



Lake Living

SPECIAL SECTION

by BARRY WISE SMITH
photos by SYLVIA MARTIN

DREAM (HOUSE) DELAYED

A Pell city couple waits two decades to build their Logan Martin dream home.

In 1984, Connie Hill and her husband Ike Newton, owners of Black Creek Integrated Systems in Moody, were literally living on the water in a houseboat on Logan Martin when they spotted a lush sliver of green jutting into the lake. Soon the couple heard that the lot was for sale. Wasting no time, Hill and Newton made an offer on the nearly five-acre property the next day.

Hill and Newton moved into a farmhouse they discovered on the lot, made minimal renovations to make the house livable, and planned to build their dream home—sooner rather than later. But it wasn't until two decades later that Hill and Newton started the project they'd been dreaming about. "We were planning this house for 20 years," Hill says. "We knew how we wanted the

house to look and feel." Over the years, the couple had amassed a volume of clippings from design magazines, and armed with years of research and ideas, they decided it was time to hire an architect. "In architectural speak, we had a program," Hill recalls.

Unfortunately, with such definite ideas about the house they wanted, Hill and Newton had a difficult time finding an architect to translate their ideas into reality. After three architects failed to do the job—"Everyone kept trying to put a 10,000-square-foot house here," Hill says—Newton received a recommendation for Joel Williams, an architect who had recently started The Williams Partnership with his wife Melissa.

Hill and Newton presented Williams with one of their previous architect's plans and clippings. "They asked for Frank Lloyd Wright but not too Frank Lloyd Wright," Williams remembers. "They had this beautiful site, and that's what I responded to." Several months later, Williams made his successful pitch at Fat Land Barbecue, and with just a few minor changes, "that's the design we went with," he says.

Since the Hill-Newton lot sits squarely in a flood plain, Alabama Power dictated where struc-

tures could be located. This left Williams to focus on room orientations to maximize views from the house. With plans finalized, building began in October 2004.

The result is a 5,500-square-foot house that blends seamlessly with its surroundings. While the house has just three bedrooms, the open, airy public spaces and 2,000 square feet of terraces give the home a much larger feel. A thin causeway separates the property from the mainland and leads guests to the site of the lot's original home where there is now guest parking and a garage with workshop and guest apartment. A dramatic 60-foot-long cedar bridge with stainless-steel cable rails connects the garage to the main house, ending at an elegant entryway featuring stunning stone archways, a contemporary fountain that echoes the lake in the distance, and a handsome cherry front door.

Upon entering the home's foyer, soaring ceilings and an abundance of cherry trim set the tone for what lies beyond. Immaculate travertine floors with slate accents flow throughout the home's public spaces, and dozens of floor-to-ceiling windows flood the space with natural light. The kitchen, designed by Melissa Williams and built by

Cantley and Company, is a large space that feels warm and inviting. A 10-foot-long island provides seating and houses a butler's sink and other essentials. An elegant pass-through serves as a custom entertainment unit and focal point for one of the adjacent den's two seating areas.

The den features a 13-foot-high barrel vault ceiling painted pale blue and a wall of windows looking onto the lake. David Walker and Sean Beam of Richard Tubb Interiors in Birmingham chose stunning, yet simple furnishings for the space. "Sean and David did a good job of selecting pieces that look old but aren't," Hill says.

While the main seating area faces the kitchen, a second cozy spot faces a fireplace inglenook with an arched fireplace and custom-tile hearth.

A 30-foot-long gallery with floor-to-ceiling French doors opening onto a gracious terrace connects the public spaces to the master suite and other private areas. The gallery is also home to the couple's home office, a powder room, and for Hill, an avid mosaic tile artist, a craft room, which is one of her favorites in the house.

At the end of the gallery, a screened porch flanks the entrance to the master suite, which features cherry-stained hardwood floors and pocket

Opposite: The home's three-story tower offers spectacular views of Logan Martin.

Top: The kitchen's cherry cabinets are see-through with light flooding in. The 10-foot-long island is the heart of the space. The bottle cap fish was made by Birmingham artist Melanie Colvin.

Bottom: The spacious dining room easily accommodates a dinner party.



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Top: The Newton-Hill house features an abundance of stone and full-length windows. Above left: One of the home's 2,000-square-foot of terraces feature a striking outdoor fireplace and comfortable overstuffed furniture. Above right: The screened porch flanks the master suite.

doors that close the suite to the rest of the house. The suite has a private patio, beautifully crafted built-in bookshelves, a huge walk-in closet, and elegant master bath. Stairs lead to two well-appointed guest bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. At the top of another flight of stairs is the home's crowning glory—a third-story belvedere with floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides to capture 360-degree views of water and sky. "It's the crème de la crème," Williams says.

After years of waiting, Hill and Newton moved into the house in November 2006. "The results exceeded my expectations," Hill says. The Williamses are also pleased with the house. "I think it's a nice balance between a contemporary house and a house with character," says Joel. "My biggest struggle was to achieve a house that made sense on the site, and we did that." As for Hill, she says, "I still walk into a room and think, 'Damn, I love my house.'" 🍋



resource list for newton hill house

Architecture and Interiors (including cabinet and millwork design, finish selections, fixture selections, tile, granite, stone, paint, etc.)
Melissa & Joel Williams of Williams Partnership; Architecture, Inc.

FURNISHINGS
(furniture, layout, fabrics, and accessories)
Sean Beam and David Walker of Richard Tubb Interiors

CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS
Tim Coker (project manager) and George Prater (superintendent), Rives Construction (exterior/shell construction); Jay Ritch (mechanical/plumbing engineering); Paragon Engineering (site/civil engineering); John Gill, CRS Engineering (lighting consultant); Keith and Cyndy Cantley, Cantley & Company (kitchen cabinet fabrication); Hannah Tile (stone and ceramic tile installation); Eddie Sullivan, Finer Finishes (cementitious stucco work); Robert Davis, MasonryScapes (stonework); Thomas Davis (carpenter); Southern Stone Design (stone slab fabrication and installation); Clay Metal & Stone (tile materials); Hinkle Roofing (Bermuda panel roof installation)

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