

CHARLOTTE URBAN

HOME

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CELEBRATING INSPIRATIONAL DESIGN AND PERSONAL STYLE







In the CLEARING

By Anne Marie Ashley
Photography by Dustin Peck

Many people talk about building their dream home, often far from the busy roads and surrounded by vistas and landscapes.

FEW, HOWEVER, ACTUALLY SEIZE THE opportunity to do so. But when Louise and John Andrews sent their children off to college, they felt the time was finally right to build their dream home. Perfectly, John's family owned over 300 acres of gorgeous land in Midland – a dreamscape for a custom home. They purchased 13 acres and built their home in the clearing.

“John's family has owned this land since the 70s,” Louise explains. “Over the years, we talked on and off about building a house on the land, but it wasn't until our kids were out of high school that it really seemed feasible.”

The couple envisioned a European farmhouse with a modern

feel, filled with light from floor-to-ceiling windows. Plans for an open-concept home with few hallways and plenty of airy rooms were drawn up. “We like to walk through rooms to get to other rooms,” says Louise. “Hallways seem like such a waste of space.” The sprawling home was constructed over the course of a full year.

Before the home even broke ground, however, the Andrews' teamed up with interior designer Stephanie Semmes to help plan the interiors around the architecture. Louise had seen the home of friend Mollye Bell, also featured in *Urban Home Magazine* and designed by Semmes, and knew immediately that Stephanie would be the woman for the job.

“Stephanie was instrumental in getting this home completed,”













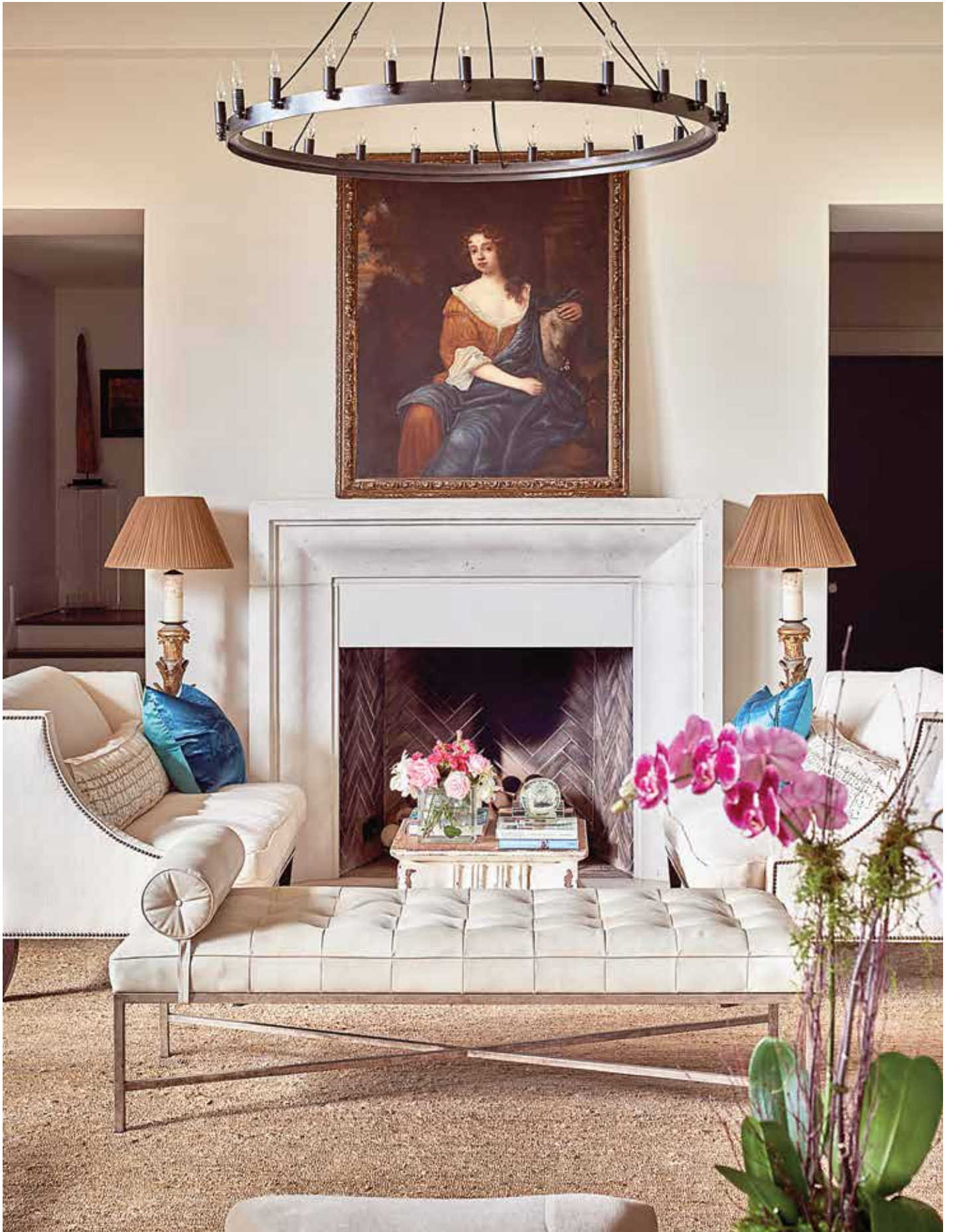
says Louise. “From tweaking the floor plan to paint selections, plumbing fixtures, floor stain colors and elevations – she was key to the success of this home.”

“It’s really easy for me to envision the design well before it’s installed,” says Stephanie Semmes. “And thankfully, I have a knack for translating that into words so that my clients can see what I see.”

Stephanie incorporated many of the Andrews’ personal pieces into the overall design. A painting of a large urn from Louise’s parents’ home was repurposed in a modern setting. A painting created by their daughter, Hunter, was hung in their master bedroom along with an original piece by Sarah Otts.

“In a home like the Andrews’, the architecture







is the star,” explains Stephanie. “So the palette needs to be mostly neutral and designed with soft furnishings so that the architecture stands out.” The juxtaposition of modern design next to historical architecture is part of Stephanie’s general aesthetic as a designer, but was really the soul behind this project. “It just has to be done properly,” she advises.

Stephanie says that collaborating with Louise was her favorite part of this project. “She was challenging in the best way,” Stephanie laughs. “Louise has impeccable taste and so I couldn’t present her with just anything... it had to be a perfect piece.”

She admits that she had to push the boundaries only a few times, including Louise’s request for purple in her daughter’s room. “I just don’t work with purple,” jokes Stephanie. “But I did it anyway, and when neither Louise nor I liked the look of the room, she finally acquiesced and let me do my thing. Which was an Aspen-inspired room.” A vision Stephanie says was inspired by her many years moving around as a child – from the southwest to Charleston to Asheville and beyond, she brought a little something from each environment into her design repertoire.

Pulling pieces from Phillips Collection, Oly Studio, La Donna and Arteriors, to name a few, Stephanie created a cohesive look that pays homage to the landscape, the architecture *and* interior design – a trifecta of perfect planning. “My favorite room in the home is the living room,” offers Stephanie. “Every single accessory was thought out, every nuance planned.”

The Andrews’ also wanted to highlight the incredible landscape around the home, so they worked with the late John Byrd and his good friend Hugh Crump with Greenline Design. The landscape includes some formal spaces with a sodded yard, boxwoods and a rose garden, but also more rustic areas for the shed and vegetable garden. “It’s beautiful now, but I can’t wait to see what it looks like in a few years when it’s matured!” Louise says. ♦