

Southern Living®

Fall Treats

Enjoying Our Spooky
Halloween Party Menu

Creative Ideas With
Pumpkins

More Than **75**
Recipes

plus:
8 Budget-Friendly
Slow-Cooker
Favorites

Beautiful
Wreaths
From Nature
Bring Autumn
Leaves
Indoors



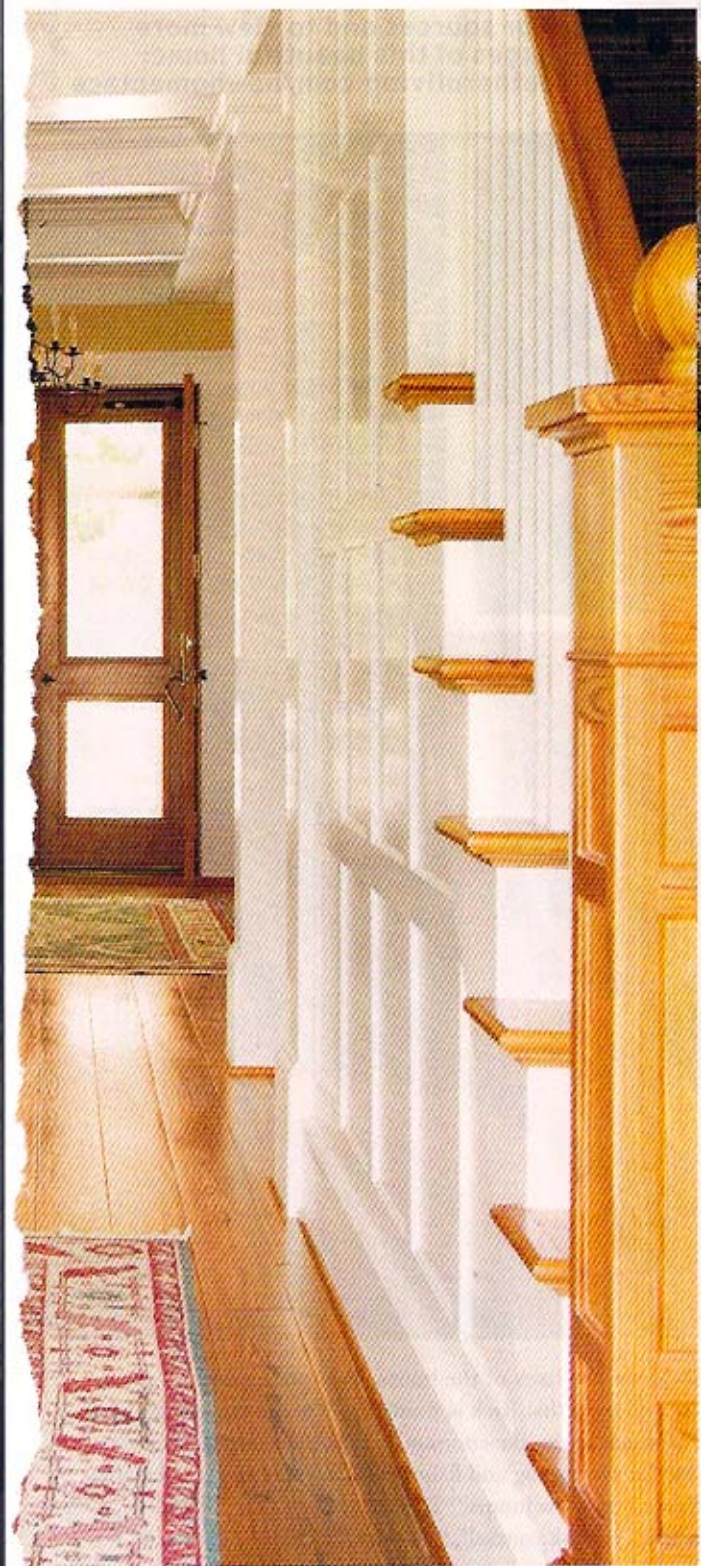
**SOUTHERN
HOME AWARDS**

Best Before & After, Best New Home,
Best Renovation & Addition

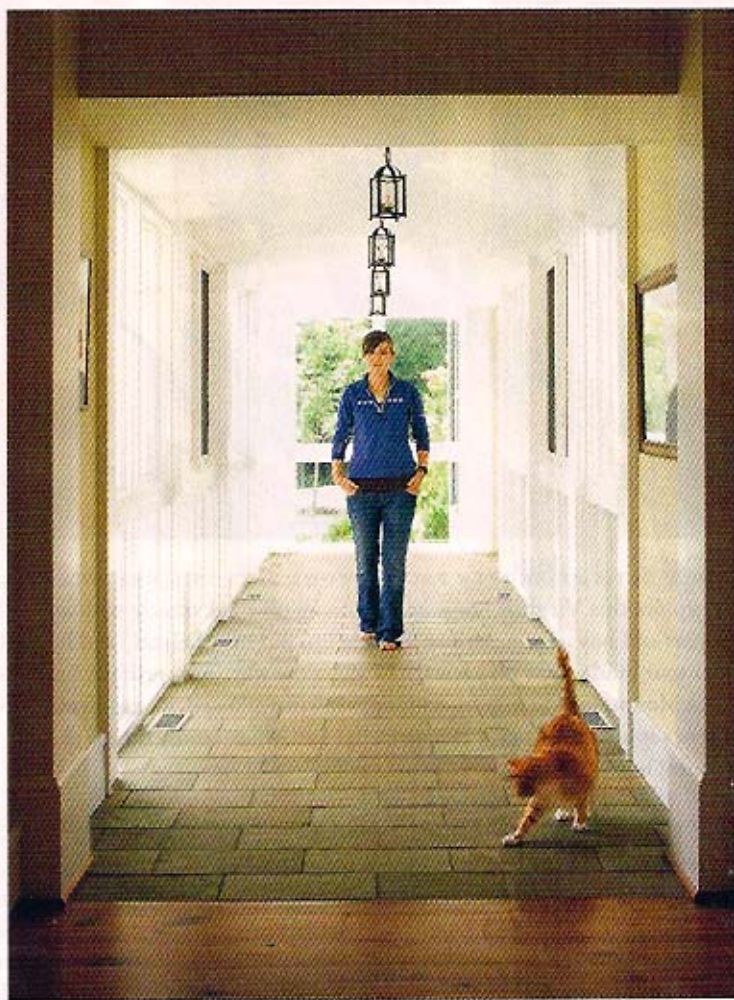


New Homeplace

This Virginia house oozes real-life Southern charm. By **Amy Bickers Mercer**,



LEFT: Yes, Virginia, you can have gorgeous interiors that stand up to family living. The sturdy heart-pine floors support all kinds of activity.
ABOVE: The Scherrs found the architect, Robert A. Steele, in an issue of *Southern Living*. Bob won a Southern Home Award in 2000 for Woodside plantation, and these homeowners liked the concept of the winning project.
BELOW: The breezeway connects the main part of the house to the master suite, creating the look of a separate building from the outside. Jacey, 23, (pictured) and her sister Caity, 19, grew up bringing friends to the Cat Rock Mountain house for sleepover fun.



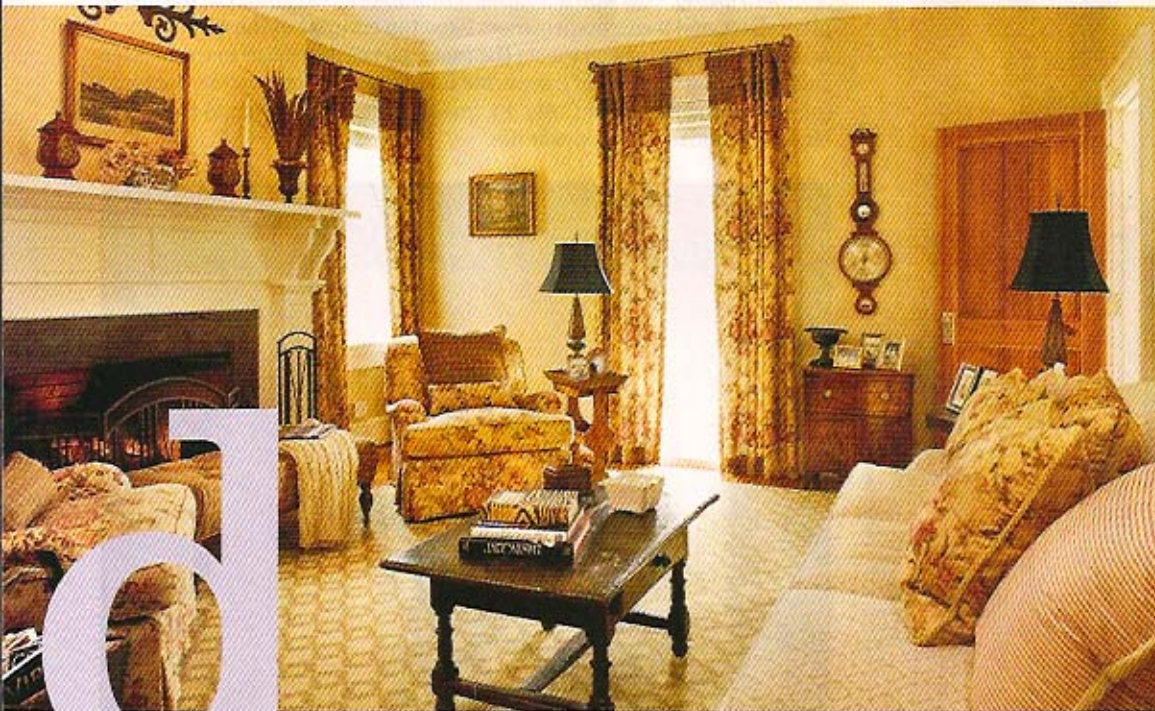
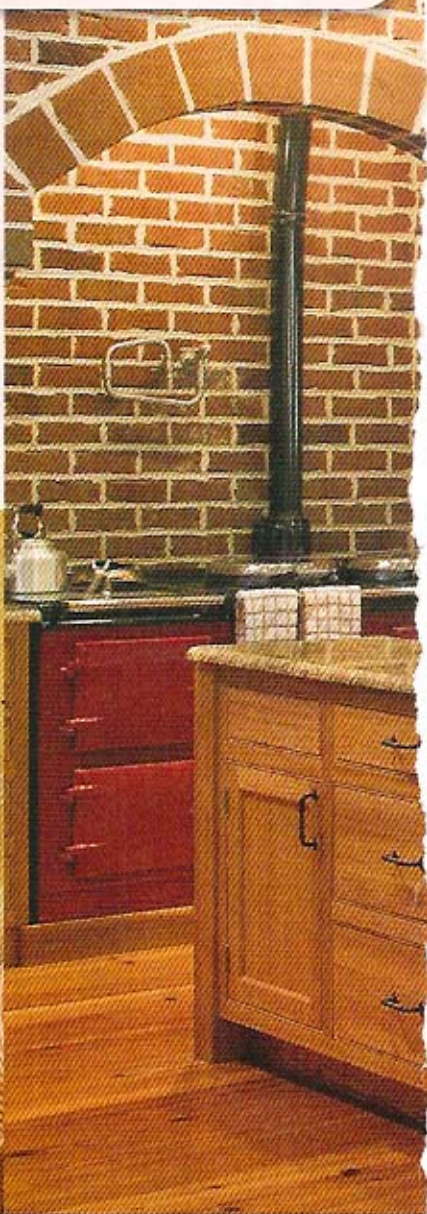
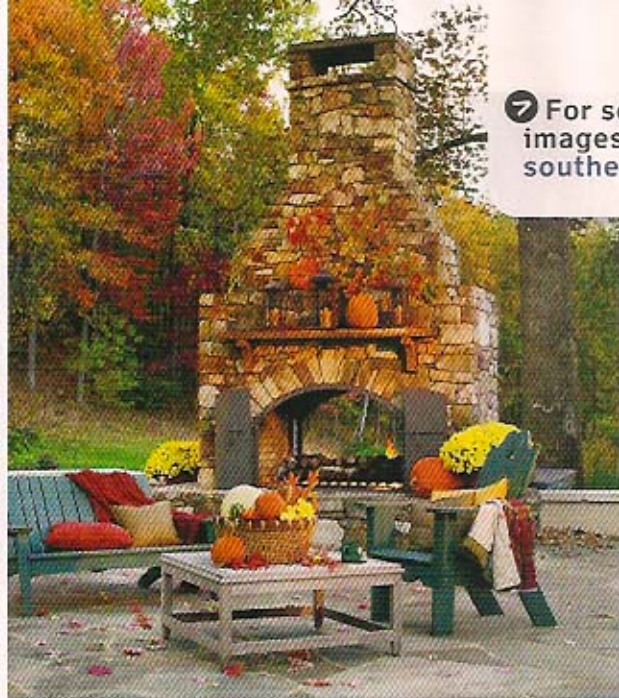
photography **Laurey W. Glenn**, styling **Todd Childs**

RIGHT: "This was never really planned. We never thought we'd have a second home," Rick says. The family lives full-time in Maryland, but like moths to the flame, they are drawn again and again to their Virginia getaway.

FAR RIGHT: Belinda frequently bakes using her four-oven Aga. The energy-efficient cooker with its radiant-heat ovens, hot plates, and a warming plate is always ready to cook. No need for dials or knobs. Learn more about this luxury range at www.aga-ranges.com.

BELOW: "The living room is my favorite room," Rick says of this grown-up space at the front of the house. Because of its cozy proportions, the room is great for quiet time. "We only have time to use it when Belinda and I are here alone," he adds.

➔ For sources and to view more images of this beautiful home: southernliving.com/newhomeplace



DON'T LET THE PROPER FACADE FOOL YOU. THE BEST WAY to explore this Virginia homestead is on an off-road vehicle with an 11-year-old boy as your driver. Buckle up, put on a helmet, and let your tour guide show off a few tricks along the way. This is life at Cat Rock Mountain, where getting muddy isn't just allowed, it's required; where sophisticated never means stuffy; and where family time is the greatest luxury of all.

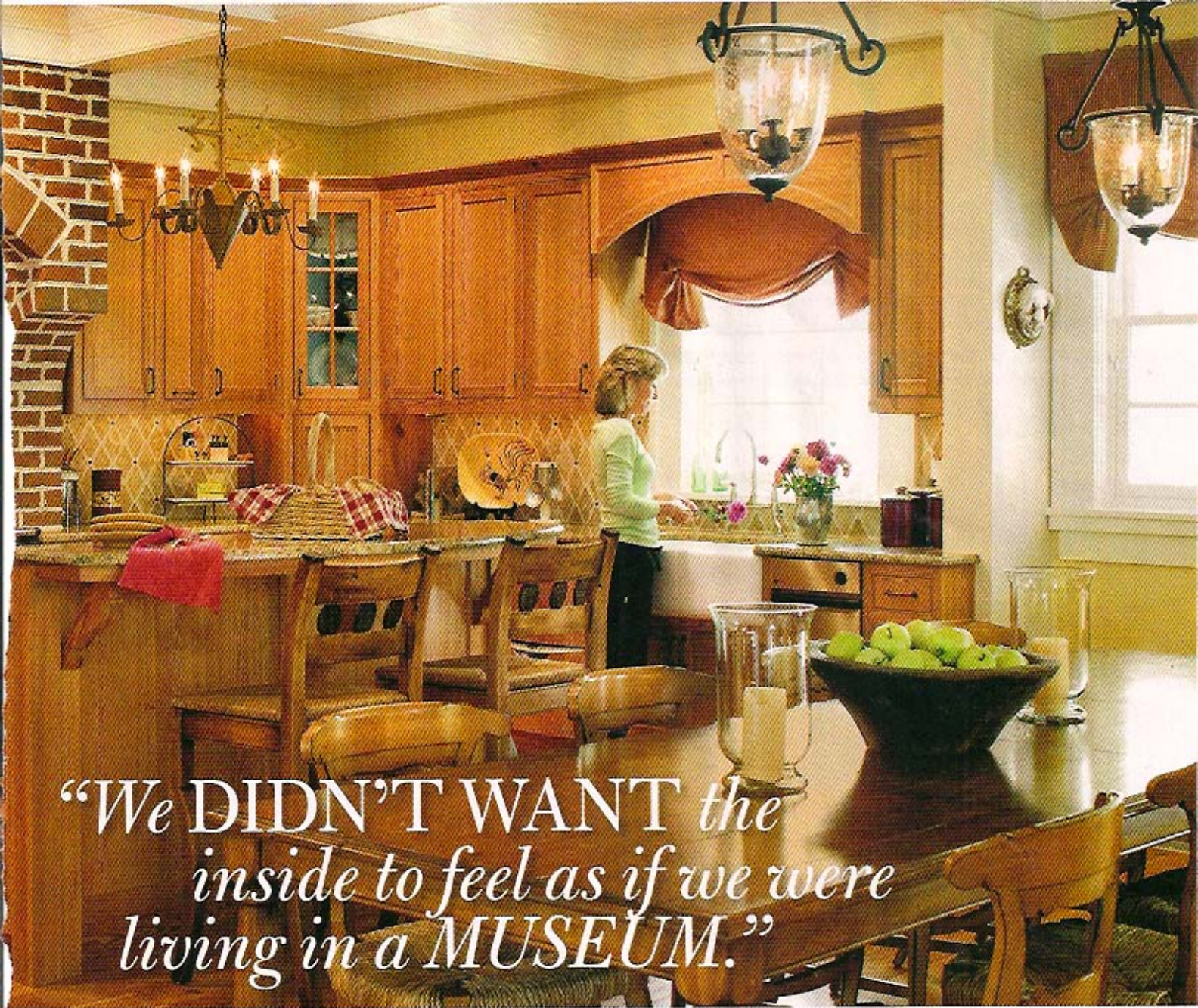
Off the Beaten Path Maryland residents Rick and Belinda Scherr explored the back roads of Virginia in search of the perfect property. "Once we got stuck on a logging road, suburbanites in our Land Cruiser," Rick says, laughing at the memory.

Now, he and the couple's children—Jocey, 23; Caity, 19; Will, 14; and Ben, 11—are off-road experts. On a ride through the wooded

mountainside at the back of the house, Ben points out the sights. There's the old barn that Rick is fixing up. There's the "bear" tree, the bark of which looks like enormous claws have torn it. There's a 1-acre pond for swimming and fishing. Then come the massive dirt piles. "Want to try a few jumps?" Ben asks.

"And really," you ask yourself, "why not?"

Looking for Inspiration Rick and Belinda found architect Robert A. Steele of BOB Architecture in a past issue of *Southern Living* and called him to create their dream house. This getaway isn't just about doors and floors and windows though. Rick longed for a lifestyle unavailable in the city. "When I was growing up, my brothers and I would go out in the woods all day. That builds your independence. My boys didn't know that life," he says.



“We DIDN’T WANT the inside to feel as if we were living in a MUSEUM.”

At the Cat Rock Mountain property, the first time Rick encouraged Will and Ben to “go explore,” they looked at him skeptically. Now they and their sisters run the woods like expert trackers. “We have pictures of the girls and their friends just covered in mud,” Belinda adds. “The boys are always a mess.”

Designed for Living The Scherrs challenged Richmond designer Susan Jamieson to work *with*, rather than around, muddy shoes and rambunctious boys and girls. “We didn’t want the inside to feel as if we were living in a museum,” Belinda says. “Susan captured that very well. The house looks well done, but you can sit back and get comfortable.” Warm colors throughout the main level create a cozy vibe. Antique furnishings aren’t untouchable. Beautiful rugs and heart-pine floors hold up under kids (and remote control cars).

Backyard Retreat Outdoor fun isn’t always dirty. The back patio is great for elegant gatherings. Angled at the end of the patio, the outdoor stone fireplace affords views of the front and back of the property.

The house is ideal for guests, but often it’s just family. There is always a project afoot. They once hauled piles of wood to the top of the mountain to build a quaint cabin. Belinda spends hours walking the winding trails. In their wanderings, the members of the Scherr family keep their eyes open for wildlife. They spot turkeys and have seen a couple of bobcats. A few skunks have wandered into the yard. And occasionally, in the early-morning mist, a deer will step out onto the pristine front lawn, making its way across the open expanse before disappearing again under the cover of lush forest. ●