



Creating Character

Worthy of an epic best-seller, this new Lowcountry home takes its cues from old regional architecture and well-crafted features. You'll be inspired to bring this oh-so Southern look to your house. By **Robert Martin**, photography **Laurey W. Glenn**, styling **Leigh Anne Montgomery**

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Illuminated by the doorway to the upper front porch, the second-floor hall serves as a home library. LEFT: Dominating the front exterior, a classically designed pediment welcomes guests as they approach the main entry.



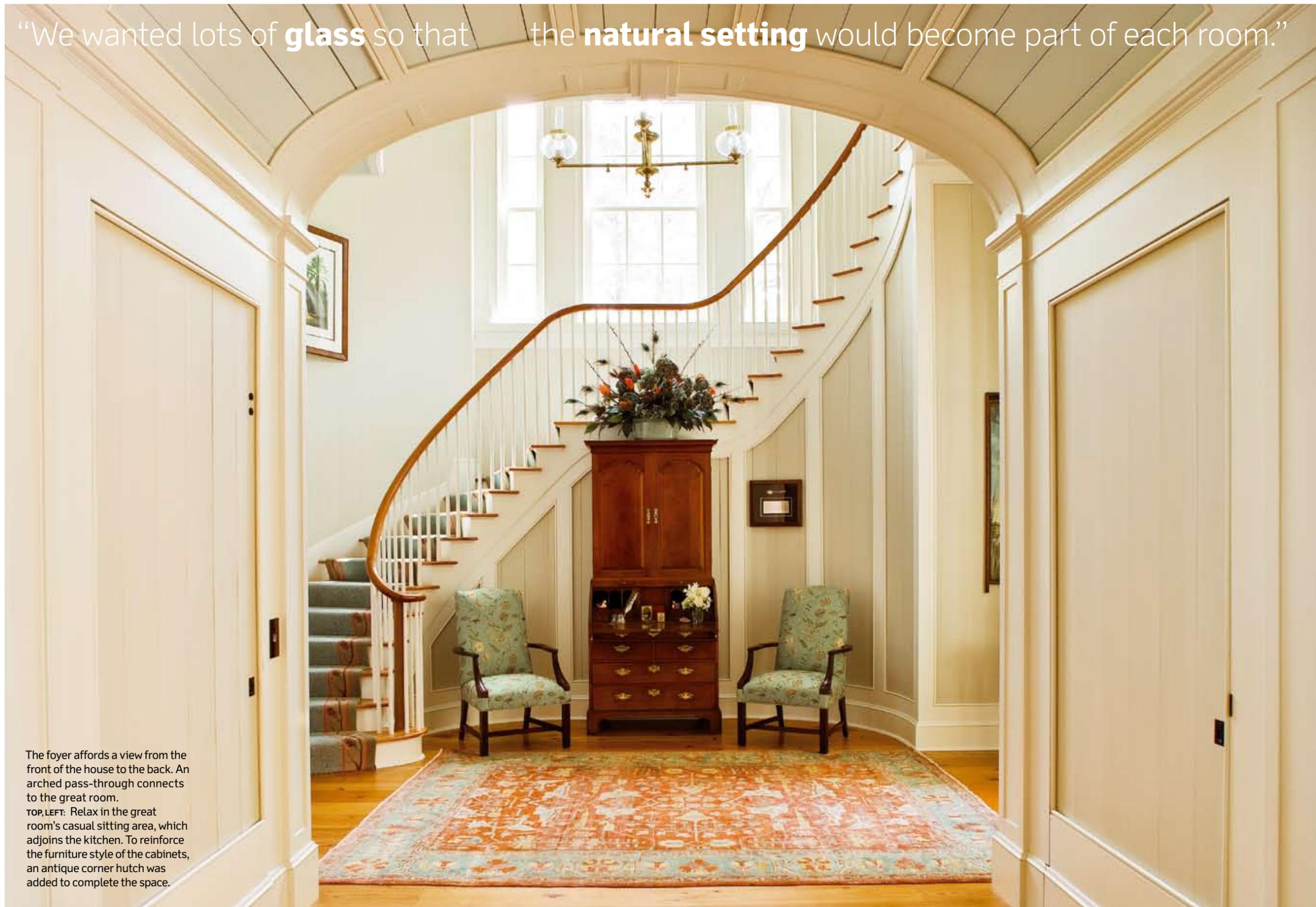
MANY CELEBRATED WORKS OF LITERATURE take place in and around great houses that embody as much dramatic impact as the characters themselves. In *Wuthering Heights*, two imposing English manors—the first for which the book was titled, and the second, Thrushcross Grange—serve as the catalysts for Heathcliff and Catherine’s ill-fated romance. For *Rebecca*, the countryside estate, Manderley, practically steals the show. And not to be overlooked, who could deny the pivotal role that Tara plays in *Gone With the Wind*? In similar fashion, if a sweeping saga were written about Spring Island, South Carolina, Dan and Merrie Boone’s marshlands home would surely take center stage.

Amid thickets of palmettos and wax myrtles, its lush setting holds enough enticement to pen a compelling opener. “Neither Dan nor I are from this area, but we kept hearing about Spring Island from family and friends,” explains Merrie. “We decided to visit and knew immediately that we wanted to make this unique place our home.”

Approached by a meandering gravel road, the couple’s retreat reveals itself little by little through a canopy of ancient live oaks and Spanish moss. The anticipation builds with glimpses of white Doric columns and broad porches. Finally, as the drive flows into the parking court, the house’s classic, perfectly proportioned exterior comes into full view.

Going by the Book Inspired by the antebellum Lewis Reeve Sams house in nearby Beaufort, the Boones’ house displays a time-honored presence, even though it’s newly built. “The home’s front appears very formal because it’s designed in the Greek Revival style, which emphasizes a strict use of symmetry,” explains architect Aaron Daily of Historical Concepts.

“We wanted lots of **glass** so that the **natural setting** would become part of each room.”



The foyer affords a view from the front of the house to the back. An arched pass-through connects to the great room.
TOP, LEFT: Relax in the great room’s casual sitting area, which adjoins the kitchen. To reinforce the furniture style of the cabinets, an antique corner hutch was added to complete the space.



Steal These Ideas

Any of these elements will make your home undeniably Southern. Pick the ones that work for you.

A Floors: Make something old useful again. Recycled heart pine floors provide authentic age and warmth throughout this home.

B Furniture and furniture arrangements: Mix and match for a comfortable, well-appointed room. A judicious use of antiques adds some formality to this space—but not so much that it feels uninviting. Also, comfortable furnishings grouped together within the room, not against the walls, encourage use of every square foot.

C Walls: Use materials that are indigenous to the area. Cypress boards that are butted together line most of the interior walls, lending a subtle texture that gypsum drywall just can't provide.

D Doors: Capitalize on your surroundings. A series of French doors topped with transoms maintains a visual and physical connection to the marsh. And the natural light is spectacular!

E Windows: Try a great idea from the past. The triple-hung windows on either side of the great room's fireplace are found in many older homes in the Deep South. When the two lower sashes are raised, the openings serve as passageways to the screened porch beyond.

F Trimwork and molding: Emphasize walls and important features of a room. Large expanses of wallspace are always hard to decorate. A combination of flat boards and trim enhance the mantel area.

G Artwork and accessories: Use every opportunity to give your home a sense of belonging. Framed prints and objects depicting local wildlife and coastal themes reinforce this home's association with its environment.

H Window treatments: Don't hide a good thing. Draperies are used only to soften the room's corners, not to cover up the windows and doors.

I Ceilings: Give this surface some attention too. Although the great room is one large, open space, a coffered ceiling designates the living and dining areas. Some beams are supported by pilasters on the rear wall. This millwork assembly brings the order and rhythm established on the ceiling all the way to the floor.



Overseen by the firm's principal Jim Strickland, Aaron achieved a balance between function and authenticity. To keep it from appearing too rigid, the design duo added small, one-story extensions on each side of the main core to suggest that the house had evolved over the generations. Other elements—such as double-hung windows and elaborate door surrounds, complete with sidelights and fanlight transoms—are hallmarks of this architectural period.

Merrie encouraged Jim and Aaron to take a more relaxed approach when designing the back of the house. As a result, formality gives way to breezy screened and open porches overlooking the marsh. “This is our favorite place to gather with friends,” says Merrie.

Beyond the Cover Just as balanced determination guided the exteriors, the same holds true inside, yet with a more subdued approach. “Because of its fine woodwork and detailing, this house had the possibility of being overwhelming,” states interior designer Ruth Edwards. “That’s why we went in

the opposite direction. We purposely chose a nonfussy, clean look for the interiors.”

Throughout the main floor, cypress-planked walls and trimwork are bathed in almost effervescent colors that flow seamlessly from one room to the other. “All the colors were inspired by a lampshade that Merrie saw on the cover of a magazine,” explains Dan.

The Boones gravitate to the openness and easy flow of the first floor. The driving force for the interior’s progression from formal to casual is the surrounding vistas. “We wanted lots of glass so that the natural setting would become part of each room,” says Dan. That’s why windows, French doors topped with transoms, or a combination of both fill the rear walls. The couple can also survey the marshlands from their master suite.

Happily Ever After “Every time we walk through the house, Dan and I notice something Jim and Aaron designed that we hadn’t seen before,” says Merrie. What better place for this couple to start a new chapter than laid-back living in the Lowcountry. ●

ABOVE: With its own private back porch through the French doors, the master bedroom has a commanding view of the marsh. **RIGHT:** This knockout master bath leads to a screened sleeping porch. Plantation shutters on the lower window sashes provide ample privacy while still allowing in natural light. (For sources visit southernliving.com/march2009.)



“We love the **old-fashioned sleeping porch** and how our master shower is carved out of **unused chimney space.**”