

the water issue

Natural Wonder

Situated on the scenic banks of Alabama's Lake Martin, the **Country Living Lake House of the Year** skips the kitsch and takes a relaxed and refined approach to waterfront living. (No, not a Billy Bass in sight!)

written by LAURA KOSTELNY photographs by BRIAN WOODCOCK
produced by PAGE MULLINS

MAKE IT Count

Put a lid on it.

Make sure boat caps are on tight, and don't overfuel. Leaking gasoline threatens water quality near the shoreline.



According to *Country Living* Style Director Page Mullins, there's only one nonnegotiable rule of lake house design: *Don't block the view*. And that's certainly understandable when you set foot on the waterfront property of the *Country Living* Lake House of the Year, a collaboration with Nashville architect Jonathan Torode (Pfeffer Torode Architecture), builder Chad Calhoun (Classic Homes), and Russell Lands On Lake Martin, a high-end real estate developer on this Alabama lake, just two hours from Birmingham and roughly 2.5 from Atlanta (see page 85). "The design is less about being 'timeless' and more about creating a place where people lose track of time," says Jonathan. And because some Russell Lands residents choose to live on Lake Martin year-round, Page fought the urge to "lake it up" indoors and instead designed a space that counterbalances more rustic elements (wood beams, a stone fireplace) with effortlessly elegant furniture, finishes, and fixtures. Or, in happy hour-at-the-lake speak: the "sauvignon blanc" equivalent of a lake house as opposed to the "six-pack" interpretation. Still, thanks to durable materials (nubby linens, performance velvets, sisal and rag rugs), nothing feels particularly precious or too formal. Here's how the *Country Living* team, with the help of our partners, brought a dream lake house to life.

Fair-Feathered Friends

In the entry, a pair of pelicans (1) from Nostalgia Fine Art (nostalgiafineart.com) greets visitors, while a bluestone-topped console table (2) (universalfurniture.com) offers a pretty perch for mail.

Open-Floor Policy

The ample living space accommodates larger groups (hello, holidays at the lake!), but to make it feel more intimate year-round, Page carved out four distinct spaces for dining, reading, lounging, and card-playing.

Unobtrusive Lighting

In keeping with the don't-block-the-view mantra, the room's sole overhead light fixture (3), an artisan-crafted piece inspired by gas lanterns (lowcountryoriginals.com), hangs street-side.



All furniture by Universal Furniture (universalfurniture.com) except wooden game table and chairs (see page 110 for more resources).



Barstools and outdoor furniture by Universal Furniture (universal-furniture.com); striped rug (far right) by Dash & Albert (dashand-albert.com)

Refreshment at the Ready

PRESENTED BY SPARKLING ICE

No afternoon at a Southern lake is complete without iced tea—even better when it's bubbly and infused with fruity flavors like peach, lemon, or raspberry. More of a tea-totaler? Sparkling ICE also has you covered with fizz-tastic (zero-calorie!) flavored waters and lemonades. Grilling enthusiasts will also want to check out the surprising ways you can infuse more flavor into marinades and BBQ sauces. See sparklingice.com for more.



Wood Finishes

Lake Martin's heavily wooded landscape inspired the home's overall design, as well as the interior finishes, such as tongue-and-groove pine walls (4), the cedar ceiling (5), and the stained, pecky cypress kitchen island (6). "We're primarily surrounded by plaster and Sheetrock in our day-to-day lives," says Jonathan. "Walking into a cabin that's wood inside and out removes us from that everyday and shifts us into a relaxed mind-set."

Mixed Materials

In addition to the assorted wood finishes, reinforced by the barstools (7) (universal-furniture.com) and an antique trestle table (8), a broad range of fixture finishes sets a relaxed, not-matchy tone. Copper lighting (9) (lowcountryoriginals.com) blends well with stainless appliances (10), polished chrome faucets (11), quartz countertops (London Grey by Caesarstone) (12), and the Pearl Ash subway tile in the kitchen and pantry (13).



In the upstairs landing, an antique green cabinet stays stocked with board games and quilts—the latter of which provide a perfect spot to sit and take in Lake Martin’s Fourth of July boat parade, which features thousands of decked-out boats and the largest fireworks show in the Southeast.



Sheer Shades

Throughout the home, jute window treatments (19) (Belize Sand downstairs; Fiji in Mist upstairs; smithandnoble.com) offer privacy and texture without blocking coveted sunlight.

Floral Draperies

Linen panels (20) (“Wild Thing” in the cobalt/copper colorway by Carleton V) add a feminine touch to the master bedroom and pair well with two handsome antique striped wingbacks (21).

Herringbone Stone

The master bathroom has a spa-like feel thanks to ample natural light, quartz countertops (22) (Shitake by Caesarstone), and printed porcelain tile (23) arranged in a classic pattern around the oversize bathtub.

Nature’s Neutrals

Page embraced an interior palette that downplays the delineation between the indoors and out: Blues, greens, and browns, as seen on the bedding (14) (pineconehill.com) and the Flax Boucle bed and mattress (15) (sleepnumber.com) in the master bedroom and the earthy coverlet fabric (16) (fischumacher.com) paired with a Stone Linen headboard (17) (sleepnumber.com) in the guest room keep the scene serene.

Upcycled Finds

An antique demijohn (18) repurposed into a lamp base adds a nice touch of “crust” to an otherwise buttoned-up space.



Rugged Rugs

Page primarily used sisal and oushak rugs downstairs (*fibreworks.com* for the former; *kingshouseantiques.com* for the latter) and turned to durable rag rugs (24) on the second floor (Neddick in the game room; Kittery in the twin bedroom, both available to the trade at *pattersonflynnmartin.com*). An indoor/outdoor recycled sail pouf (25) in a cozy playroom offers an equally durable spot to plop down. (If sailcloth can handle the sea, it can handle damp swim trunks!)

Smart Furniture

A modern-rustic console (*universalfurniture.com*) (26) displays the television while storing odds and ends underneath. In the kids' bedroom, a vintage desk (27) is a convenient nightstand-desk in one.



Whimsical Windows

Indigo shades featuring a globe pattern (28) (*peterdunham.com*) strike a youthful note but could easily transition to an office space or more grown-up guest room down the road. Vintage globes (29) and a healthy *National Geographic* collection (30) in the nearby playroom reinforce a spirit of wanderlust.

S'mores Central

A pair of iconic, clean-lined Kentucky stick chairs (31) (*kentuckystickchairs.etsy.com*) adds a layer of sophistication to the natural stone fire pit—echoing the rustic-meets-refined approach to the interior.

SPECIAL THANKS TO STYLE ASSISTANT LUCY BARR.



SPECIAL THANKS TO Russell Lands On Lake Martin!

Located on Alabama's Lake Martin, which features 40,000 acres of pristine blue water, Russell Lands On Lake Martin celebrates the best of lake living. Here's just a sampling of the development's many amenities.

DINING

In addition to multiple boat-in restaurants (one of which offers a kid-friendly beach!), the property features a gourmet market-cafe and SpringHouse, a nationally recognized restaurant helmed by James Beard semifinalist Rob McDaniel (*springhouseatcrossroads.com*).

RECREATION

Enjoy more than 120 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, as well as golfing (*willowpoint.com*) and boating/water sports through Russell Marine (*russellmarine.net*).

EVENTS

There's no shortage of programming for residents and visitors alike, and that includes everything from concerts in the waterfront amphitheater (Alan Jackson has taken its stage) and fireworks displays to yoga and arts and crafts shows. The waterfront setting (and scenic stables) are also popular venues for weddings.

REAL ESTATE

Russell Lands On Lake Martin owns 280 miles of the 900 miles of Lake Martin shoreline—and a piece of it could be yours! To find out more, go to russelllandsonlake martin.com.

