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'TIS THE SEASON

Our Annual Gift Guide!
A Holiday Home Makeover!
Party Planning Tips From The Pros!

ALSO INSIDE

THE LEGEND BEHIND ONE OF LAKE
NORMAN'S MOST ICONIC STORES p. 30

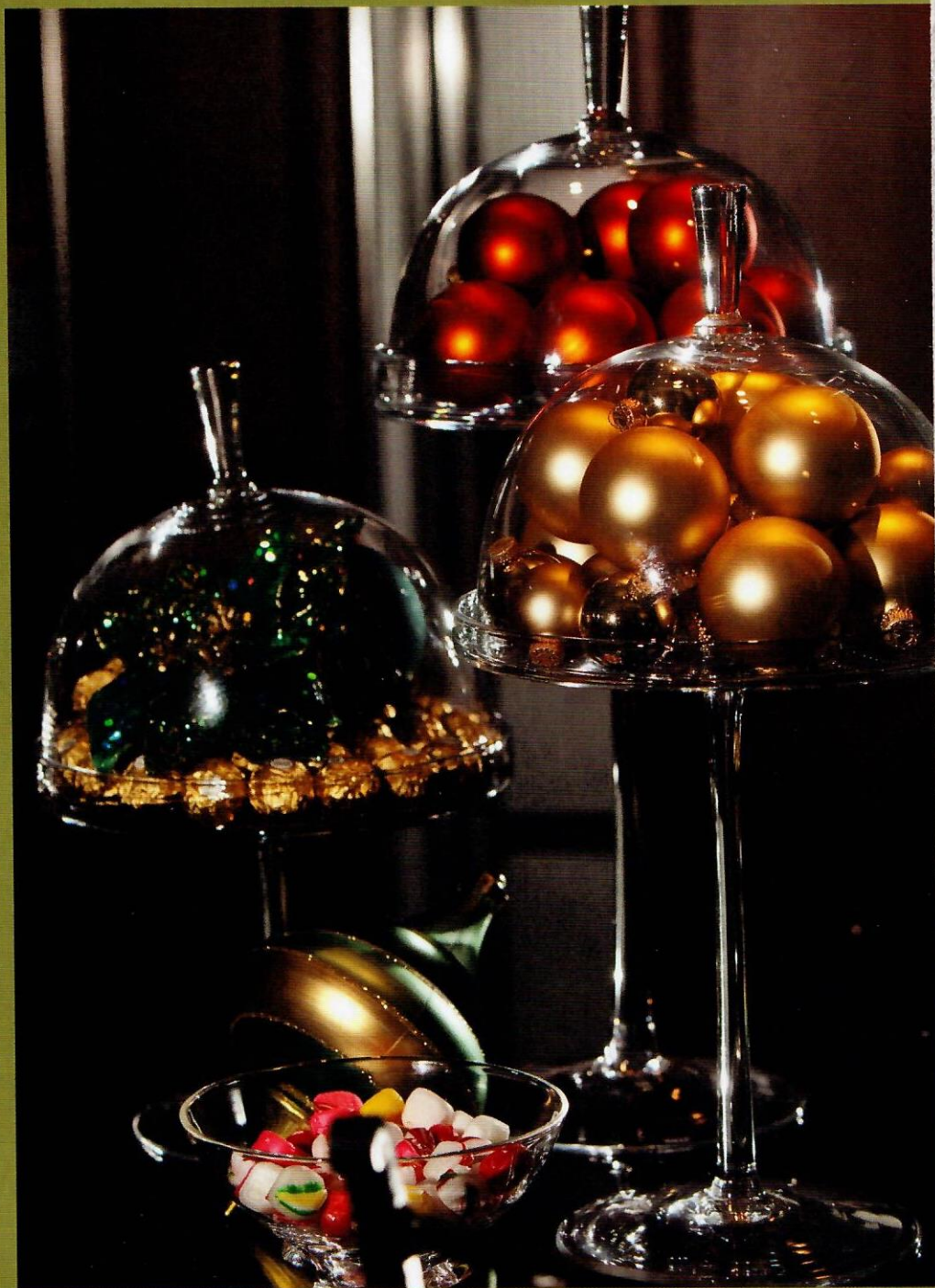
VOLUNTOURISM: IMPROVE THE WORLD
AS YOU EXPLORE IT p. 64

STORY SAM BOYKIN
PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN W. ADKISSON

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

A lakeside house
gets an updated look
just in time for the
season's soirees

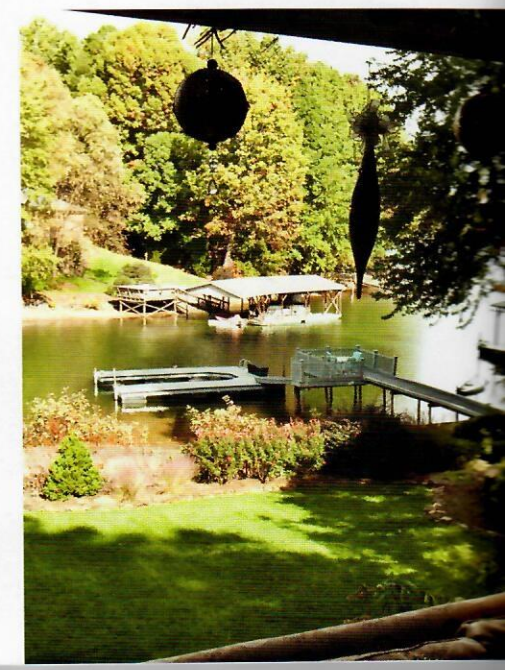
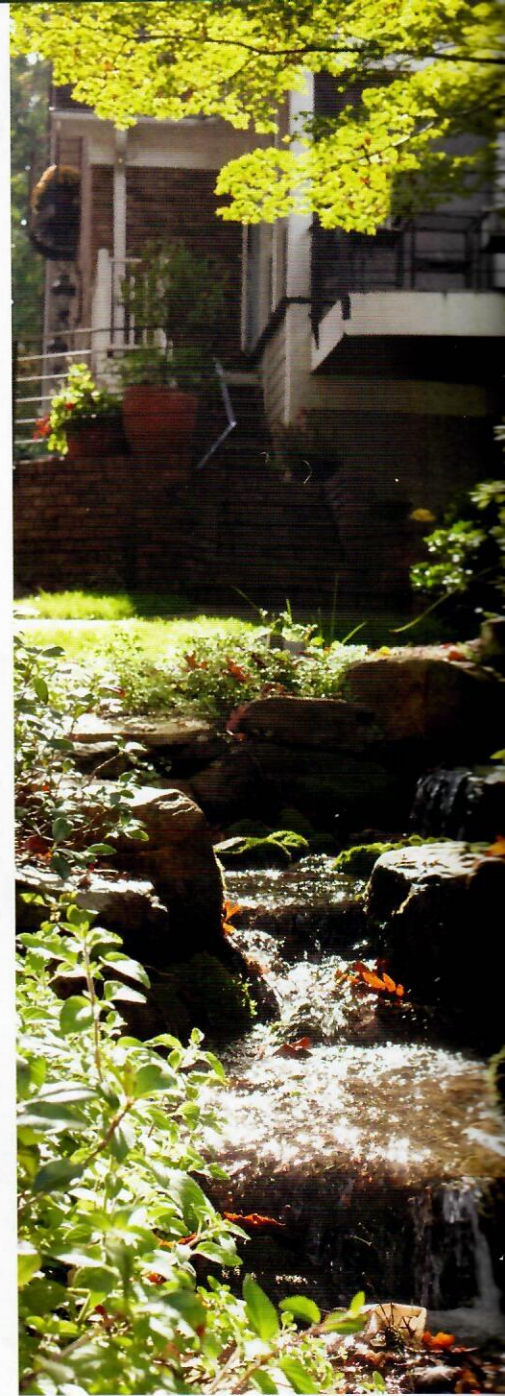
A festive table setting in the formal dining room presents a welcoming spot for friends and family to gather during the holidays.

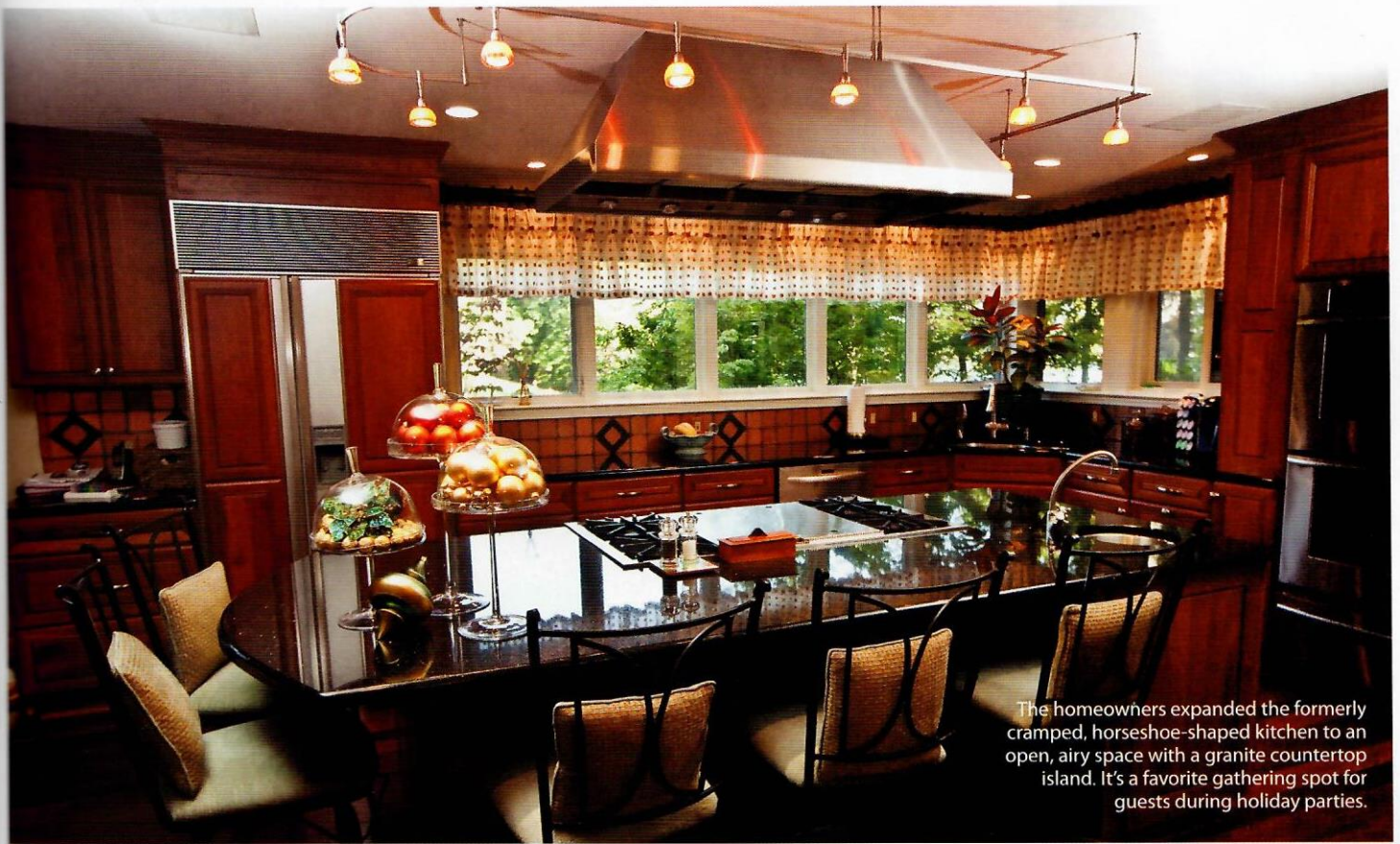


It all started with a dirty couch. Although the Cornelius home sits on a lush lakeside lot and had been renovated a few times over the years, the interior design and style didn't fit the owners' lifestyle as they often host parties and get-togethers. The furnishings and décor were dated and arranged in a choppy, segmented way that didn't flow well. Plus, there was the couch, which had originally been white, but over the years had turned a shade of brown thanks to the family dog.

Enter Starr Miller of the Cornelius-based StarrMiller Interior Design. Miller was charged with updating the look of the house and creating a warm and inviting environment where friends and family could gather and socialize—particularly during the holidays.

The homeowners make the most of their lakeside location with a scenic flagstone path that winds along a waterfall and stream, and leads to a dock and sandy beach area at the water.





The homeowners expanded the formerly cramped, horseshoe-shaped kitchen to an open, airy space with a granite countertop island. It's a favorite gathering spot for guests during holiday parties.



The sitting room's old "country cottage" décor was replaced with contemporary pieces that were positioned to offer intimate spaces where people can mingle and socialize.



Luckily for Miller, she had good bones to work with. At about 4,500 square feet, the three-story brick house, built in 1987, has three bedrooms and four-and-a-half baths.

It also reflects the homeowners' love of the lake. An upstairs screened-in porch and deck overlook the water and are connected to a small outside flagstone patio via a short stairway. Another set of stairs leads from the patio to the backyard, where the lawn is bordered with flagstones and meticulously landscaped shrubs and bushes, as well as oak, poplar and dogwood trees. Along the side of the backyard a flagstone path winds

along a waterfall and stream, and leads to a dock and sandy beach area at the lake.

Over the years the homeowners (who wish to remain anonymous), made several structural improvements to the house, including expanding the formerly cramped, horseshoe-shaped kitchen to an open, airy space with a handsome granite countertop island and large windows that look out onto the backyard.

The renovation opened up the entire main floor, so that the kitchen flows seamlessly into an informal dining room/breakfast nook and an expansive sitting room. This area is the heart of the house, where

guests congregate, chat and, of course, eat.

Miller may have been first called to simply re-cover the dirty sofa, but once she and the homeowners started talking, other projects took shape. Most pressing was the sitting room, which, like most of the main floor, has rich, southern chestnut hardwood floors and lots of windows. It also boasts a large stone fireplace with built-in, floor-to-ceiling bookcases on either end. It's a great space, but the traditional "country cottage" décor was outdated and awkwardly positioned.

"It was almost like two separate rooms



An informal dining area/breakfast nook next to the kitchen is the ideal place to set out holiday goodies during parties.

within one room," says Miller. "The space needed to be opened up and pulled together."

First, much of the older furniture was replaced with contemporary "transitional" pieces, Miller says, which feature clean, simple lines. This included four custom armchairs that took the place of an old sofa that bisected the room. The chairs were positioned in pairs and placed back-to-back, and angled inward, with each pair facing opposite ends of the room. The chairs helped break up the large room, but the two distinct spaces still felt connected.

Elsewhere, stylish, open-arm chairs with funky stripe and checkered designs were grouped next to coffee tables and sofas, offering intimate spaces throughout the room. The space went from clunky and awkward to one that was perfect for mingling and socializing during holiday parties.

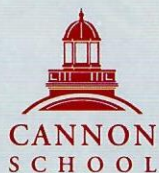
"It created lots of different places for people to sit and talk," says Miller. "During parties guests fill up every little nook and cranny."

A mix of recessed and track lighting was installed, along with contemporary,

earth-toned lamps. Other touches included whimsical polka-dot draperies and funky artwork. It was all tied together with a 20-foot custom wool and silk rug with tones of blue, copper and champagne.

With all the custom pieces and detailed touches, the main floor makeover was done in multiple phases over nearly two years. But the end result was just what the owners and Miller envisioned.

"All the designs and renovations were done with entertaining in mind, and it really shows," says Miller. "It's an ideal setting for holiday parties." **LNM**



Going *beyond.*

Information Session (1st grade)

Thursday, Dec. 6 at 10:00 a.m.

Open House

Saturday, Jan. 12 at 1:00 p.m.



John Luke, Cannon School '20
as John Glenn, 4th Grade Living History Museum

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