

SOUTHERN COMFORT

With family-friendly finishes and time-worn antiques, this luminous new build in Columbus, Georgia, is here for the long haul.

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Architecture: David Baker, Tippet Sease Baker Architecture Interior Design: Ashley Gilbreath, Ashley Gilbreath Interior Design
Home Builder: Ray Brinegar, Ray Brinegar, Builder



For a new Columbus, Georgia, abode by architect David Baker, divided-light windows by Kolbe Windows & Doors complement a copper French Quarter lantern by Bevolo Gas & Electric Lights. Sheep's Wool by Benjamin Moore coats the façade's tumbled brick from Acme Brick.

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et on the banks of the Chattahoochee River, Columbus, Georgia, is counted among the South's most charming small cities. Boasting the largest urban whitewater rafting course in the world, it also beguiles

adventure seekers galore. But for a local family of four, Columbus offered a thrill of a different sort: the opportunity to construct a forever home where cherished memories would be made. And a sloped, wooded lot provided the prime location for such a dream to take shape. "The draw of this property is its beautiful setting; you're very much in the city, but it feels like a vacation home because it's so tucked away," explains designer Ashley Gilbreath, who dressed the interiors in her telltale curated, comfortable style. "We wanted to play up that connection to the land as much as possible."

Architect David Baker's quest to craft the perfect envelope began with the wife's requests. Specifically, her heart was set on a classic white-brick house organized around a central courtyard. Fulfilling her wish, Baker sketched a multigabled two-story abode augmented by a few Belgian-inspired notes. "A house is a lot like us; we travel the world, we see beautiful things, then we bring them home," observes the architect of his inspirations. Translating Baker's vision from paper to framing was general contractor Ray Brinegar. "Although this was the first time Ashley or I had the opportunity to work with Ray, his craft proved vital in erecting a home that perfectly fit this family," Baker shares.

Tucked into the hillside's embrace, the residence follows a modified H-shaped layout, which happens to impart its most intriguing characteristic: Most spaces are just one room deep. Keeping the structure intentionally narrow allowed for 360-degree views to nature, a quality Baker emphasized via multipaned floor-to-ceiling windows that flood the interiors with natural light. The architect amplified this effect with a wealth of corner windows and a transom over the kitchen's plaster range hood that further tie the home to the landscape. "Your gaze never stops at a corner or a dead-end space," Baker explains. With every quarter turn, "You're visually invited into the next room and the next—whether that happens to be inside or outside."

Since there is no formal foyer, from the moment you enter, "you get a taste of the entire home," Gilbreath notes. And although open layouts can sometimes lack a sense of mystery, this one holds a few enigmatic twists. Namely, both the kitchen and the office are part of the main thoroughfare, yet they sit discretely tucked away. Because of this, happening upon each feels like an act of profound discovery. "You're in the center of the action but very much in your own private world," Gilbreath says. "That's the magic of David's work; he can create that kind of duality within a space." This aspect also underscores one of the guiding forces of the project: that it become a long-haul home meant to mature with the family. Comments Baker: "There's an adaptability to this residence; it allows for rearranging or editing furniture to accommodate how the clients want the rooms to evolve."

To complement the architect's selections of white oak floors and defining ceiling beams, Gilbreath swaddled the interiors in a palette of creams, watery blues and greens, taking her creative cues from the cerulean sky and rolling hills outside. Nature-inspired art and classic silhouettes put the focus on gracious comforts, while black-iron chandeliers introduce crisp punctuation points to the predominantly neutral backdrop. Meanwhile, heirlooms with pedigree, including the entry salon's bleached-wood Portuguese worktable, impart gravitas without fussiness—a combination considered a must in Gilbreath's playbook. "We believe furniture can have dings and marks and still be beautiful," she says. "You can love on it, and it only adds more texture and patina to the space, proving that everything doesn't have to be perfect."

For a family with two teens, two dogs and two cats, approachable finishes and fabrics like these were a prerequisite. The wife was adamant about having hard-wearing quartz in the kitchen, using stain- and fade-resistant upholstery throughout the home and laying down soft synthetic-fiber rugs that could handle the pets running to and fro. "Everything we chose was durable and life-proof, designed to hold up over time," Gilbreath adds.

In fact, that practical mindset could sum up the entire project's warm, family-centric aesthetic. "I don't think there's a square inch of this house that didn't have some massive intention behind it," the designer says. "It's a house that will evolve along with the owners themselves. It's timeless and everlasting—a truly inheritable home." ■



Above: The family exercise room is swathed in Sherwin-Williams' Link Gray. Visual Comfort & Co.'s Branson chandelier suspends above a Jaipur Living braided rug and layered cowhide from BS Trading Co. The Renée Bouchon painting is from Gregg Irby Gallery.

Opposite: Demilune consoles from Parish flank a white oak front door built by JP Millwork. Indiana limestone flooring from Kolbe Windows & Doors delineates the front hall cross-axis, which leads to a transom-topped door to the family exercise room.

White oak beams from JP Millwork define the home's dining area. Visual Comfort & Co.'s Branson chandelier presides over two styles of Lee Industries dining chairs, including a skirted version sporting Perennials' Piccadilly Stripe fabric.





Above: Visual Comfort & Co.'s Norma table lamp rests atop a Highland House desk in the sunlit office. Lee Industries' High Back Campaign chair pairs with an antique footstool, providing an ideal spot to focus. Jaipur Living's Santa Barbara Miradero rug runs underfoot.

Opposite: Draperies of Carole's Keep Calm textile surround the office, illuminated by Visual Comfort & Co.'s Belfair Grande chandelier. A 19th-century leather campaign trunk from Parish pops against the owners' sofa, which was updated in Kravet's Smart velvet.



Right: Erika M. Powell Textiles' Palm Parade grass-cloth wallcovering enlivens the laundry room. Sherwin-Williams' Mindful Gray colors the cabinetry while an antique pine table from Parish offers a place to fold and sort.

Opposite: The kitchen's white oak paneling extends into the adjacent pantry. Custom storage is accented by Water Street Brass hardware from Brandino Brass Co. The countertops feature quartz from Sellers Beyond Tile.





Above: In the guest bedroom, a custom Mark V Jordan headboard donning Lulie Wallace's Anna fabric coordinates with Pom Pom at Home linens. Two framed Laura McCarty landscapes telegraph serenity as Arteriors' Tassel lamps keep things playful.

Opposite: A skylight creates a channel of light in the primary bathroom, where Visual Comfort & Co.'s equally striking Erika chandelier crowns the scene. Polished nickel Easton plumbing fixtures accompany a burnished cast-iron Voltaire tub, all by Waterworks, balancing high shine with patina.