners



### *Step Inside*

In the front gallery, a gilded antique demilune and abstract painting by Augusta Wilson set against the backdrop of more casual butted wood walls offer a first glimpse of the high-and-low design effect present throughout the home. *opposite* Architect Brandon Ingram incorporated natural materials to complement the residence's leafy, lakeside surroundings.



*Laid-back Luxe*  
*opposite* Pieces with character, such as an antique Italian table and vintage leather chairs, define the dining space. The mirror is from Scott Antique Markets. *above* A pair of Visual Comfort iron chandeliers ties together the adjoining living and dining spaces. Pressed foliage by Blackwell Botanicals nod to the home's natural setting.

WHEN BUILDING A DREAM HOME, it's easy to get caught up in the aesthetics. Will it be contemporary or more classic? Will it feature pops of color or playful patterns? But for a young couple with two children, their new lakeside home in Columbus, Georgia, was instead built more on feeling.

"The home really does smile at you," says Montgomery-based interior designer Ashley Gilbreath, when describing its welcoming nature. "It's a hospitable, happy place and that's really a reflection of the clients."

The family's easy-going spirit, along with the land's verdant setting, was all the inspiration Atlanta architect Brandon Ingram needed to craft a rambling-style home that makes quite the first impression. A meandering driveway through the woods reveals a classic lap-sided dwelling that boasts touches of local fieldstone and a playful wooden roofline. "It has a kick back-and-relax feel to it, but still is very sophisticated. Given they're a young family, it was important that the home didn't take itself too seriously so we avoided any notion of overt formality," explains Ingram.



**Pretty + Practical**

*above* The family room takes on a more relaxed feel with splashes of color and playful patterns. Clean up is also a breeze thanks to performance fabrics. *opposite* While an unexpected Chippendale-style railing on the home's center staircase adds flair, butted board walls instantly dial back the formality, a yin and yang design sensibility present throughout the house.

The interiors echo Ingram's approach. "While much of the home is rooted in classic design, it's equally casual and approachable," says Gilbreath. She skillfully achieved this balance by avoiding anything deemed "too fussy" and instead outfitted the light-filled spaces with tailored lines and natural textiles in a range of organic tones so as not to distract from the scenic lake views. Whimsical details were also part of the design equation, such as the powder room's vintage wooden trough sink or an unexpected modern leather light fixture in the library. Most impactful of all, though, is a custom 11-foot raffia upholstered screen that not only serves to delineate the living and dining spaces, but further enhances the home's unique design sensibilities.

Since the young homeowners were trading in their hodge-podge furnishings (including pieces from college) from their first home for more refined pieces in line with this new season of life, Gilbreath was keen to help them understand the value of investing in antiques. "I don't think you can grow up in the South and not have some collection of antiques, that's just part of it, but they began to recognize the value in an old piece rather than buying something new," she says.

*Family Style*

Designed to accommodate large groups, the breakfast room features a mix of seating options. The antique walnut table is from Belgium and the light fixture is by Noir. *right, top to bottom* A graphic Scion wallcovering adds a dose of whimsy to the laundry room; the custom folding table was made from a large butcher block Gilbreath found in France. Reclaimed Italian doors reveal a butler's pantry.





### *Historical Nod*

In the kitchen, cabinetry by Kingdom Woodworks was designed to resemble furniture as a nod to historic homes. The pendants are Visual Comfort.

“Not only do antiques, with their little quirks and imperfections, add to the depth of a space, but they really stand up to life’s ‘uh-oh’ moments,” Gilbreath goes on to explain when discussing the home’s antique European tables in the breakfast and dining rooms. “The clients envisioned their home as a place where all the other kids and families came to hang out, so snacking and coloring and whatever else on these tables is very hassle-free because you can’t harm them. They’ve already stood the test of time.”

The backdrop for all of these design details was just as thoughtfully devised by Ingram, with many of the interior walls featuring butted wood boards. “There’s an inherent feeling that wood gives to a home. It’s the echo and the way a door shuts; there’s something kind of ephemeral about that,” he explains. And to dress up spaces intended for entertaining, Ingram incorporated more complex millwork. “In some places, we let the cornices get fancy but the wood still reels it in a bit. And there’s other spots where we dialed back the millwork, essentially playing this game of high and low throughout to create visual interest, which effectively creates a story to the home.”

And undoubtedly, the narrative of this home is one of warmth and hospitality. “It’s not too showy or too bold,” says Gilbreath. “Just like the clients, it’s ready to greet you with open arms.” See *Resources, Back of Book*.



**“THIS HOME  
REALLY DOES  
SMILE AT YOU.”  
—ASHLEY  
GILBREATH**

*Seeing Green*  
Farrow & Ball's Green  
Smoke in high-gloss  
enriches the library's  
detailed millwork.  
Since the space also  
doubles as a home  
office, a skirted con-  
sole and fabric-lined  
cabinetry keep "work"  
components hidden.





*Peaceful Place*  
left A custom, hand-crafted mahogany bed by Reid Classics in Dothan, Alabama, serves as the centerpiece of the generously sized master suite. The private sitting area features a dressing table and prime views of the lake. below The master suite's serene, pared-down palette continues into the bath. Additional storage is hidden in the walls adjacent to the vanities.

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—ASHLEY GILBREATH





**Warm Welcome**

*clockwise, from left* In the guest bedroom, an antique chest purchased in Belgium sits beside a chair from Selamat Designs covered in a playful fabric by Erika M. Powell Textiles. Antique demilune nightstands mounted on the wall add a historic edge to a guest bedroom. A vintage trough from Europe is repurposed as a sink and rests on a lacquered countertop suspended by custom iron hardware. A powder room is clean and serene.



**Stately Slumber**

In the guest bedroom, the top of a vintage armoire serves as the bed crown. Other unique accents include framed Italian family crests displayed just above the headboard. To keep things fresh, Schumacher's Deconstructed Stripe wallcovering adds a touch of modern.



*Cottage Charm*

*left* A custom bed swing on the back porch offers a serene spot for the family and their dog, Lexi, to enjoy views of the lake. *below* A detached garage—charmingly designed to look like a potting shed—houses a boat and other equipment.

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—BRANDON INGRAM**

