

LAKE NORMAN

# CURRENTS

Five real  
rescues

SCUBA at  
Lake Norman

Denise Osborne's  
selfless service

perfect  
pets

Here's Sophie,  
our Canine  
Cover Winner

VOL. 9 NUMBER 7  
JULY 2016  
WWW.LNCURRENTS.COM



# HOME FOR EVERYONE

A Cornelius couple designed a dream home for themselves — and their dogs

When Starr Miller begins working with a client, she and her team do a lot of interviewing, a lot of talking. They bring fabric samples to meetings, looking for approvals and disapprovals, as both are very telling.

However, when Miller was hired to design a lakeside home for a Cornelius couple, their task was a bit more difficult. The challenge was in the fact that the couple wanted the design to also work well with their three dogs — Ripley, Tito and Tobey.

Since the dogs can't share their opinions on paint colors and finishes, Miller studied how the couple lived with their furry friends to create a house that works for everyone. The result is a casually elegant home that flows from room to room — whether you have two legs or four.



The outdoor room features a wood-fired pizza oven. The husband of the home is of Portuguese descent, and his grandmother had one when he was growing up.

## Practical and pretty

The couple, who requested their names not be used, built their 3,329-square-foot home in 2013, although they had lived in the circa-1970s home on the same lot prior. They loved their lake view and their Cornelius location, so they tore down their old home to start anew. "We started just by drawing on a napkin. The idea was to have it flow to how we live," explains the wife of the home. "We knew we would always have dogs, so we said, 'What will make it easy to live here? Especially as we get old.'"

With that in mind, the master suite is on the first floor of the two-story home, where it embraces a view of the lake. In the master bath, a distinct curve in a tile wall hugs the stand-alone tub. "We did chocolates with the hints of copper [in the tile]. It picks up the colors from the bedroom," explains Miller, president and principal designer at Starr Miller Interior Design, Inc. in Cornelius. "You'll also see it in the corners of the walk-in shower."

The master bath has distinct areas where they each have their own sinks and space. The wife even has a vanity with a

**Right**, Custom tile work hugs the shape of the stand-alone tub in the master bath. **Below**, An open floorplan allows the couple to entertain easily.



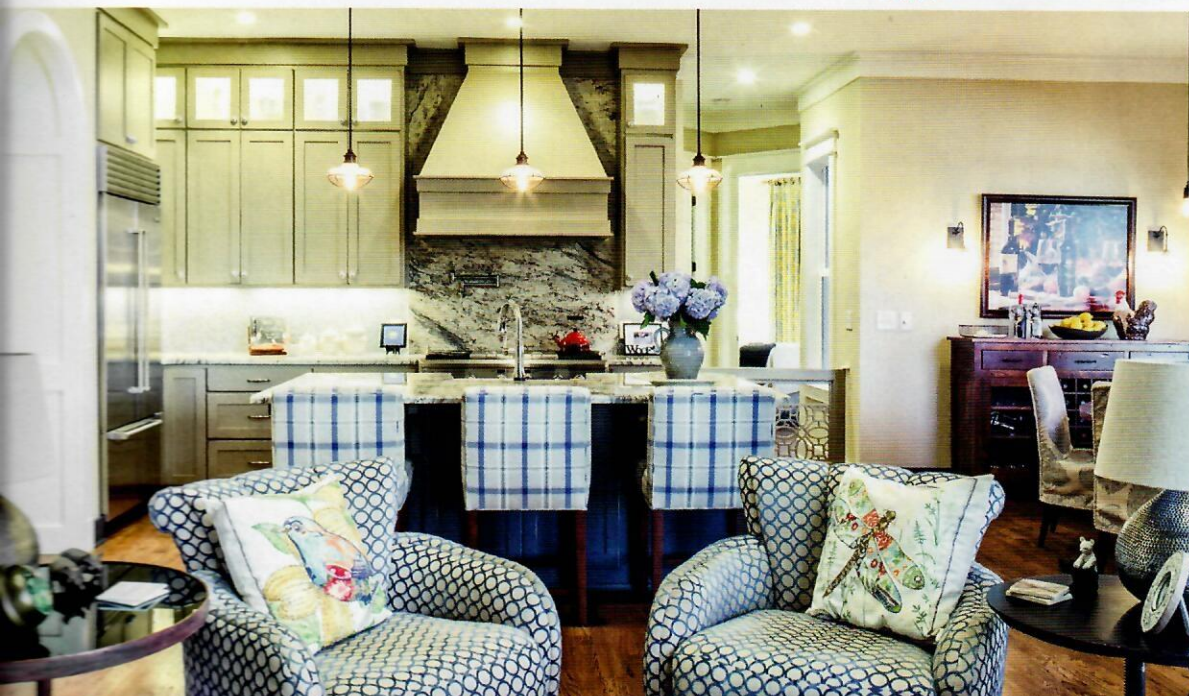
**Above left**, Portraits of the dogs by Gerry McElroy hang in the dogs' room. **Above**, The master suite is on the first floor of the home. **Left**, Ripley investigates the custom gate and then relaxes.

lower counter, so she can put on her make up easily. Custom shaker cabinetry gives the space a rich feeling, while the distressed edges of the mirrors add warmth.

One of Miller's favorite quotes is by legendary designer John Fowler who writes about a "pleasing edge of decay." "I hate when things are so brand new that they feel staged," adds Miller, "so everything has just a little bit of rub on it."

In the living room, slipcovers were made for the custom couches so the dogs can lounge where they please. Miller also had custom ottomans made of reclaimed wood, complete with casters on the bottom. Not only do they serve as a place for storage, but they also work well as dog transports, as the couple's dogs jump on them and scoot from couch to couch.

The bottom portion of the living room's custom window treatments is made of Sunbrella fabric and simply Velcros off for washing if the dogs mess it up. The blue print fabric echoes the blues in the space, which can also be found on the baseboards, as they are painted in Sherwin Williams' Gale Force.



JULY 2014 | 60 | LAKE NORMAN CURRENTS

Continued from page 60

The open kitchen features more custom shaker cabinetry, a light blue penny round backsplash, as well as River White granite countertops. It also has two dog gates to keep their furry trio in or out. One gate was custom made out of wood, while the other was made from a mirror frame the couple had in their garage.

“The mirror had broken, but we didn’t get rid of it for some reason,” explains the wife. “My husband walked in with it one day, and it worked perfectly.

Starr found someone to make the middle part, and she had the metal frame powder finished.”

### Designed for living

The mirror gate leads to a barrel hallway where you’ll find the pantry. “This whole area is about how we come and go,” says the wife. “We can drop our groceries in the pantry, and there are three cubbies for the dogs with their dog bowls.” A seat drops down over the cubbies, so it can be a bench, and there’s also a mail station in this area.

Keep walking and you’ll find the dogs’ room, where a small



Custom slipcovers make the living room's sofas dog friendly.



**Above,** The dining area embraces views of the lake. **Left,** Eating cubbies and a washing sink were specifically designed for the dogs. **Below,** Diane Beard of Custom Impressions by Diane painted the stairs with patterns from the home's fabrics.



pocket door leads to the outside area floored with Astroturf and appointed with a doghouse. There are three little beds in the dog room, a washing sink, and a place for their bath supplies, medicines and shampoos. The floor is heated, and commissioned portraits of all three dogs by artist Gerry McElroy hang on the wall.

The set-up works well for the dogs in case the couple has to work late, which often happens. “We don’t have to worry about the dogs in case we can’t get home,” says the wife.

A staircase custom painted

by Diane Beard of Custom Impressions by Diane, leads to the second floor, where you’ll find a media room with a canvas dog gate. “The guys can’t get the run of the house,” says the wife. “We like for them to be with us, but we like to limit their space.”

The house is perfectly in sync with their lifestyle, as well as that of their dogs. Whether the couple is traveling, entertaining, or simply doing their daily comings and goings, the layout of their home is an ideal fit, and Miller only made it work more beautifully for them. ■