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ELEVATING THE INTERIOR LIFE

Vol. XVIII | WINTER 2016

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Welcome

Welcome to *Nashville Interiors*. We hope you enjoy our mix of design-inspired stories. Our new editorial direction has the goal of "elevating the interior life." With this in mind, we have selected stories that show how our private spaces and settings can inspire, reveal local history, and nurture relationships.

Since *Nashville Interiors* first arrived on newsstands sixteen years ago, online rooms and resources have become well-worn paths for information. We've all changed. *Nashville Interiors* has also changed, offering a dynamic web presence. Our annual print edition continues with a new vision, offering a visual journal of stories that remind us why design and sense of place matter in the first place.

In print, we take you across the threshold of fine homes with great personality. We also introduce you to collectors, visual artists, and masters of craft from across our region. Travel with us to a mountain top cabin, urban markets, an orchid greenhouse, and to historic Bright Hour Farm in Brentwood. Our cover story explores a lakefront retreat designed by Christopher Architecture and Interiors of Birmingham, one of our long-time supporters. Each of our advertisers connect you with great style and expertise.

Music City, USA is made up of generations who make music both an economy and a lifestyle. Certainly, nothing elevates our interior life like music and its rich artifacts and venues. So, we are pleased to introduce you to Tennessee's senior luthier, Charles Gene Horner. My own mandolin bears his initials and is a prized possession. Shannon Pollard and Lon Eldridge are two younger Tennessee musicians who collect and curate the culture, building bridges to new audiences. There's no more exciting time to live in Tennessee for those who seek an authentic sense of place and value the visual and performing arts.

We hope our pages inspire you to playfully explore design and fine art in your special places.



Kathryn Nash
Publisher

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Design **JOURNAL**

The O'More College of Design 2016 Show House featured a vintage bungalow in historic Franklin, TN and *Nashville Interiors* was there for the opening reception. More than a dozen of the top interior design firms in Tennessee participated. Pictured are Dana Goodman and Cristy Allsbrooks Parish with Dana Goodman Interiors.



MARKET

Machinist David Tilley repurposes pallets and scrap metal into high-end industrial-style accent furnishings and tables. Learn more about this green start-up business and how you can commission one of his finely crafted conversation pieces for your home or office. If we didn't tell you these were made from recycled pallets, you wouldn't guess. The craftsman's finish rivals the finest furniture. The iron embellishments add to the industrial look and blend with any décor.

STORIES

Wayne White painted a mural on his dining room wall as a romantic gift for his wife, artist Mimi Pond. When Jon Sherman at Flavor Paper saw this, he immediately wanted to feature the vintage fantasy landscape as part of his line of high-style wallcoverings. He did, and "Waynetopia" won the best wallpaper prize at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair held in New York in May 2016. Congratulations to this multi-faceted artist who now lives in California but still claims Tennessee as his homeplace. Watch for an upcoming article about a solo exhibit of his work at the Hunter Museum of American Art.

Nashville Interiors

2016

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Nashville Interiors

©2016. *Nashville Interiors* is published annually by Tennessee Interiors, LLC. The magazine has been continuously in print since 2000.

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Nashville Interiors magazine issues are available at select newsstands in the region.

To receive an advertising rate sheet for print and digital options, please contact Pam@nashvilleinteriors.com. Outside Middle Tennessee, please contact Laurie@nashvilleinteriors.com.

Please direct story ideas and calendar items directly to Laurie@nashvilleinteriors.com.

The publishers and editors are not responsible for any unsolicited materials.

We seek to be the premier design publication of Tennessee, offering regional stories that introduce you to masters of craft building and interiors, artists, those offering high-quality furnishings, collectors, curators, advisors, and architects. Our team seeks to elevate design excellence along with green building practices, land trusts, historic preservation, and community events.

As we embrace Nashville as that distinct cultural hub known as Music City, our stories and our readership extend out like spokes across the South.

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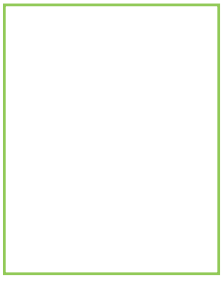
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Memories and Minnow Buckets

BUILDING THE MODERN HOMEPLACE

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS LUKER

The fondest memories of childhood for Jeff Roberts were spent on the water—driving a boat, skiing, and swimming. His mother, Betsy Roberts, taught Jeff and his brother, Will, to enjoy each of these activities at an early age. Actually, she has taught hundreds of children to be confident swimmers and water enthusiasts. For more than thirty years, Jeff's grandmother, Girlie Snyder, and his mother, Betsy Roberts, directed the prestigious Webb School Day Camp offered exclusively for girls. Now retired, Jeff's mother was missing the water.

Jeff went searching for a future homeplace where his mother, now 75, could feel most at home. Smith Lake, located near Cullman, Alabama, is situated half-way between Jeff's home in Birmingham and his brother Will's home in Knoxville. Jeff has wanted his four nieces and nephews to have the summer camp experience he and Will had enjoyed. They would all benefit from a place where they could unplug, connect with nature, and swing a minnow bucket on their way to fish. For Jeff and his family, the most natural place on earth is a Southern lake.

above left: Master bedroom

above right: Built in bunk beds delight younger guests.

right: Front door is Douglas fir, crafted by artisan Charles Atkins of Birmingham. The hardware is hand-forged bronze.

far right: A crema marfil marble is paired with an antique limestone for the master bath.

"We've given more than a nod to the Craftsman lodge with our design." —Bill Moore, Project Manager, CAi

This summer the dream was fully realized and best captured in the joyful splash of children's laughter as they make their jumps from the dock into the water. Jeff named the new homeplace "Bebbie's Pointe." Situated on approximately three acres, the property offers a woodland and water nature preserve, a gorgeous 5,000-square foot home, a private dock, a two-car garage with attached carport, and 550 feet of shoreline.

Christopher Architecture and Interiors designed the lake home to sleep more than a dozen guests. The family enjoys built-in bunks in the third story guestroom, and for extra-large gatherings, window seats multi-task as highly comfortable twin beds. We expect there's probably a fight over who gets the beds on the porches that are also swings.

The entire home and easy access to the lake tap the inner child of every guest. No matter the season, the views are well buffered from neighbors and bring wildlife into view. "Jeff had one particular wish," said CAi Project Manager Bill Moore. "He wanted to be able to see the lake from every room. We designed a long linear footprint for the house to maximize those incredible views."

"We've given more than a nod to the Craftsman lodge with our design," said Bill. The Alabama brown stone piers are eight feet across at their base and work with heavy timbers to anchor the three-story home. "These elements frame an outdoor room that blurs the interior and exterior settings." In winter it will be sheltered from winds and snow, so the family can enjoy their outdoor fireplace, and in summer it is a natural gathering place.

The outdoor fireplace makes this homeplace welcoming in the winter.

"Natural materials underscore Jeff's lifestyle," said CAi interior designer Emory Ratliff. She and Bill collaborated to develop the interior look and feel of the entire home. She selected the finishes and also worked with Jeff to furnish and accessorize the second home. "There's nothing fussy here, but it is also not overly masculine." The home appeals across generations and is a beautiful backdrop for a formal family holiday with all the trimmings, or a casual, spontaneous get-away that needs little planning. **NI**

far left: Christopher Architecture and Interiors designer Emory Ratliff and project manager Bill Moore

left: Outdoor room connects the family with nature.

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Christopher Architecture and Interiors of Birmingham: christopherai.com
Cotton Woodworks custom built cabinetry and furniture of Birmingham: cottonwoodworks.com
Red Mountain Ironworks of Birmingham: redmountainiron.com
Bevolo copper lighting of New Orleans: bevelo.com
Circa Lighting of Charleston: circalighting.com

TENNESSEE HISTORY

Jeff Robert's has named the lake home "Bebbie's Pointe" in honor of his mother and using her affectionate family nickname. His mother, Betsy Snyder Roberts, directed the prestigious Webb School Day Camp exclusively for girls. Her mother, Girlie Snyder had founded the program. Together, for more than 30 years, they offered one of the only progressive camps of its kind in the nation devoted to ensure equal access to skill-building and challenging activities for girls. The program proved popular with families in the region. Girlie Snyder also taught at the Webb School, and Betsy went on to become Assistant Athletic Director for the Women's Division at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

"Both my mother and my grandmother were very progressive and strong advocates for women's athletics and equality," said Jeff Roberts. "Back in the 50s, women's basketball in East Tennessee was played half-court. My grandmother thought that was ridiculous and had her female students at Webb School running the full court."

"Leading the summer camp for girls was Girlie and Betsy's way to be effective advocates for girls and women," said Jeff. In addition to the four-week summer camp, Betsy Roberts taught private swimming lessons, he said. "Through their swim lessons and camps, hundreds and hundreds of young women in Tennessee became confident swimmers and were exposed to many other skills."

The Webb School Day Camp offered a variety of activities: swimming, water ballet, canoeing, water skiing, archery, riflery, crafts and tennis. The women's locker room at Webb School is named for Jeff's grandmother, Girlie Snyder.

"Mother was a close friend of the late Pat Summit," said Jeff, "and they were both in the Chi Omega Sorority and worked closely together when Mom was in the athletic department. I once heard Pat Summit say, 'If it weren't for women like Girlie Snyder, I would be coaching half-court basketball.'"

Coach Pat Summitt went on to have the most wins in NCAA basketball history upon retirement in 2013—all full court, of course—as the head coach of the University of Tennessee Lady Vols from 1974-2012. Pat also won two Olympic medals for basketball, one gold as the coach and one silver as a player. Pat passed in June of 2016.

Girlie Snyder and Betsy Snyder Roberts must have been thrilled to witness the full-court equality they insisted upon for their girls' basketball program find such a winning champion in Tennessee's beloved Pat Summitt. **NI**

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life at Bright Hour Farm

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY WEEKS

Old cedars from the farm continue in new form as barn doors with decorative iron hinges. This intentional craftsmanship frames each horse like a row of oil portraits as we approach. The paintings begin to come alive, and suddenly the personality of each horse becomes apparent by their greeting. One horse studies *us,* quietly stepping back into the shadows of his stall; another kicks their wall in anticipation that we have come to play, and not merely document their beauty. A third horse sticks her neck as far out as possible and flares her nostrils. How can we resist? We step away from our purpose to see each one, to take in all the aromas of the place, the dry hay, the husbandry.

At the center of the barn we are invited to step into a rustic retreat, a small saddle room with a display along the wall. A fireplace tries to be the focal point, but it's the saddles that draw us into their story. If the horses appeared as a gallery of paintings, imagine these saddles lined up like a row of old leather-bound books. The timeline of saddles speak volumes about history and culture, wins and losses, and the rites of passage for each person in the Houghland family. A small brass label is attached to each one and the engraving of 'Bright Hour Farm' serves as the common imprint. The history in that room is not merely the

NASHVILLE NOTE

The Nashville rite-of-spring takes its name from Pierre Lorillard's beloved 'Iroquois,' the first American-bred horse to win the English Derby. The celebrated horse was retired to Belle Meade Plantation in Nashville where he was bred to bring the next generation into the limelight. The Nashville racetrack at Percy Warner Park was built in 1936 in the rolling hillside as part of the federal Works Progress Association (WPA) and the first race was held in 1941. Nearly 30,000 people now annually attend race day. The 76th annual Iroquois Steeplechase will be held Saturday, May 13, 2017.

family's private world, but a community's heritage shared over many years— and each year— through the iconic event they helped fashion: Nashville's Iroquois Steeplechase.

"The happiest days of my life have all been here at this farm," said Calvin Houghland, Jr. His first night at the farm began bundled in a blanket when his parents brought him home from the hospital nursery in 1947. The family lived in a white two story farmhouse that still stands nestled into the hillside. His parents had very recently purchased the property in anticipation of having an ideal place to raise their children. Bright Hour Farm is, in many regards, a classic 1940s post-War American dream.

Today Calvin Jr. and his wife, Blythe, enjoy their own home at Bright Hour that overlooks the large pond and into a meadow. Geese walk across the field like school children. The afternoon sun turns the water to a silver shimmering. Calvin's sister, Sara Jo, and her husband Don Gill, also live on the property past the barn as the wooden slats of fencing curve around the property and out of view. They all share a passion for the land and their horses, perhaps Sara Jo and Don most of all. "They ride every day and work as trainers," said Calvin. He speaks of their talent for the work and dedication. "Sara Jo has never missed a Steeplechase race."

The farm was actually named Bright Hour, in honor of a beloved horse that "Big Calvin" (Calvin, Sr.) rode in the first Iroquois Steeplechase on May 10, 1941. More than 50,000 people are reported to have attended that inaugural event at Percy Warner Park, surprising organizers and overwhelming traffic for miles and conversation for weeks. Today, more than 30,000 attendees meet a city well prepared for its main event, one that sells out in advance.

Calvin, Sr., like his father Mason Houghland, helped direct the Volunteer State Horseman's Foundation that serves as the governing body for the race. Mason Houghland served as chairman from 1941 until his passing in 1957. Calvin Sr. continued the family's commitment and embodied the passion of the race. He rode in the first Iroquois Steeplechase in 1941 and took home a trophy for his third run in 1943. He scored victories as an owner again in 1958 and 1961. At age 93, Calvin Sr. would win again in May 2009 with a throng of cheers. In October that same year he passed.

"My father's story came full circle that year," said Calvin, Jr. showing us a photograph of his father holding up an impressive silver trophy and sporting a beaming grin that defied any frailty. The circle remains unbroken. There has not been a year when the Houghland Family has not had a horse in the race. Their bright blue and yellow silks are a signature of their dedication and love for the equestrian life. Their family name is underscored in the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame and the Iroquois Steeplechase Hall of Fame. Their philanthropy has been significant to connect the successful event with the Vanderbilt children's hospital as beneficiary.

In 2010, race officials honored the memory of Calvin Sr. by ringing the bell. Those who witnessed the moment said the typically boisterous crowd went completely silent as a show of respect. It was indeed a moment, one that still resonates for this family. Their public honors seem tempered by private loss.

Bright Hour Farm is a place where everyone who visits gets drawn toward the view of the pond, and the sound of geese announcing a change of season. It's a place where one cannot help but wax mindful of the increasingly rarity of land that still anchors family, culture, and community.

The couple recall their engagement, and later how they rode an old golf cart across the hills to try and choose a site to stake out the foundation for a home of their own. If they had chosen their second favorite site, they might now have a house that overlooks an asphalt Publix parking lot and Brentwood traffic. Intuition told them to look toward the sunset across the pond, the heron's tranquil pose, the family farmhouse standing luminous that night in the distance. They are buffered on all sides from suburbia.

Two of their daughters, Sara Jo and Lacey, were married near that same spot beside the pond in recent years. Both brides carried roses cut from their Aunt Sara Jo's trellis nearby. The same farm where Calvin Sr. passed away surrounded by family and dreams fulfilled, also holds new beginnings for the next generation. Calvin and Blythe's story brings to mind the last line of verse from "Wild Rose" by Kentucky farmer and poet Wendell Berry, "Once more I am blessed, choosing again what I chose before." **NI**

As you might expect, Calvin and Blythe's home is furnished with equestrian-themed art and race memorabilia. They are particularly fond of French antiques such as two Napoleonic urns that flank a new oil painting installation. A French cabinet serves as pedestal for a bronze figure of a horse. Many of their furnishings were collected over the years at auction houses including Northgate Gallery in Chattanooga. One particular set refuses to be overlooked: three large black standard poodles. The three are not made of fine porcelain or captured in oil; the dogs are real and have names: Annie, Jett, and Toby. They might seem at first to represent the old idiom, "like a bull in a china closet.' Yet, somehow, through the easy temperament of the couple, the scene endures without calamity. The dogs each have a story of abandonment and neglect, before landing in the care of this family and this farm. The family and the three lively ones enjoy a setting where the only drama is that of a loud barred owl at dusk or the sighting of a bald eagle or albino hawk.

Hollie Berry's Equestrian Paintings

Capturing the gallantry of horses is a strength of painter Hollie Berry. Looking at her subject, our eyes move with the horses and our heart pounds as they refuse to be contained by a frame. In May, she was selected through a competition to be the featured artist at Iroquois Steeplechase. Her painting 'Endurance' was well received and became a promotional image and was later auctioned with proceeds benefiting Monroe Carell, Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. 'Endurance' is now a part of the private collection of Blythe and Calvin Houghland.

Berry has attended several Steeplechase events in prior years, typically spreading her quilt on the hillside and enjoying a picnic, then gathering with others at the fence to witness the intensity of the horses and blur of the silks. Many of her paintings begin with the photographs she has taken during those memorable moments.

At the VIP Box she sat up an easel, working from photographs to create small-scale original oils. "At the race, everything is moving—the people, the sun, the clouds, the horses, so a reference photo worked better than a plein air landscape approach to my on-site painting," she said. Those at the race became inquisitive and some stood for a long time and watched her race painting reach the finish line.

One of the paintings she began on race day, 'Muzzle Study III,' features a row of horses peering out from their barn stalls. This painting was sold for cash before the oil paint had a chance to dry. "Painting at the race helped me make many meaningful connections and several commissions," said Berry. "Ultimately my paintings are each exploring our relationship with the horses, our admiration for their beauty, speed, and athleticism." **NI**

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Hollie Berry Art: (available works and commission information): hollieberryart.com
Iroquois Steeplechase: iroquoissteeplechase.org
The American Academy of Equine Arts: aaea.net



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BOLD & BEAUTIFUL

Nashville interior designer Marcelle Guilbeau brings a bold design aesthetic to each of her projects, and is highly sought out by those who seek a soulful and eclectic vibrancy. Step with us into the Green Hills home of Pilates-trainer Anissa Pollard. Her vitality is conveyed with the use of saturated colors, warm vintage Oushak rugs from Turkey, and gold wainscoting. The hand-blocked wall coverings and Thai-inspired sculpture add layers of sensuality.

Marcelle's artistry in interiors draws from her French heritage and a crossroads of culture the Mediterranean region has uniquely represented. Marcelle often layers rustic chic, Moroccan, or coastal elements into a classic, slightly minimal presentation. These unique pairings result from a collaborative exploration of her clients' passions, tastes and lifestyles. The Nashville market that has historically been defined as being conservative is finding a new generation embracing color and globalism. Marcelle is designing for a generation raised to be design savvy and they are not afraid of living with ink or pattern on their walls.

The use of teal, blue, cherry red, and gold clearly ground each room; yet there's a secondary layer of intricacy that reminds one of fine jewelry against a black dress. We see this delicate layer immediately in the celestial wallpaper of the foyer. Another example of attention is demanded by the architecture of the dining room, where the coffered ceiling has the elegant setting it demands.

above: Homeowner Anissa Pollard

Marcelle's approach involves more than one engaging conversation with clients to explore what may sound to some like contradictions in style. For Marcelle, however, there is no contradiction in being both daring and delicate.

For example, the foyer crosses into a threshold where a Rolling Stones image is perfectly at home above a bold cherry leather bench. However, the room is softened with the celestial metallic shimmer of the wallpaper called 'Stardust' by Bradbury & Bradbury. The dining room wallpaper from Herter Bros. Tradition bears the name 'Crane and Tiger' also underscores this fantastic juxtaposition—again the daring and delicate pairing that evokes her client's tastes.

"Clients often begin by saying they are looking for something 'simple.' That is rarely the case. I've learned to work in translation, and unpack the reference of 'simple' to mean 'modern with clean lines.' In consultation, a client eventually reveals their authentic style and it is always inspired by one or two artifacts in their life. The question, 'What has to stay?' is always revealing."

For Anissa the vintage red velvet sofa had to stay. It was no workaround, but a catalyst. The red faux leather drapes in the dining room followed. While shopping in Asheville, Anissa called Marcelle with the news she had found an amazing red leather antebellum bench for the foyer. It was the perfect addition.

Together with the indigo bedding of the master bedroom, the home's use of saturated colors became striking. The wallpaper, however, steals the show.

Marcelle's experience with wallpaper is evident in these rooms that bring a depth of texture and imagery perfect for the homeowner's growing eclectic art collection. Wallpaper is not just for the powder room any longer, this designer reminds us, as we step into the the elegant master bath where wallpaper transforms the words *utility* to *retreat.*

Beyond determining if a client swings toward modern or traditional, there's typically a skew toward either extremely practical or highly sensual. "A practical style may get translated as tech-savvy with a preference for finishes that are kept solid and low maintenance," said Marcelle. "A sensual style, however, is highly attuned to texture and a layering that results in a nurturing space." In other words, a client may be modern and sensual, or even traditional and practical. Here we see Anissa's home as clearly modern and sensual. **NI**

Interior designer Marcelle Guilbeau highlighted the coffered ceiling with wallpaper pattern 'Tiger and Crane' from Herter Brothers Victorian collection. Gold wainscoting adds to the room's shimmer and elegance.

Indigo bedding from Bella Linea of Nashville makes the master bedroom bold and luxurious. The end tables were custom made by Harpeth River Furniture to accommodate the tall windows and finished in a silver patina by Sherwin Williams.

NASHVILLE NOTE

Designer Marcelle Guilbeau has a forthcoming book, ***The Soulful Home: Design for Authentic Living***. Read an excerpt on her website: Marcelleguilbeau.com/thesoulfulhome.

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Bella Linea of Nashville: 2133 Bandywood Drive: bellalinea.com
Cumberland Gallery: 4107 Hillsboro Circle, Nashville, TN: cumberlandgallery.com
K2 Studio, 59 College St., Asheville, NC: k2furniture.com
Harpeth River Furniture, Nolensville, TN: harpethriverwoodworks.com

below: The vintage red velvet couch in the living room became a design inspiration for the jewel tones and saturated colors found throughout the house.

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right: Master carpenters Jason and Roy Dorn. The Dorns planed the salvaged boards for the dining room table.

When you shake Roy Dorn's hand, you immediately discover that he is a *maker*, a carpenter. When you talk to his clients you quickly realize he is a *master*. Recently his craftsmanship helped salvage an 1885 wood-frame Victorian home in downtown Chattanooga. The restoration was extensive and Roy Dorn's carpentry work now gleams as polished heart pine.

The house is one of several historic restoration projects *Nashville Interiors*' publisher Kathryn Nash has completed in the city. Kathryn and her husband, Benjamin Phillips, call this particular project *home*. It's the gathering place for friends and family and the magazine's home office.

"I've worked with Roy and Jason Dorn on quite a few intense projects," said Kathryn. "They are excellent problem solvers when it comes to any type of older structure that offers surprises, good and bad. Their attention to detail and love of the work is unmatched."

For decades this downtown two-story house served as a busy law firm. The pleasing open floor plan flooded with natural light was once a series of choppy, small rooms. The Dorns created a modern home that respects its architectural integrity and salvaged many of its original charms. One of those charms is the front parlor fireplace mantel, original to the home. Another is the unique millwork of the stairwell banister. "I've never seen one like it," said Roy.

While the house is magazine ready, there were days when Jason Dorn emerged from the job site looking like a coal miner's son, not a carpenter's son. A minor furnace fire decades ago had filled the 'balloon' wall structures with soot and ash. A 'balloon wall' is the result of 22' tall timber frames that span the first and second floors, creating a void between the timbers where soot and dust collected. Firewalls now cap each floor so that a fire will not spread so quickly, but in 1885, 'firewall' was not a word in any carpenter's vocabulary. In 1885, the words 'plywood' and 'subfloors' did not exist. Clapboard was nailed directly to the studs and tongue-and-groove flooring sat directly on the floor joists. In 1885, foundation walls were typically only one brick thick between the piers, causing settling to be dramatic.

The house needed structural improvements and new footings were poured in the basement to better support the floors and load bearing walls. Part of the front porch was rebuilt, and the interior plaster and lathe was gutted. The project took nine months, and proved to be exactly the kind of work where the Dorns' skill set shines.

The Dorns like a challenge, or at least expect one, with each historic property. The father-son team are often called in when another contractor has gotten in over his or her head and over budget. They've rebuilt log homes on Signal Mountain and salvaged more than one large estate on Lookout Mountain. "If there's a structural problem, there will inevitably be a cosmetic problem too," said Roy. "If you don't realign the basic support structure, the results will not be lasting or satisfying for the homeowner. There are no shortcuts to quality. If the basic structure of a home has suffered years of neglect, the project will be challenging."

As a young man Roy moved away from the South to New England where he got his first extensive remodeling experience working on 'post and beam' homes dating back to the 1700s. "There was nothing straight or plumb about those homes," he said. "They were held together with 'mortis and tenon' joints and if you didn't know better the entire thing could collapse." Working on these Revolutionary War-era homes proved to be, well, revolutionary for the young man who already displayed a keen interest in carpentry, tools, and techniques.

left: All the cabinetry in the kitchen and baths are created from 130-year-old heart pine, salvaged from the interior of the home and repurposed. The local marble kitchen countertops are from are from supplier Rocky Top Custom Countertops, and the island lighting was selected by Kathryn at Merchants on Main. All plumbing fixtures are from Ferguson.

below: Homeowners Ben Phillips and Kathryn Nash on the back balcony

In 1974 Roy Dorn began what we would call today a 'start-up.' He purchased a '65 Chevy panel truck and went into business with his brother-in-law. A hand-painted sign on the car said, 'Walker & Dorn Building Contractors.' "We were young and had confidence," said Dorn. "Now we have experience."

Jason Dorn is now his father's business partner, and while he began as an apprentice, he too has become a master carpenter. "There is great satisfaction in investing three months of interior demolition and then bringing a beautiful house back to life," said Jason. "The results exceeded everyone's expectation."

Roy Dorn lives outside of Chattanooga in Sale Creek, on the farm where he was raised. He recalls his very first construction project, helping his father and uncle take down and rebuild a barn on their property. Still a child, he was handed a claw-head hammer and a rough-hewn board to 'clean,' meaning to tediously pull out the old nails and straighten them with a pounding. That young boy learned to recycle each iron nail as if the metal had the value of a coin, because it did. In other words, repurposing lumber is not a new trend for Roy Dorn. When you visit his place you pass a barn with a loft stacked with slats of boards of all widths and lengths. Roy Dorn reminds us, "Recycling and reusing lumber is the practice of anyone raised on a farm." **NI**

“There are no shortcuts to quality” – Roy Dorn

above: Original 1885 stair banister

below: Original front doors repurposed with rustic hardware slides for upstairs master bath.

right: Pool offers tranquility, with views of downtown Chattanooga. The vintage department store sign was salvaged from another downtown property Kathryn helped revitalize.



SOUTHERN SOURCES

Roy Dorn Construction, Sale Creek, TN.: radornbldg@gmail.com, 423.332.5270
Interior Trim & Supply: interiortrimandsupply.com, 423.855.4108
Tallent Planing Mill & Lumber Co., Jamestown, TN: 931.879.4877
Ferguson (plumbing fixtures and lighting), Nashville and Chattanooga: ferguson.com
Merchants on Main, Chattanooga: merchantsonmain.co, 423.521.6285
The Refindery on McCallie, Chattanooga: therefinderyonmccallie.com
Mango's Décor and Co., Chattanooga and Knoxville, mangoshomedecor.com
Rocky Top Custom Countertops: 423.805.9906
Bellavin Woodworks, Sale Creek, TN.: 423.332.6260

The original heart pine floors were not able to be salvaged, so another source of heart pine was specially milled for the flooring of the house to ensure an authentic restoration. Thick heart pine timber boards salvaged from an old warehouse roofing deck in Chattanooga were planed by Tallent Planing & Lumber in Jamestown, TN. The process included drying the boards in a kiln, and using a bandsaw to mill them into tongue-and-groove flooring. Furnishings include a vintage typewriter table from the 1940s repurposed as an end table, a cool find from The Refindery in Highland Park. The slate blue sofa that anchors the room is from Mango's Décor and Co.

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Design Journal

WALLFLOWERS

LIVING WITH TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Photography by Steven Long

MASTER BEDROOM | MARCELLE GUILBEAU

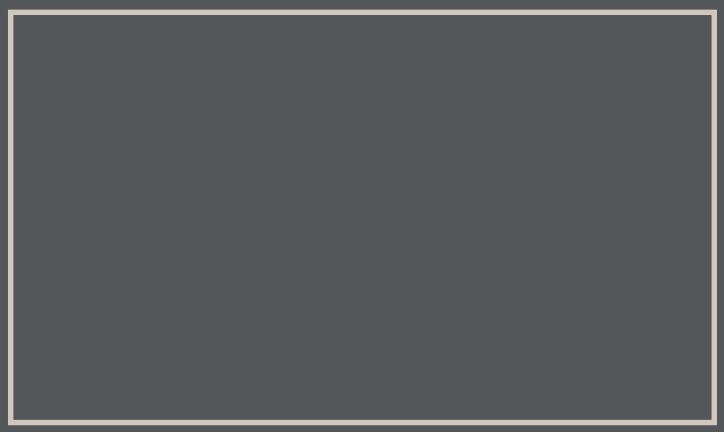
We asked two designers to share rooms they've wrapped in paper—and we were not talking a mere accent wall, stairwell, or tucked away powder room. Paper, not paint, transformed the two large spaces into rooms that balance their vitality with an invitation to kick back and relax. Both designers defied the stereotypes of wallflowers to bring pattern and pulse to their projects.

Here you have it: a Marcelle Guilbeau design for a contemporary master bedroom suite where a large pattern pleases the eye; and, a Dawn D. Totty room transformed from dutiful beige to a room that evokes stars in the night sky.

These two designers consistently win awards from HOUZZ for their creativity and customer service. We are pleased to share their work to inspire you. All that we're saying is give *paper* a chance.

"Wallpaper adds sensuality to a space," said Marcelle Guilbeau, "especially modern spaces." In the master bedroom suite the Nashville designer uses wallpaper in a large, yet delicate, motif to finish the room. The solid color of the duvet and modern lounge chair balance the design and ground the room.

"Wallpaper can be the perfect antidote to a large room with an expanse of gallery wall," said Guilbeau. "Pattern brings the room together in a way a single wall color cannot." Rather than seeking a cozy look associated with traditional Victorian floral bedrooms, this modern bedroom is now inviting, offering a peaceful retreat without compromising spaciousness. *(Continued on page 52)*





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(Continued from page 50)

Design Journal

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Marcelle Guilbeau Interior Design:
marcelleguilbeau.com
Dawn D. Totty Designs:
dawndtottydesigns.com

Photography by Morgan Nowland

LIVING ROOM | DAWN D. TOTTY

Dawn D. Totty's clients hand her the keys and go on vacation, trusting they will return to a very different space. Dawn does not disappoint. Her clients want something that is full of texture, and want to get away from what they call "the generic." However, that's sometimes as far as their imagination goes in their busy lives as executives. In this high-end riverfront condo on Chattanooga's North Shore, Dawn used wallpaper to add personality and elegance, reflecting the homeowner's excellent taste. Goodbye taupe.

With an open living space, the challenge for the condo room was about how to blend function with a strong design. "I am a problem solver," said Dawn. She added a stainless steel kick plate along the back of the kitchen island and changed the cabinetry finish to bridge the two rooms so that the tone is clean, modern, and seamless.

The wallpaper Dawn chose for her client is not simply charcoal and modern, it offers a romantic touch with specs of gold that give it dimension and a fresh feel as day turns to night. Caught in the morning window light the paper is as stunning as in the evening lamplight. "I love to work with paint, but the layering and dimension that a quality wallpaper offers allows a room to feel complete," said Dawn. "Wallpaper can define a space, allowing the homeowner to keep the furniture simple and sparse. This is a great technique that takes the pressure off of furniture in a condo where space is at a premium." **NI**

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OLD WORLD TUDOR REINTERPRETED IN RIVERVIEW

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICKI CHESTER

Architect Josh Cooper used Tudor-inspired arches to open up the main living area of the family home. The design offers elegant views from all rooms and infuses the home with natural light.

top left: Formal gardens at the historic Riverview property

above: The sitting room was once closed off and now extends its sunny presence into the adjacent family room.

top right: The new Tudor arch was vital to open up the original separate dining room and create the modern open floor plan. The warm wood blends with the original wainscoting.

right: Master bedroom with wall panels for exquisite architectural detail.

Architect Josh Cooper has brought a modern floor plan to a distinctly traditional Tudor home in one of Chattanooga's oldest neighborhoods. His firm, JCC Studio, completed a stunning restoration of the former McCallie estate, originally built in 1933. "Our challenge," said Josh, "was how to preserve the character, integrity and history of the home, while addressing the needs and aesthetics of a contemporary family."

Josh is familiar with clients who begin a conversation with how much they admire the original woodwork, even as their next question is, 'Can you make that wall go away?' Family members want to keep each other visually close, yet working with historic structures, you are quickly reminded of the social history reflected in the architecture. Family rooms are no longer an addition or afterthought, and a separate dining room is no longer the norm or a luxury. Today, connectivity is everything.

The architect shifted walls, opening up a butler's pantry and an isolated sun room, to blend spaces together with the goal of reflecting the values of the new residents, a family of five. Working within the original footprint, much care was taken to not make any changes that might impact the exterior design.

The result of the architect's care is a series of arches that subtly define rooms, while allowing for a flood of natural light and family interaction. Each of the defining Tudor elements were not only retained in the new design, but were elevated by echoing such patterns. For example, the family room and kitchen are connected with wide archways that opened up what was previously somewhat choppy spaces. The classic arch patterns echo the exterior of the Tudor home and were inspired in their millwork by a smaller interior archway. The dominant arch transitioning from the living room into the kitchen area is a warm walnut-stained wood, while other arches echo its design but are painted white to blend with the bright kitchen

cabinetry. The attention to detail with the coffered ceiling beams in the kitchen reflect Old World sensibilities blended with modern sleek countertops. Similarly, the master bedroom expansion uses the traditional mitered millwork panel details on each wall, to make the original and new Tudor-inspired features seamless.

"The most satisfying part of this project was the realization that we were essentially giving this landmark house another one hundred years of life," said Josh. "The success of the renovation is a credit to the homeowners who made a commitment to update each system—electrical, mechanical, and thermal insulation—and bring the home fully into the 21st Century."

JCC Design Studio's restoration of this historic Tudor home represents best practices of preserving the architectural style while making significant functional improvements. **NI**

above: Master bedroom vestibule entrance

Principal Architect Josh Cooper with the JCC Design Studio team. Left to right: Interior Designer Barbara Winchester; and Project managers Nick vonWerssoiwetz and Bryan Owens.

above: Master bath enhances existing windows with a mirror installation.

above right: The children's bedroom features built-in closets flanking the double windows.

below: Grand upstairs landing offers original architectural detail with new lighting.

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Architect Josh Cooper, JCC Design Studio, specializing in historic residential properties, Chattanooga, TN: jccdesignstudio.com

Matt Brown, Raines Brothers, Inc., Chattanooga, TN: Custom Cabinetry and Homes: 423.468.2036

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Musicians accumulate the most interesting artifacts. Rarely do they own only one instrument, or even one means of listening to recordings. It's complicated, this relationship they have with these 'things,' which are so much more than 'things' to them. They are sometimes scavengers, and sometimes in the salvage business. Meet two Tennessee musicians who aren't just obsessed collectors, but who are also curators of our music culture: Shannon Pollard and Lon Eldridge.

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY WEEKS

SHANNON POLLARD collects vinyl. A shelf in his office nearly buckles under the weight of hundreds of albums. Above the shelf are books about said albums and their creators. He has a turntable where most offices park a printer, and there's a record on deck ready to go. It's his way of streaming, of streaming consciousness.

Shannon also makes vinyl. He cofounded the Plowboy Records label in 2012 with friend Don Cusic. His albums are artifacts infused with good design as well as interesting collaborations. His titles live up to its tagline, 'respect the unexpected.'

When you tour the music studio in Brentwood, you can see why Ken Burns' production crew has been there five times in recent months to film and interview Shannon. While we came to talk about his story, Shannon would rather tell you about other musicians' stories–those he admires, those who persevere. Those kind of stories are where you find Shannon's passion and the soul of Plowboy Records. Take Plowboy's release of *Meridian Rising* by Paul Birch, a well-received musical journey that spins us around all the way back to the short-yet-epic life of Jimmie Rodgers. If a region's musical soul could be packaged, this is how it would sound today.

Ken Burn's long awaited documentary on country music connects Shannon to his famous grandfather, crooner Eddy Arnold. With so many legends long gone before Burns turned toward Nashville–think Cash, Jones, and Arnold—Shannon's artifacts serve as a bridge between generations and genres. Shannon owns some great tribal stories.

One family story is found in the real estate venture Shannon oversees off Granny White Pike. The Italian name for the property, *Você*, comes with a mystique, with legend. Você is a parcel of the rural property where Eddy Arnold once kept a log cabin and where he often retreated to work through song lyrics and melodies. The story goes that he liked to ride his horse among the hills and sing, adding credibility to his gentleman farmer persona. One evening as Arnold was out pacing the hills, perhaps on a stroll or I'd like to think while in the saddle, his voice suddenly reached a new depth just as he crowned a hill. This moment led to his second wind as a performer with wildly popular love ballads such as "Make the World Go Away" and "Welcome to My World." These songs made Arnold one of the first cross-over, country and pop performers. Você is now a setting with architecturally distinct homes among conservation easements and scenic natural areas. It's a place where designers now find *their* voice, their Você.

While The Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum has its collection from Eddy Arnold's estate, such as the canisters of film from his TV shows, Shannon keeps some artifacts closer to home. On Shannon's desk is an autographed photo of Louis Armstrong. There's a vintage address book with the handwritten names and phone numbers of icons from tv, radio, and the recording industry, that even predates a Rolodex. I lift the book and see the name 'Steve Allen,' and turn the pages to see in another blue script 'Mike Douglas.' Eddy Arnold touched every tab in the industry, A to Z. He was a champion of singer Charley Pride, when 'controversial' was code for a racial divide in a community that could think rather small at times. Like his grandfather, Shannon's taste in music is wide-ranging as both a listener and a producer. He tells us that his grandfather liked to hit the jazz clubs in New York, and that once Dizzy Gillespie called him out from the stage, spotting him in the crowded venue. Eddy Arnold was a person who could travel from a place where "Dixie" is still whistled to a place where Dizzy defines a new American art form. It's no surprise Shannon would take on a production project to honor Bobby Bare, or introduce emerging talent such as the Blackfoot Gypsies.

Shannon Pollard: drummer, collector, music producer.

Eddy Arnold's cluttered desk and reel-to-reel machines nearby on the console are all left for now relatively in place, as if the star stepped out for lunch. Shannon has

right: Louis Armstrong, "Satchmo," and Eddy Arnold were friends beyond the world of celebrity. Arnold enjoyed moving among the jazz club scene in New York on his travels.

below: Shannon Pollard founded Plowboy Records with Don Cusic in 2012. Vinyl continues to be rediscovered.

the task ahead of sorting out a legendary life, in a different way than a Ken Burns or a Hall of Fame. For Shannon, it's personal. Mostly he sees the task as an honor, and certainly as a place that demands a work ethic he's inherited. The back room is a near shrine, and a glimpse into a past where business cards were taped up and down the bookshelf edge. That back office is an oddly public place and yet clearly poignant. There's so much to sift through, and Shannon has become a near archeologist. Everything he touches is connected to hundreds of other rehearsals, career hits, and some near misses. For Shannon, it's the music that matters and feels urgent. He gathered a stunning group of artists for a tribute with *You Don't Know Me: Rediscovering Eddy Arnold*, a Plowboy release in 2013. It features everyone from Jason Isbell to Chris Scruggs. Designers and collectors will appreciate the stunning album art from Cronin Creative that makes the pearl inlay on the guitar close up iridescent, like the songs.

above: Drum Art Nashville's Kristen Jo painted the Plowboy Records logo. Nashville's Karen Cronin with Cronin Creative designed the logo.

right: Tribute in vinyl to Shannon's grandfather, Eddy Arnold

While the rooms at Shannon's studio are rich in history, with stories that stack up like the drummer's affinity for snares and vinyl, there's nothing at all stagnant about 154 Franklin Road. This humble storefront is a dynamic working studio where musicians and visual artists pop in to talk about ideas and set up rehearsal time. Visual art is found all around such as a guitar-inspired table by Nashville artist Rob Hendon. Real estate is sold to a new generation with bold new tastes and takes on what it means to live and work in Music City. Keep your eyes and ears out for this thoughtful work that combines design and sound into the word 'respect.'

LON ELDRIDGE lives in Chattanooga and stays on the road playing music much of the time. He is a master of the blues finger-style resonator guitar and is a founding member of The 9th Street Stompers. The raucous band pays homage to the Big Nine blues music scene that claims Bessie Smith as its most famous daughter. Think Django Reinhardt meets Rockabilly.

Lon can tell you anything you want to know about Bessie Smith's discography and its disconnects. He can describe exactly how the recordings of Bessie Smith evolved, both the technology and the social history. He collects a culture more fragile than vinyl, more brittle, and much older. He spins shellac 78 rpms on gramophones, transcendent machines he has learned to take apart, repair, and play.

When Lon's not touring with his big stomping band, he goes solo as the persona of 'DJ Passé,' complete with handle-bar moustache and Victorian gentlemen's attire. He seems to have just stepped out of a tin-type, and well, he has. DJ Passé can be heard in such places as Asheville's Speak-Easy-style lounge, The Crow & Quill. Nostalgia or being quaint ain't his take on music, please note. Lon's understanding of the mechanical

Lon Eldridge with his hand-cranked, mechanical 1905 Victor V-2 gramophone that spins shellac, 78-rpm records.

technologies has convinced him that there's something vital to the old recording systems that brings us closer to the raw, live human voice. There's a connection between the contraptions and the very design of the human ear. There's something to ponder there, but regardless of the technology de jour, Lon elevates the art of listening.

Lon recently gave a delightful public lecture at Jazzanooga, a new music venue on MLK Blvd. (formerly Ninth Street) in downtown Chattanooga. He moved like a dancer between two hand-cranked gramophones as his podiums. 'Around the World in 80 Plays' included music from his extensive collection of salvaged 78s. He travels with his heavy burdens of old equipment and enjoys speaking about the history of His Master's Voice as he quickly replaces the needle in the arm and turns a crank.

above, top: Lon Eldridge has one of the area's largest private collection of Bessie Smith, Empress of the Blues, recordings.

above: Prior to the gramophone 78s, there were wax cylinders for recording

Watching Lon Eldridge spin the old technologies is nearly as hypnotizing as the sounds are enthralling. He is spinning music that dates to a time just before Billie Holiday stepped up to a now-vintage microphone to sing about 'All the Old Familiar Places,' some that are now gone. Lon is sharing music recorded acoustically, as the soft voice had to lean way in to the horn and allow the needle to mark the wax. What we take away from this scene is a context, the realization of how determined music and its makers have always been. He points out a musician's courage and desire to change our consciousness, to connect—even when it was cumbersome. One small steel needle Lon pulls from a tiny envelope only allows him two spins, a front and a back. The work is labor intensive, a labor of love.

Lon has one of the largest private collection of Bessie Smith recordings I've seen, but also has a weakness for the even more obscure. Lon is someone you would want on your Trivia team, or creating your college syllabus. He knows what details matter, but also what ideas hold together—that hard to pin down word, 'relevance.' He goes for what many of us amateurs might overlook at the estate sale and he's generous to name off the places he peruses. Lon Eldridge makes *meaning*, as well as music. **NI**

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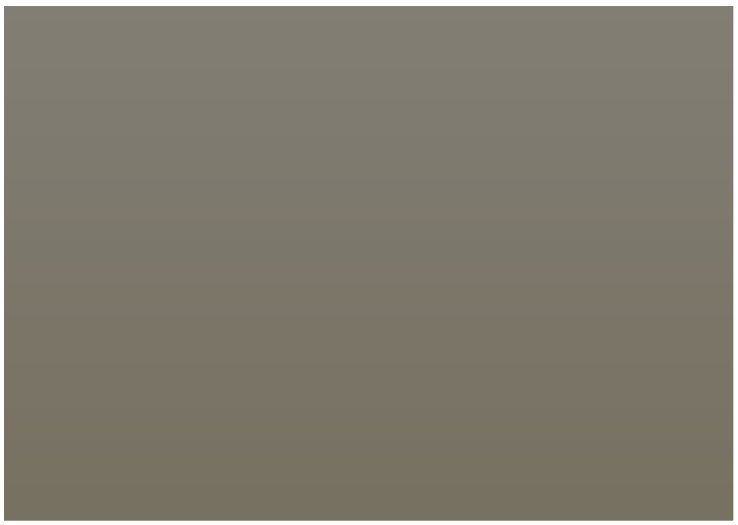
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Grimey's New and Preloved Music, Mike Grimes: 1604 8th Ave. S., Nashville, TN: grimeys.com
The Great Escape Superstore, 5400 Charlotte Ave., Nashville, TN; 615.385.2116: thegreatescapeoline.com
Chad's Records, 40 Frazier Ave. Chattanooga, TN (inside Winder Binder Books, Art and Music): Store 423.413.9464. Chad: 423.326.5695
Alison's Record Shop (and Sonny's Vintage Vinyl Gallery), Alison Warford: 994 Davidson Dr., Nashville, TN; 615.356.0180: alisonsrecordshop.com
Brian's Custom Theaters & Hi-Fi, Brian Warford (turntable experts and home theater installation): 994 Davidson Dr. N., Nashville, TN; 615.356.0180
Third Man Records and Novelties Lounge/Store, Jack White: 623 7th Ave. S. Nashville, TN, 615.891.4393: thirdmanrecords.com
Carpe Diem Vintage Vinyl, Next door to Kimbro's Pickin' Parlor, 212 S. Margin St. Franklin, TN., 615.429.0157: carpediem212.com
Lon Eldridge: loneldridge.com
9th Street Stompers: 9thstreetstompers.com
Bessie Smith Culture Center (exhibits and events) 200 East Martin Luther King Blvd, Chattanooga, TN, 423.266.8658, info@bessiesmithcc.org: bessiesmithcc.org
Jazzanooga, Shane Morrow and James McKissic, founders: jazzanooga.org
Chad's Records: 40 Frazier Ave. Chattanooga, TN (inside Winder Binder Books, Art and Music): 423.326.5695
Wade Hunton, gramophone restoration, sales, accessories, Decatur, GA., 678.640.2022: phonologic78.com
Antiques by Samson &Delilah, 8578 Main St. Woodstock, GA., 770.516.4000: phonologic78.com sales of restored gramophones inside the antique store
Charles Coleman, tin type and all types of photography; 1222 East Main St., Chattanooga, TN: colemancreative.io
The Crow & Quill, (very unique performance space and speak easy-like lounge, so check out their upcoming events online to connect with some great music and poetry) 106 N. Lexington Ave. Asheville, NC: thecrowandquill.com
Rick Taylor (turntable and radio restoration and repair service since 1979) Ooltewah, TN: inquiry@ricksantiqueradios.com: ricksantiqueradios.com
The Refindery: 1300 McCallie Ave. Chattanooga, TN., 423.697.1243 (vintage radios, vinyl sales, Mid-century modern stereo cabinets, and more): therefinderyonmccallie.com

above left: Tin type image of Lon by photographer Charles Coleman.
left: DJ Passé dons vintage clothing and shoes when he performs at Asheville's The Crow & Quill.

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Unmatched Value, Architectural Distinction, Honesty and Integrity, Passion for Quality, Proven Customer Service: these are the foundations upon which Ford Custom Classic Homes has established itself as the leader in custom homebuilding in Williamson County. Having successfully created timeless luxury homes in Williamson County's finest neighborhoods, including LaurelBrooke, Westhaven, The Enclave, Annandale, Windstone, The Highlands at Ladd Park, Berry Farms, and The Grove. Renowned for providing superior quality and value to every homebuyer, the company is committed to excellence in every detail of the homebuilding experience, from conception through completion.

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- The Grove – $700s to $2 million
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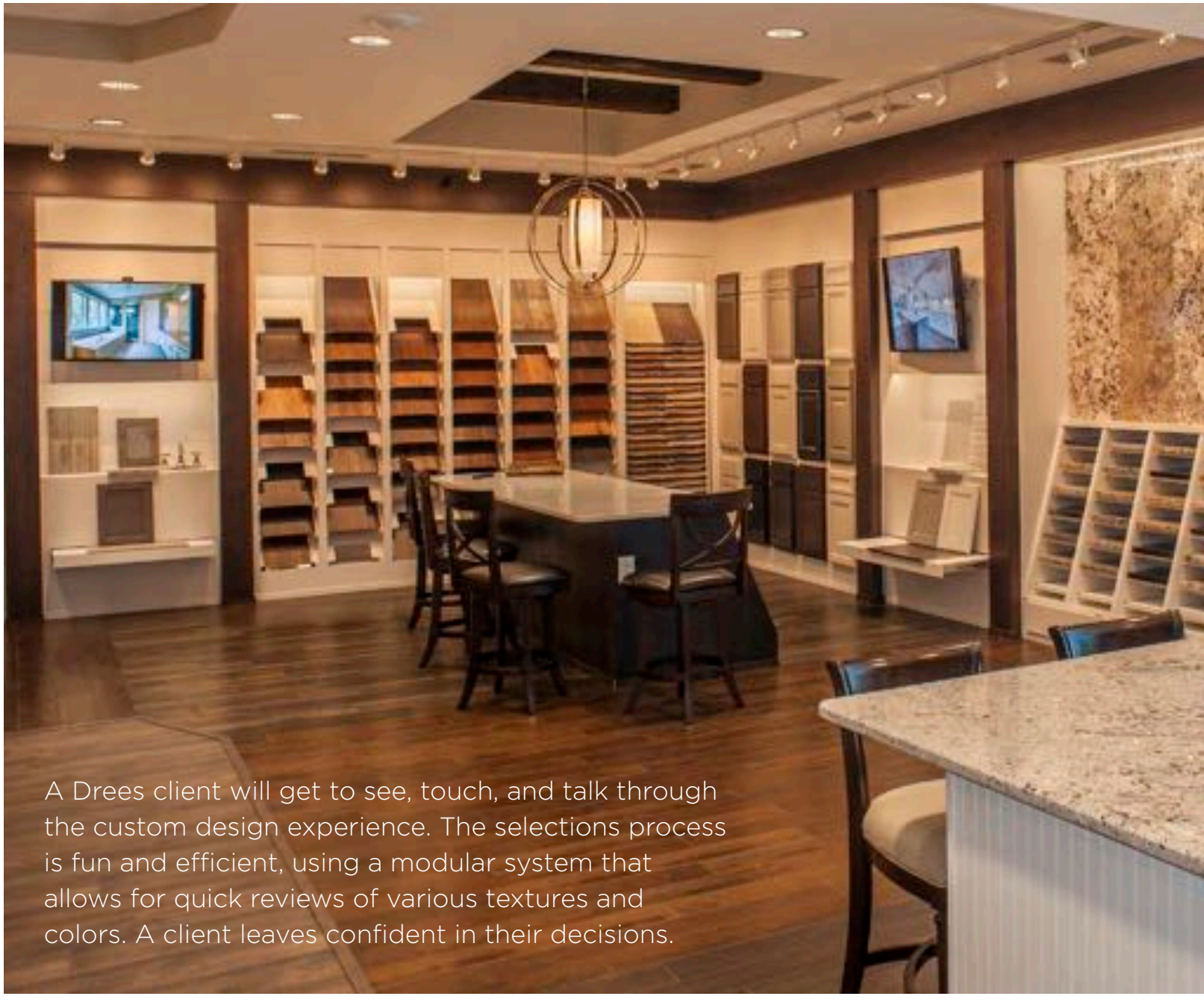
DREES HOMES OPENS INNOVATIVE DESIGN CENTER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAVE STEINBRUNNER

Drees Homes opened a new design center this summer in Brentwood that is NOT your typical design or retail experience. There are no brand names shouting at clients about what they are 'supposed' to prefer. Brand influence is secondary to good design.

"We offer only premium products and have done the daunting brand research of what works for today's lifestyles," said senior designer Jennifer Harkai.

When clients make their design selections, they don't have to guess what their kitchen will look



A Drees client will get to see, touch, and talk through the custom design experience. The selections process is fun and efficient, using a modular system that allows for quick reviews of various textures and colors. A client leaves confident in their decisions.

like by holding a tile the size of a playing card or squinting at a designer's laptop. A Drees client leaves confident in their decisions.

The showcase rooms are not a slice of life, but 'life size.' One kitchen, designed by Harkai, has been so popular that several people have nearly duplicated it. The kitchen features a six-foot-long granite-top island, a classic ogee edge detail, and furniture style legs. The traditional charm finds its contrast with a back wall of sharp-dressed cabinetry and darker quartz countertops with a sleek, distinctly modern 'flat polished' edge. The hardwood flooring pairs wide and narrow planks, a fresh design option just hitting our market.



How the Drees Homes design system works: Planning niches and built-in shelving allow clients and designers to quickly pull together custom looks from a large variety of product samples. Each of the samples—regardless of manufacturer, brand, or price point—are quite large and uniform in size. There is a shelf at appropriate counter-top height, and directly above is a narrow ledge for the backsplash sample so clients can easily see exactly how these two materials work together. Flooring, cabinetry, and even faucet packages, can all be arranged for review in a quick, modular fashion.

Choosing an exterior style can be even more daunting than an interior space, given the pressure placed on first impressions of a home, but not here. We were impressed with the variety of exterior finishing options.

"Our clients are typically working with us to custom build what will be their second or even third home," said Ron Schroeder, President, Drees Homes Nashville Division. "In other words, our clients are pragmatic, but look to our team for fresh design ideas."

Ron refers to the new design center as a 'one-stop-shop' that expedites a dream home while making it easy to navigate style and price-point. "We not only save our clients time, but also take away a lot of the angst in the process."

The new Drees Homes Design Center in Brentwood is the only one of its kind serving our region. Headquartered in Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, Drees Homes of Nashville offers several unique residential communities. They also offer the convenience of building a Drees home on your own lot almost anywhere. **NI**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
online: dreeshomes.com
talk: 615.371.9750
visit: 1651 Westgate Circle
Brentwood, TN 37027

above: Ron Schroeder, President, Drees Homes Nashville Division

left: From the design center's consultation counter, clients have a clear line-of-sight to professionally designed showcase rooms for inspiration

Revival of the Portrait

THE NEW NARRATIVE

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY WEEKS

In a Snap Chat world where an image is here today and gone tomorrow, an investment in an heirloom portrait feels like the new counter culture. Once a standard investment found in any fine home, portraits quickly grew out of sight and out of mind—replaced by a clutter of the candid souvenirs of time. Technology had us all at 'cheese!' The Kodak Instamatic lived up to its name; the Kodak Moment created our shrines.

In our lifetime, the old oil profiles were shuffled to the estate sale, museum, or attic. These same pressures from technology also influenced university art departments, shifting the syllabus to industry demands for graphic design and Photoshop. Many art students began graduating more than shy of the 10,000 hours it is touted to master any fine art skill. Some art students now graduate without having the experience of 'drawing from life,' mixing oils, or prepping a canvas. A highly designed world and our blog templates provide the tools for most of us to dabble in art with satisfaction. The fine arts generalist with a portable easel and box of brushes was not nearly as portable as a laptop and mouse. The discipline-based skills needed to draw a portrait from life (or from an intimate mirror reflection) were no longer required subjects, but became 'electives.'

above: Artist Cindy Procious led a workshop on charcoal portraits this summer at Townsend Atelier. A self-portrait by the artist is shown.

right: A fine example of a contemporary narrative portrait by James Courtenay James of Chattanooga.

The changes at the university have actually provided an opening to alternative ways of becoming a master. The apprentice approach of the *Atelier movement* has stunning results. The work that comes from the atelier movement reminds us that something has been missing, a vitality in the work worthy of being insured, something worthy of setting aside from the estate sale as 'family inheritance.'

Portrait artists are finding a way to deepen their skills through the atelier classes to create a believable eye and reconnect with a customer base. Such portrait artists achieve excellence, one sitting at a time.

The atelier communities of artists in our region are wonderfully inter-generational, with some participants enrolled in art schools, but most learning important techniques through the old disciplines and mentors. Universities remain a valuable next step for anyone aspiring to become an artist, but Ateliers are full of *lifetime* learners. If you are looking to purchase a once in a lifetime portrait, we suggest you choose among such lifetime learners. Otherwise, you might be disappointed.

Susie McGinness has a portfolio of life-time learners she likes to share with clients as a seasoned broker for Portraits South. Her company is based in Raleigh, North Carolina, and she calls Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, home. Some of the artists she represents may live down the street and some live across the pond in London. Her portfolio is wide-ranging, in other words, but her clients are from our region and there's no more personable Southern guide. Think of Susie McGinness as a 'matchmaker' who works both sides of the equation to find compatibility and manage expectations. It's an important job because portrait options vary widely and can be completed as a pastel, oil, watercolor, or pen and ink. Options might include a formal head-and-collar profile or a gathering of several playful siblings in the backyard.

One of the daunting aspects of commissioning an heirloom portrait before the kids become tweens or an aging parent passes, is likely knowing 'where to begin?' Our answer is Portraits South. The main reasons we encourage such a conversation, is that Portraits South artists come with recent references that you can speak with directly. Susie can show you samples of styles from the traditional to contemporary, and in various mediums you may not be aware exist. A Bart Lindstrom oil with sepia tones may illustrate your idea of 'timeless,' or a Jenny Lathem detailed pastel of a

These artists are fine examples of the variety of mediums available through Portraits South. Clockwise from top left: Rob Beckett's contemporary pen and inks, one of a young girl in simple clean lines, and another featuring a narrative portrait of three sisters; Bart Lindstrom uses only sepia tones in this oil; Jenny Lathem's pastel.

young girl in a dress gathered at the waist may evoke the concept of 'classic' for your family.

Portrait offerings do well in contemporary settings, and Portraits South can advise you on how framing and materials can work with your personal tastes and lifestyle. Portraits South also works with clients on various price points—$3,000 to $10,000 depending on the detail and number of people depicted—and she can quickly help a client narrow down a selection after listening to their heart's desire. Susie works with clients all across Tennessee.

Keep in mind portraits are rarely displayed in fine art galleries among the collage assemblages and landscapes, because the work is custom, intimate even. So portrait artists' names may not be as well-known even among gallery circles. However, if you already collect art and have a relationship with a trusted gallery, they can likely connect you with portrait artists they may represent. In Nashville, perhaps speak with Anne Brown with The Arts Company, a gallery that's been in the business for twenty years. In Chattanooga, River Gallery in the Bluff View Art District represents our featured portrait artist James Courtenay James.

Beyond a broker or gallery agent, the ateliers are a source for finding the masters, or becoming one. Susie McGinness agrees that continual study from life, such

that you can generally only find through an atelier setting, has nurtured the finest artists in her portfolio. The difference, she underscores, between a master and an emerging artist (or over-rated amateur), can be noted quickly by looking at two things: the eyes and the backdrop. “The eyes reveal the talent and skill of the artist, always,” says Susie. “But also, pay attention to the background of a subject, and see if it is competing too strongly. Sometimes the setting gets more attention because the artist’s strength may not actually be in portrait work, but landscape.”

The light and dark nuance a painter brings to a face allows for dimension to appear on the one-dimensional canvas. Dimension and proportion, in other words, also reveal a skill level. “When you witness a portrait and cringe but can’t exactly explain why,” said Susie, “it is likely because of poorly executed dimension, which makes the composition flat; sometimes the hands and arms are slightly out of proportion making us want to look away. My artists, and any master artist, share a common denominator: they make you stop and look into the painting with care, enjoying that pause for years and years.”

A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS AT TOWNSEND ATELIER

A strong atelier can introduce you to a regional community of masters. Stan and Peggy Wood Townsend have been at the center of our region’s atelier movement and recently moved to The Arts Building in Chattanooga. They share the renovated building and synergies with organizations including Arts Build, SoundCorps, and The Southern Lit Alliance.

Townsend Atelier offers regular workshops and lectures by portrait masters such as Chris Saper, Cindy Procious, Seth Haverkamp, and Mia Bergeron. Classes fill quickly and guests often travel far to find such opportunities outside university enrollment.

Townsend Atelier is a hive. In addition to master classes, there’s a weekly Thursday evening three-hour ‘drawing from life’ exercise that is well attended. A monthly gathering allows work of all levels and genres to be reviewed by mentors. In addition, Townsend Atelier is one of the few suppliers in the country that curate the kind of archival-level fine art materials that all commissions demand. When it comes to an heirloom, the artist must select products and surfaces that stand up through time. Product knowledge is just as important a skill as the strokes of a brush. Townsend Atelier educates artists on techniques, but also raw materials. You can purchase supplies online or visit their shop at the atelier.

When you enter the atelier you see a chart that you might expect to see in a physiology classroom or doctor’s office. Here it serves as a reminder that the portrait painter must know the nuance of the bones in an arm, as if they practice sports medicine.

THE NARRATIVE PORTRAIT: THE WORK OF JAMES COURTENAY JAMES

James Courtenay James is a Tennessee portrait master whose work in oils has been informed through the Townsend Atelier community. He is represented by River Gallery in Chattanooga’s Arts District near the Hunter Museum of American Art and primarily works in oil on commission. He has led workshops at Townsend Atelier but always remains a student, connecting with peers for the weekly drawing group. He describes each of these experiences as ‘invaluable.’

Following a career in commercial graphic design and illustration, Courtenay has shifted his focus solely to studio arts. Painting with oils has captured his imagination. “Oils are rich and create works that are translucent. They also dry slowly and allow you to work with them longer, turning a smear into a lip or working at the shadows. Painting is a lot like chess—you plan on what you are going to do several steps ahead.”

Courtenay may spend a week focused on painting clasped hands over and over in varying degrees of light. He might seem obsessed, but only to someone who doesn’t recognize the skill required for good portraiture. Certainly when you look at a portrait by this artist, gesture is a compelling strength, a signature element.

“We recognize objects and figures every day, but we do not observe these in great detail,” says Courtenay. “Portrait artists take this to near meditation.” He takes his sketchbook everywhere, the coffee shop, the park, the



James Courtenay James is at home in his art studio. He and his wife Casilda live in historic Ferger Place, Chattanooga’s first planned neighborhood. Photo by Billy Weeks.

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Portraits South: Susie McGinness, portraitsouth.com
Townsend Atelier: Stan and Peggy Wood Townsend, townsendatelier.com
Haynes Gallery (Nashville): haynesgalleries.com
The Arts Company (Nashville): theartscompany.com
River Gallery (Chattanooga): river-gallery.com
Tennessee portrait artists:
Mia Bergeron: miabergeron.com
Seth Haverkamp: sethhaverkamp.com
James Courtenay James: jcjfinearts.com
Cindy Procious: cindyprocious.com

atelier. "Most visual art is about mastering observation." The figure has always been that challenging effort he continues to explore, though he has painted en plein aire. "Painting trees as the focus now feels like an entirely different vocabulary and conversation."

In his portrait of a portrait artist, Courtenay's interpretation of his Chattanooga atelier peer Mia Bergeron expresses itself with gesture. The mood of his portrait of Mia is captured in the position of her arm as a gesture of pause and reflection and his mastery of the play of light reveals someone actively engaged but also a private person. It's a particular moment, and we are witness through the portrait.

Courtenay's work is an example of a type of portraiture gaining popularity: *narrative portrait.* Each image alludes to a setting, finding that delicate balance that keeps the focus on the person. Note the more subtle window Courtenay includes behind Mia Bergeron that serves as metaphor for this artist/subject who is looking outward at the world and through a framed focus. "Framing paintings actually comes from the concept of the window," offers Courtenay. "The Dutch had curio cabinets and during the Italian Renaissance an aesthetic ran throughout a building so that the church architecture itself served as a frame."

Kobe Rashaad Smith of East Hamilton High School has found a mentor in James Courtenay James.

Similarly, Courtenay's large painting of a woman draped with a scarf illustrates something important and vital to her being that a head and collar portrait would crop. Narrative portraiture is where metaphor and subject intertwine with a careful approach as to avoid cliché. A narrative portrait pulls in the viewer, even if the subject is anonymous. Looking at a James Courtenay James painting we are moved to want to better know the person he paints, to see them as a whole person worth knowing.

"Building an art object that will endure is essential," said Courtenay. "We now have more oil colors and we have learned so much from the past and its failure of materials. We know to avoid those materials and practices that have failed to endure the test of time. Scientific research and technology allows us to better construct an heirloom to avoid cracking or fading." Courtenay paints exclusively on composite aluminum panels rather than stretched canvas. The painting is both stable and lightweight; it will not warp. This method is drawn from the endurance of exterior metal signs.

Ultimately Courtenay, and other painters, are chasing an element that is always changing: light. "My work attempts to capture a sense of the light in a space and how the person responds to that light," he said.

Portrait painting is having a revival along with other areas of fine art and craft. "As a culture we are accustomed to manufactured things that elevate perfection. However, we remain drawn to handmade items because they are more interesting, more insightful of what it means to be human." **NI**

above: Classic Greek Revival style is underscored with the two-story symmetry of these six Corinthian columns, flanked by dining areas with floor-to-ceiling curved windows. Unlike the long-gone American chestnut trees logged to make columns in a historic home, these are made from a durable, low-maintenance fiber and cement rosin.

right: The grand staircase draws the eye to detailed ceiling panels and its mastery of the mitered corner.

far right: The kitchen scale allows for serious gatherings and entertaining with two islands. Note the curved dining room defined but well-connected to the kitchen.



The Classic Greek Revival

A MIRROR IMAGE OF THE PAST IN HISTORIC LEIPER'S FORK

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY REED BROWN

The grandeur of a Greek revival home is the sum of its stunning elements: the tall, two story columns capped with Corinthian scrollwork, the peak of a strong pediment and gable, the dramatic symmetry, the inviting entrance with transoms and sidelights, and of course, the sprawling porches. It's the style we know best from The White House, the most famous home in the world.

Situated on nearly 40 acres near the village of historic Leiper's Fork in Williamson County, Tennessee, is a grand white home designed to look precisely like a historic property. This new construction applies long-lasting materials, technologies, and a modern open floor plan to rooms with high style and millwork patterns from a previous century. The attention to authentic detail and research is apparent throughout this new 12,000-square-foot home. Castle Homes of Nashville brought their expertise to bear on this stunning estate that includes a large-scale patio and pool, and a separate, traditional horse barn.

"This is a new home with historic sensibilities," said Alan Looney, president of Castle Homes. "We went to great efforts to respect the integrity of the rural setting of Leiper's Fork, while expressing a period home that is authentic in every detail and proportion. Our clients looked at many historic properties in our area, but felt our ability to bring that same aesthetic to a new design was a solid investment." The architect for this stunning Greek revival was C. Kevin Coffey with Dwelling/Design. **NI**

top: Nestled in historic Leiper's Fork, this retreat home offers scenic views throughout the seasons.

above: A Civil War cannon is positioned as a stoic artifact of stories that echo through our region and genealogies.

left: Interior of the horse barn reveals the rustic pine wallboard and rough-hewn cedar timbers, set off with more refined lighting.

ABOUT LEIPER'S FORK

Leiper's Fork is a small village in Williamson County, Tennessee, situated along the Natchez Trace Parkway. The area is formally named to the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District and offers visitors a chance to shop, dine, and be entertained in century-old buildings along Old Hillsboro Road (Hwy 46). The village was established in the late 1700's by pioneers from North Carolina and Virginia who received land grants for their service in the Revolutionary War. The stream and village were named for Hugh Leiper, a local surveyor who lived in the area. Today, the village has a modest population of around 650. Local attractions, beyond the linear National Park, include the original Puckett's Grocery where you can enjoy a Southern meal and stay for the evening music. Another popular comfort food eatery is Country Boy Restaurant. In the mix are boutiques, galleries, and antique shops including The Copper Fox, Serenite Maison, and Village Vintage and Homegoods. We hope to catch the Lawn Chair Theater under the stars one of these days. **NI**

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When Songbirds was ready to hang more than one hundred guitars on the wall in anticipation of the grand opening, they called Bob. When the Tennessee Aquarium needed to refurbish their unique display of American folk art, they called Bob.

Gallery 1401 owners on Main Street in Chattanooga have Bob's number memorized. He's been working with that gallery since it first opened on the Southside. Galleries and interior decorators rely on Bob to complete their vision.

Typically, Bob Wright is not the last person called, but serves as a valued problem solver on the front end of a project. He can offer advice on how to incorporate artifacts along with framed memories, how to use scaffolding over a stairwell, or suggest a *French cleat* technique.

Bob developed his expertise over time and as a natural extension of working for full-service frame shops and galleries. He owned Framewrights for twenty-five years in his historic St. Elmo neighborhood at the foot of Lookout Mountain. In the 1980s he was on staff at the Hunter Museum of American Art as an assistant to the curator of exhibits.

"I don't do drapes," he says concisely and with a smile. "But I know someone who does." Bob Wright's Art Installations specializes in hanging anything you might also insure or count as priceless, such as framed artwork, wall cabinetry and shelving, musical instruments, tapestries, mirrors, plates, and taxidermy.

One of his most challenging projects was hanging a full-size, framed heirloom quilt covered in glass and weighing more than a hundred pounds. An added challenge was securing the work of art over a steep staircase using scaffolding. Recently, he worked at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo on two projects. One was an installation of architecturally placed mirrors in the new upscale bar Stir that fronts the historic train depot. He developed the antique look for the mirrors that sets the ambience and elegance for the room. Songbirds Guitar Museum, a new music venue and lounge, will feature the largest collection of privately owned guitars in the world. Bob got to hold each one and make them shine on display. "That was a satisfying project," says Bob, who is also a musician with the group Church Bus Captain.

Displaying a collection or an intergenerational wall of family photos can be a daunting task, so call Bob. He's also a master at plaster and mountain stone that no amateur should touch with a hammer and nail. While Bob works primarily with designers and galleries, he can also work directly with homeowners following a move to a new home or during a remodel project. He works on a surprisingly affordable hourly rate. So, invest in expertise is our recommendation; otherwise, you may have a more costly plaster repair or un-level painting in your line of sight. **NI**

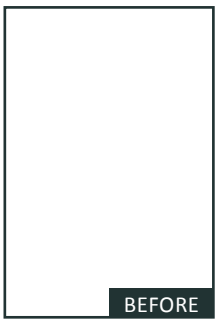
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, find Bob Wright's Art Installations on Facebook, or call Bob at 423.364.1015.

above: Beverly "Guitar" Watkins checks out the new Songbirds Guitar Museum at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Bob Wright's Art Installations completed the unique exhibit.

right: Bob mixes a framed print with family artifacts.

far right: Bob Wright pauses in front of a painting by Ed Nash of Nashville at the home of a Lookout Mountain client. Portrait by photographer Billy Weeks.

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MINDFUL LIVING

CULTIVATING A LIFE WHERE ORCHIDS BLOOM: THE LINES FAMILY STORY

STORY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY WEEKS

When Joan's daughter, Laura Lines, was only two, the entire family attended the Nashville Antique and Garden Show. A patron stepped over to the Lines Orchid booth to ask about a certain bright white orchid that had caught his attention. "What kind of orchid is this?" he asked. The toddler spoke up and strung together the Latin syllables 'phal-e-an-op-sis' without a pause. This took everyone by surprise, including Joan, the child's busy mother. Like her daughter, Joan Lines McCandless also grew up pinching spent leaves from potted orchids in the family greenhouse, as she learned to name the world around her. In many ways the family was bilingual, fluent in both English and Latin.

Joan knew by age five how to reach her tiny hand into the brown coconut husk soil to see if the plants were 'thirsty' as a child might say. She developed skills of intuition, an appreciation of delicate beauty, all right alongside the rigor of science. Joan's father and her grandfather had done the same, and Joan raised her children to understand this way of being in the world.

To tell the history of Tennessee's finest orchid grower, Lines Orchids, is to reveal the history of the American Orchid Society founded in 1921. Joan's grandfather, Oliver Lines, was a founding trustee and served as an advocate longer than any other member, more than 44 years. Oliver Lines passed in 1965. Oliver's son, John Lines, had his father's same passion for growing orchids and experimenting with hybrids.

Joan's grandfather, Oliver Lines, was trained at England's finest estates and by the most revered authorities in orchid culture, before landing in America at Ellis Island in 1910. His journey reads like a 'Who's Who' of high society and entrepreneurial energies. Beginning with Great Britain's Secretary of State Joseph Chamberlain, who was known to never be in the public eye without a cut orchid slipped into his lapel, the young Oliver Lines impressed investors, customers, and other growers. He navigated a series of mergers and economic challenges on both sides of 'the pond' while continuing his commitment to learn, adapt, and build a reputation for excellence. Perseverance has kept the cultivars of century-old delicate roots alive.

Joan's grandfather first stepped into a greenhouse in Birmingham, England at age 14, hired merely to shine the glass. Quickly his work ethic and interest promoted him to water boy and then he was chosen to be an

apprentice grower. When that work evaporated, he followed his team to a heavily industrialized London where the smog and harsh weather did not help him or his plants thrive. Choosing by intention a rural pastoral life, he landed a job working for the most revered orchid grower in England, H G. Alexander. He began to understand not only what made his plants thrive, but what made him reach for light as well. America's promise was just ahead for the now 25-year old.

Together, John and Oliver Lines accumulated many orchid culture awards ranging from engraved silver serving trays to candelabras and trophy bowls. They stacked these shiny affirmations up on the greenhouse shelves and went about their work. But customers noticed, and the Lines family's Signal Mountain business grew into a landmark. Many visited Lines Orchids as a kind of scientific pilgrimage, to meet Oliver, known as 'The Dean' of orchid culture among growers. He was given that title about the time he won three gold medals for his orchids at the 1939 New York World's Fair, pleasing his leading investor, Mrs. Eleanor Dixon. Nearly 44 million people from across the world that

Joan Lines McCandless and her son, Scott McCandless, at the Signal Mountain greenhouses. Scott is the fourth generation of the Lines family to oversee greenhouse operations.

top: More than 20 varieties of orchids are cultivated at Lines Orchids.

above: Delicate ladyslipper orchid

above right: Vintage hand stamps representing the long-term customer relationships with retail businesses in Nashville, Atlanta, Birmingham and across the region.

focused on building 'the future.' Oliver Lines was in the thick of building his family's future on something delicately rooted in the past. Orchids were proving to be highly portable and profitable in their scarcity.

In 1945, the industry's highest honor, the American Orchid Society's gold medal for lifetime achievement, was presented to Oliver Lines. A year later, following the shifting economies brought about by WWII, an aging Mrs. Dixson needed to sell her greenhouse assets. While many items of her estate were sold into a diaspora, she formally gifted Oliver Lines with the best specimens from the original collection and also a couple of greenhouse frames, which the family still employs. She knew these assets were in the country's best hands.

John Lines had shadowed his father in the greenhouse work his entire life, taking a natural and curious interest in all aspects of the business. He convinced his father to avoid retirement, and to persevere. The family purchased property in 1947 in Signal Mountain, Tennessee. John and his wife Gladys stayed busy raising four children, traveling the world to study orchids, and participating in orchid shows.

Joan has carried on the family business since 1991. Her son, Scott McCandless, now oversees Lines Orchid's greenhouse operations on the mountain, and is the fourth generation to do so. Next year marks 70 years since Oliver Lines carried his orchids, some dating to the mid-1800s and a few originally raised in prestigious English conservatories, to a community in the South Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee.

Today, Lines Orchids operates 40,000 square-feet of vintage glass greenhouse space with wholesale and retail customers extending out across the country. Lines makes regular trips with plants to Nashville, Atlanta, and Birmingham.

In 2011 Lines Orchids opened a gift shop in historic Warehouse Row in downtown Chattanooga. Joan officially handed the greenhouse reins to son Scott and fulfilled her dream of having an in-town floral gift shop that tapped her expertise in design and presentation. The shop offers plants, books, pots, free orchid expertise, and Joan's intentional support of Tennessee artists such as ceramic potter Jessie Bean Bailey. Each item on the shelf at Lines is carefully chosen. Each gift bag has been hand-stamped with the family name. On the wall is a grouping of awards her family has earned for offering the most exquisite orchids; and each item in Joan's shop defines the word 'exquisite.' Vintage copies of Orchid Society Membership booklets are stacked to elevate a decorative arrangement and prompt a conversation.

From the 1950s through the 1960s, Lines Orchids was the best source for the cut blooms of ruffled 'cattleya' orchids. The flowers were a boom to the business and were pinned to every woman of means who attended church, garden club, gala, or the prom. The demand for these reached the White House, and in 1962 John and Gladys Lines named an orchid for First Lady C. Bess Truman, much to her delight. The couple received an invitation to tour the Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, as a show of gratitude. In

those days, Lines Orchids would hire more than 20 extra temporary workers to help them manage the volume between Easter and Mother's Day.

While the cattleya still winds up on a girl's slender wrist at the prom, the word 'corsage' sounds vintage to us today, and certainly the popularity has waned. But the beauty of a potted cattleya is still in demand and are grown at Lines Orchids. Brides continue to find the orchids a sentimental favorite for vintage wedding bouquets.

More than 20 varieties of orchids are grown at Lines, and Joan notes that the Royal Horticultural Society that registers varieties world-wide has 40,000 orchid types on record, more than any other plant species. The bright white drama of the Phalaenopsis orchid is Lines' best-seller and signature offering. If you step into the greenhouse at Lines Orchids, it is not the heat and humidity that take your breath away, it is the uncommon beauty of seeing a sea of blooms that are each as luminous as the moon.

The most challenging aspect of living with orchids may be the discipline to let them be. Most of these delicate plants do not perish due to neglect, but by over-watering and allowing the plant roots to rot in a pool of water. "I don't recommend the so-called ice cube method," says Joan, nearly rolling her eyes at the thought of trying to shortcut the care of a plant. "There are too many ways that could go wrong for the plant."

The ice cube method touts a slow release of water, but the variables are too many and only complicates the task, said Joan. She likes to keep things simple. Water only when the plant needs water. Frequently touch the soil to see if it is dry. In other words, pay attention to the plant, but not too much.

Patience and attention are two vital character traits required to grow orchids. Some species may have a dormant period of a year between blooming cycles. And some orchids bloom for as long as two to three months with their most active blooming season generally falling between February and late spring, conveniently around Mother's Day.

For most of us, if we are honest, patience is depleted from our soil. Perhaps growing an orchid can be a rite of passage we offer our busy selves, a gift that represents our intrinsic need to nurture living things and pay attention.

Cultivating an orchid in our spaces reminds us that the anticipated bloom is nurtured in the small daily actions—monitoring the soil and ensuring light. "To have a healthy bloom, you have to start with a healthy plant that has been given room to grow," said Joan. When we listen to Joan, we can't help but hear in her adamant voice something akin to a parable. Perhaps a Phalaenopsis, a cattleya, or a flower the locals call a 'lady slipper' are metaphors worthy of further lessons, further meditation. **NI**

below: Handmade slip-cast porcelain flower pots by Bean and Bailey ceramics studio of Chattanooga.

Lines Orchids urban floral shop at Warehouse Row offers unique display options for potted and cut blooms.

WHAT AN ORCHID ASKS OF US

ROOTS. A healthy root structure has been given space to grow and is not 'girdling' around the interior of the pot. Begin with a healthy plant from Lines Orchids.

LIGHT. Southern or eastern exposure to natural light is best.

AIR. Orchids are 'epiphytic' plants, meaning they grow on trees with their roots exposed to air and moisture. A potting medium of coarsely ground coconut husks allows for air flow.

WATER. Monitor the soil regularly and only when it is dry, water generously so that the salts that naturally form are flushed. Allow for thorough draining.

FERTILIZER. Over the years orchids benefit from any balanced indoor potting fertilizer. The key is balance among the nutrients with a 20x20x20 ratio.

PATIENCE. Orchids may have an extended dormant season, some as long as a year, between blooms, though blooms are generous and long-lasting when they arrive.

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Lines Orchids, Inc.: 1823 Taft Highway, Signal Mountain, TN, 423.886.2111, linesorchids.com

Lines Orchids at Warehouse Row: 1110 Market St., South Building, Chattanooga

Flower Mart: 4502 Harding Pike, Nashville, TN, 615.490.3966. flowermartbysunrise.com

Tulip Tree: 95 White Bridge Rd., Nashville, TN, 615.352.1493 thetuliptreeinc.net

above: The ruffled cattleya orchid remains a sentimental favorite for weddings and for those who carry on the corsage traditions.

left and bottom: The Lines Orchids floral gift shop at Warehouse Row in downtown Chattanooga taps Joan's expertise in design and presentation.

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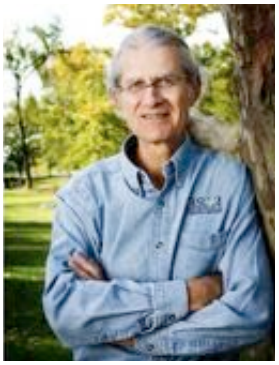
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right: Tulip poplar is the State Tree of Tennessee.

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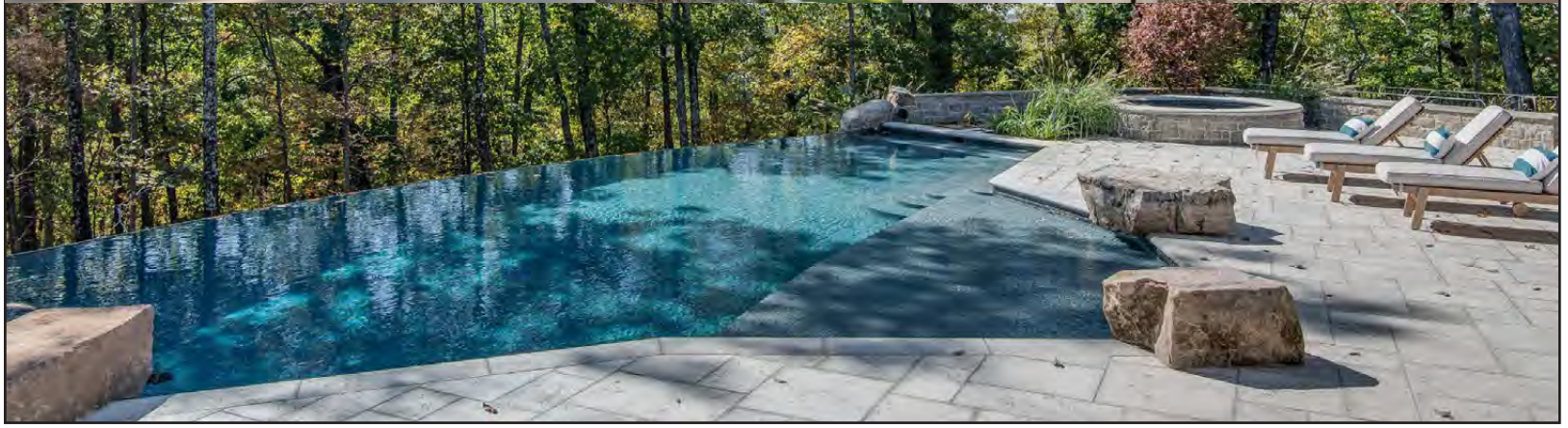
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CHARLES HORNER
TENNESSEE'S ELDER LUTHIER

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN

Charles Gene Horner hands me a fiddle, one that I recognize has taken him more than one hundred hours to perfect. He wants me to touch it, feel the armor of ten coats of varnish, what has taken an entire dry autumn to complete. Holding it, I no longer need his permission and find myself running my hand along the curves, noting the hand-carved fern scroll. There's an inlay that outlines the instrument as delicate as an embroidery stitch. He reads my next question from my gesture of following that thread, and offers a near field guide to this artifact. This fiddle is nearly a plant, nearly wild, nearly endangered. He recalls the American holly and walnut inlay he chose for the embellishment of this particular species. The tuning pegs are made of Brazilian rosewood cut back in the 1940s. Now, the fiddle has become something more, an exotic, a graft, a hybrid, with a story that extends to the Amazon rainforest and carries with it a grandfathered-in contraband. Rosewood is found in remote locations, more remote than Rockwood, Tenn., and is deemed criminal to chop or import since 1991. Charles assures me he has records that show this wood dates from a harvest many decades ago. I assure him that I can't think of any finer way to honor a tree's life more than this exquisite art object. Shyly, I bring the fiddle close to my face, where I can smell it, and allow my chin a moment's intimacy on the rest. My desire to hear it played well is palpable.

above: Cabin where Charles Horner was born in 1933, and where his father was born in 1903, is near the workshop.

right: New violin in production with fresh coat of varnish. At least ten coats of varnish will be applied.

I hand the fiddle back to Charles and he reaches into some old rugged case for a bow, and sets it down across the strings. Music fills the maker space.

Charles Horner, now 83, is Tennessee's elder luthier and makes fiddles and mandolins, and on occasion, a banjo. He's been 'at this work' since he was about 14. The list of musicians who have made the pilgrimage to his remote mountain home, some many times, includes the likes of Earl Scruggs, Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, Curly Fox, John Hartman, Mel Tillis, Fletcher Bright, and Kenny Sears, fiddler player for the Time Jumpers. "There's no telling how many recordings my violins are on," said Charles.

Beyond the workshop, across a pond, sits a one-room log cabin where he was born in 1933. His father, Bruce Horner, was also born in that cabin in 1903. "My great-great grandfather served in the Revolutionary War, I'm told, and settled this land. Most people wanted to live in the valleys where the soil was rich. But here on the mountain it was a rather isolated place." Except for his service in the U.S. Navy, Charles Horner has always been at home on this mountain.

Anne Horner, his wife, invites me to take a walk around the pond, through the muggy heat of August, the tall grass. We walk a gravel path toward the cabin, both of us hoping to work out some stiffness. In her voice I hear the admiration she has for her husband, as she points out the repairs he's made to their rural life. Their love has been kept between them for 59 years like a cedar chest with mitered corners, and all sharp edges sanded and softened. I also hear in her voice the refrain about poor health and getting older. They are survivors these two, like the cabin. She's been through cancer and its harsh treatment, and he has lost a foot to an amputation, and has a prosthetic that only slows him down a bit. I recognize that this walk is not a detour to the story I am seeking, but takes me up the steps and into the heart of where Charles Horner's story begins.

Anne and I climb the board ramp up to the cabin porch where wagon wheels lean amidst a tangle of vines. There's a wooden barrel, a chair. We step inside the cabin made from straight poplar logs and Ann said she can't imagine how anyone raised large families in a place so small. One small window stares back at us. We both shake our heads and welcome a return to the expansive outdoors, the hills, and a stand of tall Joe-pye weed full of the hinges of yellow swallowtail butterflies.

Back at the workshop, Charles takes up the story where we left it. "My brothers and I slept upstairs in the loft of that old cabin." He gestures out the window. "Up in that loft was an old trunk and in that trunk, my granddaddy kept an old German violin." Where it came from is a bit of a mystery and lost in the telling, though he has a photo of his father playing it, or perhaps posing with it for the camera. It may have come from a jewelry store in Rockwood, Tenn. "Oh, I thought it was the most beautiful thing in the world, and I still have it," he said.

Charles motions that he wants to show me the catalyst for this career of his and steps over to remove a dry towel spread across an old fiddle case. He uses these towels all around the room to keep the dust out. There's nothing pretentious about this workshop where every space is used to stack curly maple

boards or line up clamps like stair step children along the peg board above the workbench. He clicks the latches, just as he did the old trunk in the cabin loft as a child. There, fitted into the faded fabric, is a red fiddle that gleams. "I learned to make fiddles so that I could properly repair this one," he said. "My brothers and I had banged this one up pretty bad and it never had a case until I bought this one for it." The violin looks pristine. Charles tells me he made it a new top in 1984. He was already a master, back then.

Charles Horner's craftsmanship has earned him a Tennessee's Governor's Award. His instruments are documented by the Smithsonian and have toured with the Southern Arts Federation and numerous museums. He says the early violins he made were crude as he struggled with techniques and began acquiring a proper set of tools, and some he had to make himself or make do. He's made a cello, double bass, violas, more than 60 mandolins, but more than 500 violins. The violins are the most satisfying, though mandolins ebb and flow in popularity from time to time and his are coveted because they are rare.

"I'm basically self-taught," said Charles. "You can work it out by yourself, but it's not easy. There are schools now where you can learn some aspects quicker, but you still have to work at it to become good. I guess it was around 1948 when I started; I was just 15 years old. I just knew I wanted to make something beautiful and I wanted to make something a musician wanted." He had to learn to play on a fiddle ordered from a Sears and Roebuck catalog himself, before going into the Navy at age 18 and his earliest memories of hearing fiddle music was through an old radio the family had in the 1940s. "The strange thing about making violins, is that you can't get good at it until you get old. There is some sort of understanding you come upon that you have to live out over many years."

"While I was in the Navy, I managed to find a book on [making instruments] and I studied it. But mostly when I came out of the Navy in 1955 I built furniture and did cabinetry work. I studied fiddles though every chance I got, and I guess it was 1975 when I committed myself to doing this full time."

Anne has settled into a chair nearby and prompts Charles to tell me this or that story, and to show me his envelope of family photographs. I turn my camera to her, and she is holding a large open bag of plump pole beans. She snaps them as a kind of physical therapy and tells me she got them early that morning before the heat set in at the farmer's market. She shows

above: Mandolins with the signature "C Horner" mother-of-pearl inset are highly valued.

me another bag of red October beans. "Food is the best medicine," she says. That's precisely the kind of authentic place where this story is set, a place where the fragrance of garden vegetables fills the room.

I've come to a place set apart from other places, where solitude is a man building his own set of tools, those he will turn around and use to build a mandolin. There's a pause in my questions. His story has been told through the years. But at 83, technique feels less important than the 'why?'

Seems there's another story that is pressing at Charles and he begins: "One time in my life, I got to hold and play a Stradivarius. One time." He pauses and I can tell he is back in that moment holding the benchmark of all craftsmanship, the Stradivarius. Someone performing in Nashville at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center made the encounter possible for Charles to meet with an instrument made in 1718. "I've seen thousands of violins, and I've owned and built hundreds of them, but this one just seemed to look at me and say, 'I'm a Stradivarius.' Hardly a day goes by that I don't think about it."

Charles continues. "You know, Stradivarius did not have an easy life. There was the bubonic plague all around. War. Famine. There was also the thumb of the Catholic priests bearing down, but don't print that." He laughs. "It was not a good time. Yet there was Stradivarius working away at making what is still to this day the most beautiful violin in the world. Think about that. A hard life, but somehow he managed to stay with it."

Charles Horner's life is no romantic Appalachian trope. Though it might be easy to dismiss his world as quaint and even wax envious on a hot August day when the mountain offers enough breeze to turn the whirly gigs he's made. After all, there's a rack of carefully stacked wood all around the workshop as poetic as any Robert Frost fetched. The cabin. The snap beans. The curls of wood on the workbench. The scene is nearly intoxicating for a writer who has underlined the works of the Agrarians; but there's a caution. Reality holds that relentless romantic trope in a balance.

Stradivarius, in the late 1600s worked in a small house at No. 1 Piazza Roma in an attic workshop, a home he rarely left, and a place that might not be much larger than the Horner family's cabin. The master who must

SOUTHERN SOURCES

Luthier Charles Horner,
Westel, TN: 865.354.0774

have considered himself somewhat indentured, created more than 1,000 instruments in his lifetime, and around 650 of his violins still survive, get stolen, returned, coveted, displayed, studied, and sometimes played.

There's a hard accounting when you have to put a price on what has helped you survive this life. For the Horners, cancer has been a plague, and they've known famine can surface in all sorts of ways as scarcity. Charles Horner, like the Italian master he holds in awe, has lived a life elevating something beautiful out of life's amputations, you could say. There's a hollow inside every life that we can sometimes frame, and that's where the music can emerge.

There's a mystery that remains around the work of any luthier. What secrets get shared only through apprenticeship and oral history? Does this or that type of wood affect the sound? Charles Horner uses what has been available to him, becoming an apprentice to the woodpile, the forest. He certainly knows as much about wood and trees as he does the creative process. He has friends in the lumber business who set aside certain finds for him. His violins are made from maple with spruce tops.

"There's just a perfection with a violin I admire," adds Charles. "What other man-made thing can you pick up and enjoy that has not changed significantly in more than 300 years? Any violin is a priceless treasure."

Some scientists believe a Stradivarius sound doesn't result from any chemical compound, or egg white glue, or other speculations that have surfaced through the centuries. The superior music may have been a result of wood that was more dense, not because it was somehow superior, but because it had endured a cold winter and a slower growth. From a stunted tree, can come the most expansive musical sound. This 'Little Ice Age' history reminds us about what made the maple from the northern forests of Croatia sound a little different for Stradivarius.

Perhaps any seasoned artist gives us master works that reveal a parallel story of the hardships of their life, where both the luthier and his instrument become beautiful in their imperfections. "Stradivarius lived to be 93," said Charles, "and that was at time when the average life span was probably only 35. He was onto something." **NI**

far left, top: Detail of various wood insets that run along the edge of the violin as delicate as an embroidery stitch.

left: Carved mandolin detail

below: No two Charles Horner violins are alike, but these are sisters.

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TURNING THE ORDINARY INTO ARTIFACT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURIE PERRY VAUGHEN

The Refindery is an urban market with a creative bent toward repurposing ubiquitous items into something with a new aesthetic or function. The space has been repurposed as a collective of booths that offer great finds, whether you are looking for the raw materials for your own artistic creation, or looking for a gift.

Celebrating their first year anniversary, The Refindery has become a design destination. It's one of those rare places you can find Mid-Century Modern furniture for a bargain, and enjoy thumbing through a booth of vinyl. Turn a corner and there are turntables you will want to take for a spin.

There's an area where you can find shelves of vintage glass light covers, hardware, columns and doors, and another booth of sturdy farmhouse-style tables made from reclaimed lumber.

You never know what you might find at The Refindery. Charming bride and groom wedding cake toppers are among the delicate treasures in a booth called Wanderland. Vintage classroom posters, the kind that hung from chalkboards before the Internet, with diagrams about democracy or sea shells, offer cool graphics. A deck of children's flashcards will likely get woven into an artist's collage. Gorgeous glass barware sets are irresistible. In another booth, hubcap chrome gets repurposed as a wall of clocks. And speaking of time, you could spend a lot of time in this place, so come for the day and get inspired. And, while in the Highland Park neighborhood near downtown Chattanooga, take in the McCallie Mural project that continues all around the shop on nearby commercial buildings. **NI**

SOUTHERN SOURCES

The Refindery,
Chattanooga, TN:
therefinderyonmccallie.com
423.697.1243



The Land Trust for Tennessee's Glen Leven Farm, Nashville
Photo courtesy of Mary Craven Photography

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