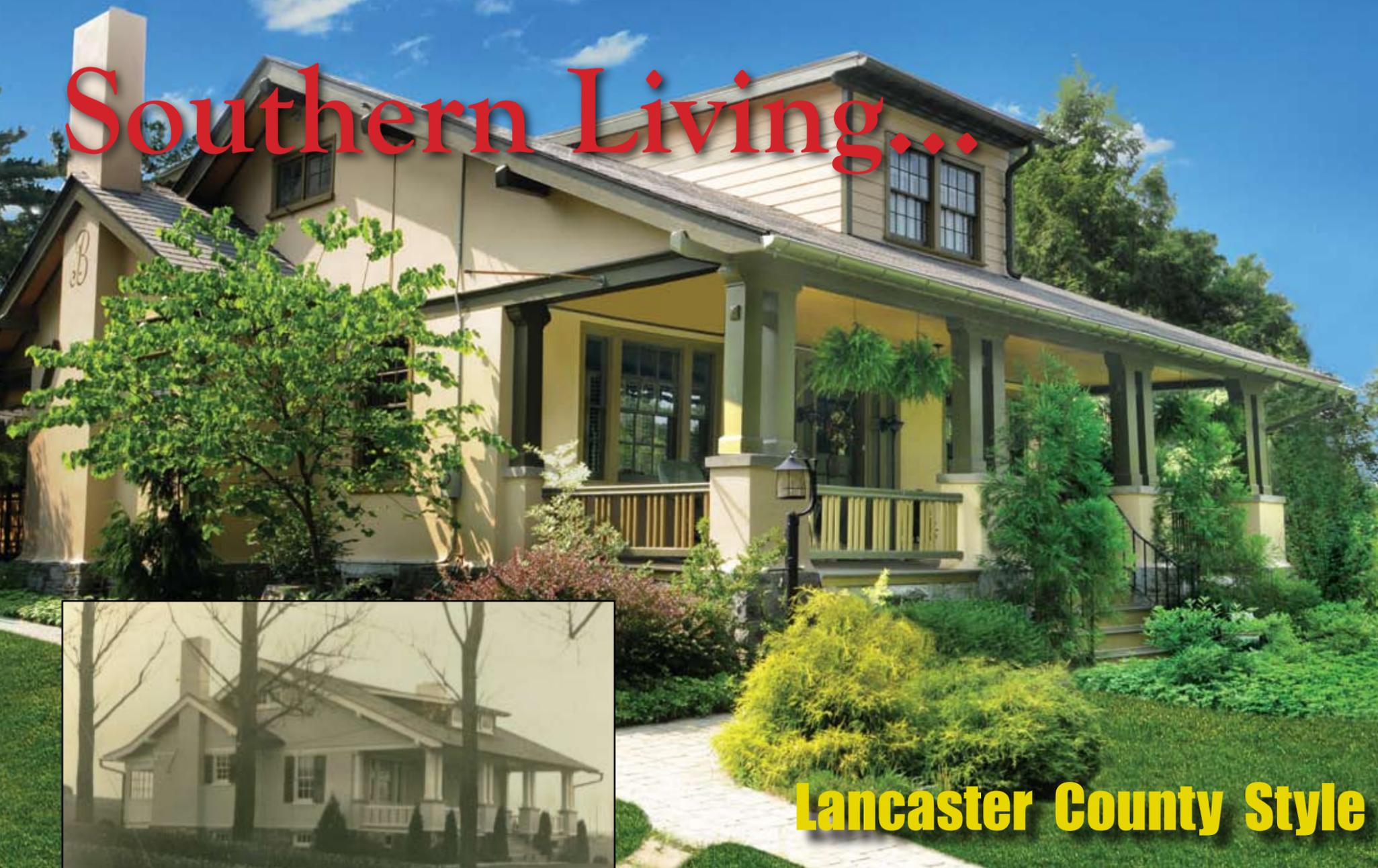


# Southern Living...



## Lancaster County Style

**H**ouses, like people, have distinctive personalities.

And for Clay and Deb, keeping their home's "sugar cane plantation" feel intact while remodeling and upgrading the residence that is anything but traditional Lancaster County architecture constantly stayed in the forefront of their minds. This meant decorating the interior with a keen eye to details and ensuring that every inch of their cottage that dated from 1915

was thoughtfully planned and carefully executed.

As Deb is quick to remind, "When you renovate a house like this, you don't own the house - it owns you!"

Ironically, this couple that has revitalized an eye-catching structure didn't intend to leave the city; they'd lived there for 18 years and were content in their roles as townspeople, eagerly enjoying daily walks with their beloved Portu-

guese Water Dog, Scruffy, and chats with the neighbors. However, when a "for sale" sign on the bungalow caught Deb's eye, she just couldn't turn away.

"I've always loved this house," she avers with a glance around the warmly decorated, quiet dining room.

### A Veritable "Hamlet's" Worth of Residences

Though their brand of extensive building and remodeling endeavors might seem daunting to the average couple, this husband and wife team has years of experience behind them.

As co-owner of Shakespeare Home Improvement Company, Lancaster, Clay Burchill has been in the construction industry for almost 35 years. His company is a wonderful representation of his style of hands-on professionalism. Joe Halstead, his partner at Shakespeare, brings business expertise to the table as well as creativity. Their Bard-inspired company slogan, "To build or not to build" was, as Clay is fast to admit, Joe's brainchild.

Shakespeare is unusual in that Clay and Joe are highly selective when choosing clientele. "We believe in

project description	
Type:	Addition and whole house renovations
Contractor:	Shakespeare Home Improvement Co. (see ad p. 39)
Trade Partners:	J&G Heating & Air Conditioning (see ad p. 44) Lezzer Lumber (see ad p. 48) Martin Appliance (see ad p. 42) To the Trades (see ad p. 44) Patio at Penn Stone (see ad p. 40) Strasburg Masonry Supply (see ad p. 46) Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. (see ad p. 48)
Scope:	Addition—master suite including bedroom and bath; 2nd floor roof elevation (dormers).  Renovations—makeovers including front entry way, kitchen and breakfast area (formerly back porch); dining room; living room; powder room, laundry; and second floor sitting area, bedroom, office, and full bath. Extensive landscaping including fencing, block walkway and driveway, patio, and doggie patch.

personal contact," says Clay. "Our reputation is what keeps us busy."

Deb, a teacher by profession (though retired for two years), has always played a huge part in the couple's real estate ventures, designing interiors that befitted each of the structures—some decidedly unusual—they've inhabited during their decades of marriage.

"At a certain point [in our lives], we were really contemporary," remembers Deb when discussing the many structures she and her husband have built and/or refurbished.

"Contemporary" may be an understatement by Lancaster County standards.





These before and after comparisons showcase some of the project's dramatic interior changes. Note the painted faux-marble mantel in the large photo below.



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# summer style

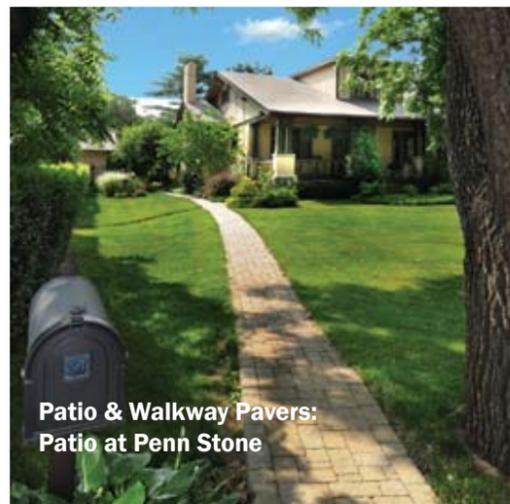


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For instance, there was the all-glass house Deb and Clay designed and lived in during the 1980s. Then there was the unique structure that was only 18 feet wide which the couple felt was a terrific place to entertain. Let's not forget to mention the home built on a 35 foot drop-off. And of course there were the two houses in old town Lancaster, one a Victorian that remains among their favorites, they revamped and adored.

But today, Deb and Clay are comfortably situated on the outskirts of town in the aptly-named village of Eden, residing in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow whose charm is reminiscent of the Deep South. With architecture that whispers of magnolia blossoms and mint juleps, the stucco structure has a warmth that turns heads.

### Bringing the Past into the Present

The home itself was designed by C. Emlen Urban for the McGranns, one of the founding families of Lancaster. A renowned architect, Urban was the same master builder who planned Milton S. Hershey's house that stood for many years on South Queen Street.

Clay, who was at first a bit hesitant about taking on another major restoration project, eventually found himself sharing Deb's passion for the bungalow. "The house was put together really



well," he explains. "In this climate, stucco usually cracks [but] the stucco exterior had held up; all we did was paint it."

However, the remainder of their project couldn't be solved with a few gallons of color, especially since they planned to increase the size of the home by half its original square footage, bringing it to a roomy 2700 square feet. As often happens during remodeling jobs, Deb and Clay spent a significant part of the renovation in the home amidst dust, noise and constant chaos thanks to a quick sale on their old town Victorian. Even though they knew what to expect from their past experiences, they weren't immune to the challenges of living in an evolving home.

"That was stressful," recalls Deb. "We lived around boxes for a while."

Clay agrees. "Remodeling is tough because people are living in the house."

Fortunately, the couple weathered the storm and eventually were treated to an updated residence that even Urban himself would no doubt have appreciated.

Originally designed as a cozy two-bedroom home, Deb and Clay have added a master bedroom and bath with two walk-in closets and French doors that open into an urban-inspired patio. "Coming from the city, we kind of got addicted to the courtyard thing," admits Deb.

Windows were put in or relocated throughout the house, including a specially placed one that's low enough to allow Deb's petite frame to enjoy the lush trees, shrubs and flowers on the property while she's in the kitchen.

As she explains with a grin, "What's the point of having a window at the sink if you can't see out?"

The ceiling on the second floor, which was only about six feet, was raised to a more modern eight feet. This required a talented hand—and Clay relied heavily on his 10 years with Shakespeare as well as his two prior decades in the construction business. To top off the remodel (literally), he chose a Tamco Laminate Slate roof, guaranteed to last for 50 years.

As with most older homes, the electric and plumbing had to be redone. An

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upstairs heat pump was installed, as was central air and a new furnace.

Yet with all the amenities that have been added, Clay has remained conscientious about reusing any original items in the house such as floor planks, moldings and even doors. As a craftsman, he, as well as his colleagues at Shakespeare, are quick to reclaim recyclable items from homes as a way to preserve the past for future generations.

### Transforming a Structure from Good to Great

Now that the remodeling dust has settled, it's difficult to say what is the most appealing aspect of Clay and Deb's bungalow.

For individuals who take pleasure in relaxing in the cool breeze of summer nights and autumn days, it could be the oversized front porch that begs for the company of several rocking chairs. More an expansive veranda than a mere space beneath an overhang, it's wide enough to accompany a small party of celebrators.

Other people would likely gravitate to the back courtyard with its fresh, white wall, wrought iron gate and all brick patio. Two fountains are soothing and inspiring; and the flowers and plants that pepper the various garden and patio levels accent the home and adjacent garage nicely. Because this house abuts the Country Club's golf course on three sides, an errant ball is an occasional "gem" to be discovered in the carefully manicured grass.

For those who love a little luxury, the master bathroom is a sight to behold. With a large, open shower (sans curtain, which makes for a crisp, clean feel) that includes modesty glass blocks, this is a place not just to rinse off one's body but to pamper one's soul. A welcoming bathtub is highlighted by a painting meticulously crafted by a local artist, Barb Rabiega. It's one of many art pieces that Deb's collected and very carefully placed to



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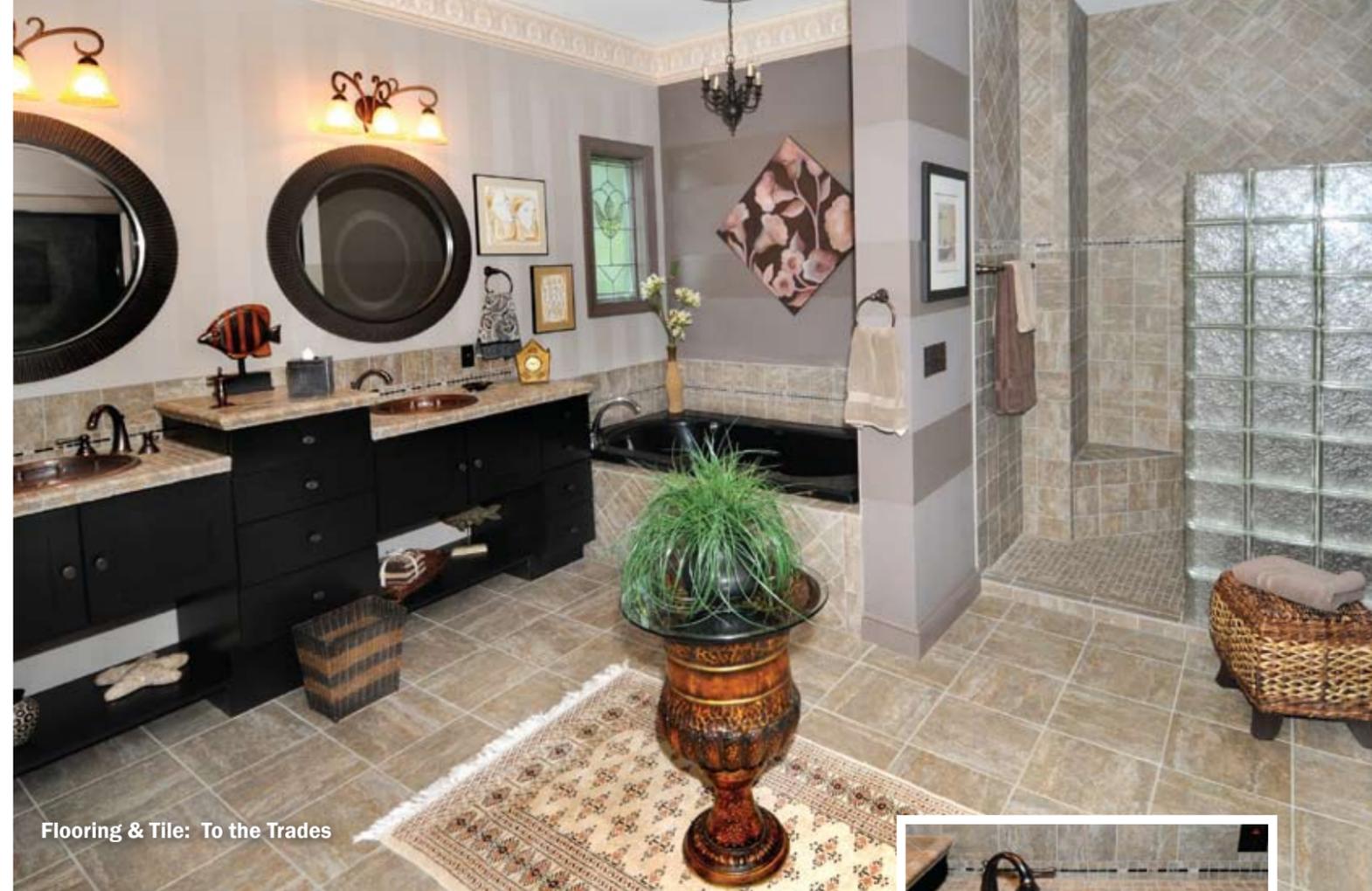
**Progressing...  
But Not Quite Finished**

To the visitor's eye, Clay and Deb's work appears to be complete, but they're not ready to stop. After having lived with their redesigned kitchen for a couple of years, they've realized it's not quite up to par.

"We still haven't come to grips with it," concludes Clay with a smile.

"It's a work in progress," adds Deb.

Consequently, they plan on adding a peninsula in place of the island that now stands in the center of the kitchen floor. Clay, the cook of the household, also wants to change the location of the refrigerator for ease of use. He chuckles as he explains that even a man like himself with a lifetime in the field of remodeling sometimes has to



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live with a design to discover it needs to be adjusted.

Deb concurs. "It just goes to show you that you're always going to say, 'Why didn't we do that?'"

Another project includes a remodel of the courtyard fencing. Though the couple find it attractive, their recent four-legged addition, a terrier mix, is diminutive enough to squeeze through the gates. Therefore, new access doors are on the agenda.

Despite those few hitches, the couple are greatly enjoying their property and although they don't entertain as much as they once did, they hope to throw a few soirees for friends and family.

All in all, it's been a wonderful – and fascinating – life for this dynamic duo who have built five houses together and are currently living in their third restored residence. Passersby have noticed and commented on the investment they've put into the property, and Deb and Clay have even received notes from strangers.

"Once we moved in, we got a number of letters and cards from people who



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used to ride the trolley [by the house]," says Deb. "It's fun to renovate a house that has history - you're extending its life."

When asked whether they'll ever move again, the two adamantly say no... but a tiny spark in Deb's eye gives a glimmer of hope that they'll once again showcase their talents.

R&A