

L A K E N O R M A N

# CURRENTS

hello,  
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Doing fresh  
with eeZ

A gorgeous  
grotto

A Huntersville  
haven

Kirk Ballard builds  
relationships



Protected from the elements (including mosquitoes), the homeowner's new family room and porch extension is the perfect place for guests to mingle and talk in intimate groups. Comfortable and flexible, there's plenty of room for dining, playing bridge, watching television and smoking cigars ... or just relaxing to the sounds of nature at the end of the day.

# A Porch with a View

A Huntersville renovation focuses on the wow factor



The family room and porch look onto two patios that surround a large waterfall- enhanced koi pond. A foot bridge, pergola and lots of trees and plants make the outdoor space a haven in the spring and summer.



Crowds that gather in the kitchen are a headache to almost any hostess. Dreams of breaking down walls and opening up doors that lead to large indoor-outdoor spaces that flow with positive energy ensue.

And that's just what one local couple says led them to give the back of their home a makeover several years

ago. Now the 1979 custom-built ranch house no longer seems cramped and dated when friends arrive for backyard barbecues.

**COLORFUL, ECLECTIC**

Sitting on some 50 serene acres east of Huntersville, the home now is filled with natural light pouring in through large windows, and the transition from the kitchen and dining area to the family room and beyond is seamless.



Interior designer Starr Miller helped transform the space into an entertainment haven.



The traditional ranch house, decorated in a very relaxed, country style, now features lighter colors that bring the outdoors in.

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While their parties easily can number some 50 to 100 people, the homeowners, who are Huntersville natives and teenage sweethearts from North Mecklenburg High School, are humble people who quietly enjoy retirement. They wish to remain anonymous for this story; however, they exuberantly applaud the expertise of their personal friend and award-winning designer, Starr Miller, who helped them transform their home into a welcoming space for entertaining.

Miller, a graduate of the Parsons School of Design in New York, is the recipient of several Charlotte and Lake Norman-area honors, including Charlotte Home Builder's Excellence in Remodeling Award in 2011. For this home addition/remodel project, she is credited by the homeowners for helping them think outside their comfort zone.

The traditional ranch house, decorated in a very relaxed, country style, now features lighter colors that bring the outdoors in. Although the homeowners originally wanted the walls of the family room extension to be painted blue, they are pleased with the slate green Miller suggested.

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New furniture and accent pieces mix well with more traditional home furnishings.

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“The best clients have opinions, and I love that,” says Miller. “The trick is to learn why they like what they tell you they like, and why they are doing the project. For this, the mistress of the house loves a strong, clear pink and blue. I wanted her to have what she wanted, but the bright blue walls would have stopped the eye from traveling to the view outdoors that is full of trees.” Miller says the green walls enable the floral pinks and blues in the sophisticated Brunshwig & Fils upholstery fabric to pop — to be the focus — rather than compete with the foliage outside.

The exposed beams in the ceiling of the family room are an extension of the rest of the house, too, and the buttercream-painted bead-board ceiling adds lightness to the room. The homeowners say they enjoyed working with Miller to choose new furniture and accent pieces that mix well with their more traditional home furnishings.

“I love the eclectic mix of the sophisticated fabrics with the imported Italian chandelier in the dining room, and also the fun, flea market finds,” adds Miller. “This home is a reflection of its mistress, who is fun, creative, has a great sense of curiosity and is the ultimate hostess.”

#### CONVERSATIONAL, FLEXIBLE

The “wow factor” of the project is the wrap-around screened-in porch off the family room. With seating for more than 30 guests, it’s spacious, yet cozy. Divided into three areas — which Miller describes as “conversation pods” — the

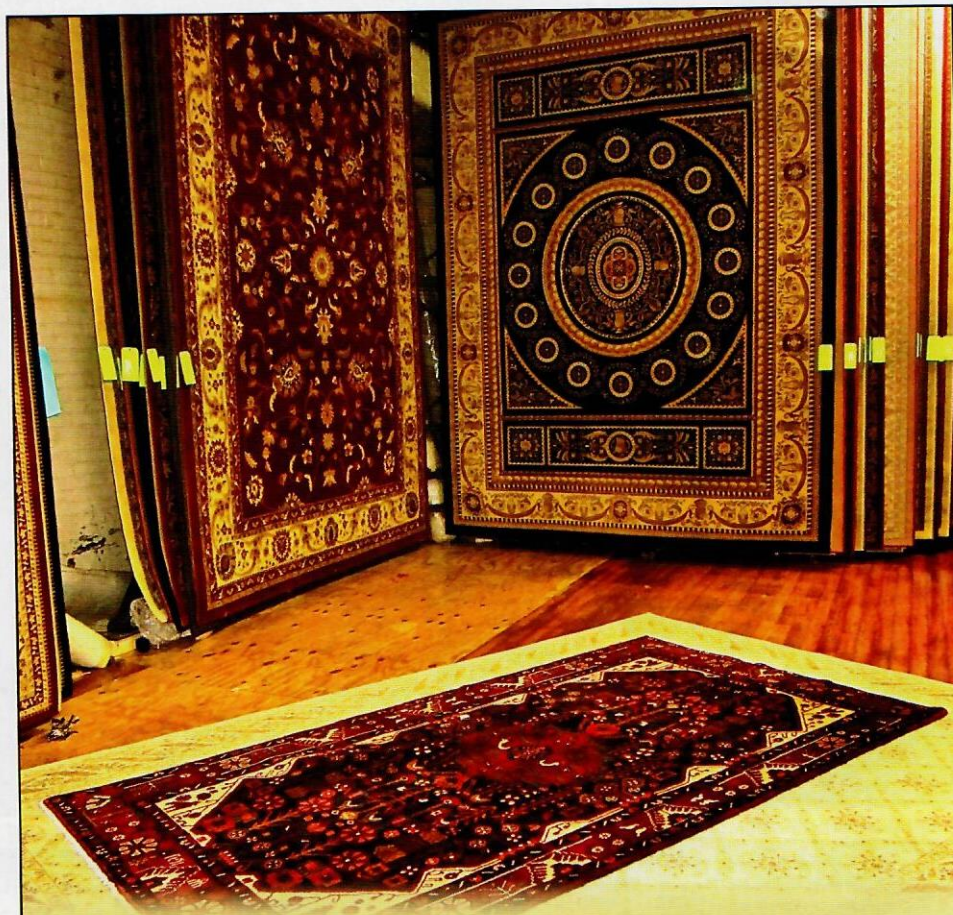
porch features a bar and sitting area at one end, a large dining table in the middle and another intimate seating arrangement at the other end. The family room and porch look onto two patios that surround a large waterfall-enhanced koi pond. A foot bridge, pergola and lots of trees and plants make the outdoor space a haven in the spring and summer.

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mingle and talk in intimate groups. Comfortable and flexible, there’s plenty of room for dining, playing bridge, watching television and smoking cigars ... or just relaxing to the sounds of nature at the end of the day. **LNC**



Lee McCracken is a Charlotte-area freelance editor and writer who lives in Stanley and grew up spending summers on Cayuga Lake in upstate New York. Since moving to the Charlotte area in 1994, she has written about business, education, health care and real estate for various publications.



### On beaux-arts and toes art...

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