JOURNEY TO GEORGETOWN

The recreation of a Tennessee farm in Madison County is an enjoyable treasure for the Arnold clan.

by mary neff stewart | photography by ron blaylock







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Custom Adirondack rockers and large boulders create a seating area around the fire pit. This is a favorite area for the grandchildren to gather to roast hotdogs and make s'mores. The property's two existing cabins were built into the hillside and surrounded by trees. During construction Arnold was able to salvage old beams and other materials from a building in Canton. Outdoor living spaces dot the property, and the "Treehouse," just off the main house, is a fun visiting and dining area as well as an outdoor grilling space. One of the best views on the property is from the swing at the water's edge, it's also a place to relax and watch his grand-children playing in the lake.

"As I walked down to the lake, one of my first thoughts was of the wonderful time I spent as a child every summer on my grandparents' farm in Georgetown, Tennessee."

Bobby Arnold's time spent on his family farm was filled with peace and carefree fun. Because of those cherished memories, he desired his own bucolic environment to celebrate life with his children and grandchildren. Though only three miles from Highland Colony Parkway, the topography of the property Arnold discovered that day created the easy agrarian feeling he remembered from his childhood. Construction on the property had been started a decade earlier by a previous owner who abandoned the project with only a pair of dilapidated cabins. When Arnold seriously considered purchasing the acreage, he called in his three daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, and Carolyn, for their opinions. After sharing his vision, their reaction was quick and unanimous. He started work on the labor of love they now call Georgetown.

Family memories began at Georgetown long before construction was completed. "I love to go there alone to sit in a rocker on the porch, look at the lake and surrounding hills, and reminisce about times with my grandparents and think about the memories that are being created with my children and grandchildren," Arnold states. Then there are the not-so-quiet times when the entire family and the dogs are all there, and these are the times that are the most enjoyable for Arnold. With this spot as their primary family gathering place, the children and grandchildren can congregate for a swim in the lake in the summer or time around the fire pit in the cooler months. There is always a child swinging on a rope into the lake, playing on the rafts, or chasing dogs through the woods. The property now hosts the family's holidays, and this past Christmas Day brought a catch of more than 30 Rainbow trout.

The smaller "day cabin" was 80% complete and the main cabin only 30% when Arnold purchased the property in July of 2013. Built into the hillside and







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: During the renovation, the main cabin was taken down to the studs, but the existing cypress kitchen cabinets were spared. Designer, Joanne Mathison, created a classic and cozy area with sentimental accents. Arnold commissioned portraits of his grandchildren by local artist Glenn Williams. Mathison notes, "The red lips of those sweet children really accented the red used throughout the space." With Mathison's plan for the bunks, carpenter Cole Ellis created them. Built in his workspace, the bunks had to be disassembled and moved up the spiral staircase then reassembled. Iron elements, like the intricate staircase railing forged by James Minter of Imagine Ironworks of Brookhaven, reflect Arnold's personal style.

surrounded by trees, the buildings sit on a sprawling 18 acres. The only flat land lies between the cabins and the lake. The remainder of the property is heavily wooded rolling hills. Arnold relied on George Henson of Henson and Dear Residential Design and Construction to develop his vision of the property. "If George couldn't have done the work, I would have passed and looked for another property," he notes. After finishing the two existing cabins, Henson and his team added a "tree house" behind the main cabin, a pavilion and bunk house next to the lake, a smokehouse, an outhouse, and a barn. All of the structures are reminiscent of the family farm in Tennessee. Henson's craftsmanship is something Arnold truly admires. "I feel the name Georgetown should also be reflective of the leadership of George Henson in understanding what I wanted and being able to convert my ideas into reality," says Arnold.

When it came to creating the interiors, Arnold's youngest daughter recommended interior designer Joanne Mathison. It was important that the interior style match the nostalgic feeling of the property, and after their initial meeting, Arnold was convinced Joanne could reach his goal. With simple instructions to create earth-tone spaces that would be comfortable and kid-friendly, Joanne took the reins and began to develop the ideal designs. "I knew right off the bat that it would be an impressive place with Henson and Dear involved," Mathison states. "Upon meeting Bobby, I could tell he really wanted to build this for the enjoyment of his three daughters and his grandchildren."

Unlike most of her projects in which the homeowners are involved with the purchases and decisions, Arnold gave her carte blanche on furnishing and accessorizing, desiring not see the final product until completion. Joanne worked with Henson and Dear through the four phases of the project, breathing life into the rustic spaces with vintage pieces to add a sentimental feel. She incorporated Arnold's personal style by





using iron elements and beautiful pine flooring and by embracing his love of art and motivational quotes. A collection of portraits of Arnold's grandchildren by Glenn Williams are in the main cabin. "My grandfather and these four grandchildren the true are inspiration for creating Georgetown," Arnold states. "Hopefully someday they will enjoy the property with their own children and grandchildren." The gal-vanized "Tataw's" sign in the smaller day cabin was Joanne's way of honoring the memory of Arnold's grandfather. These nostalgic touches were а meaningful way to tie Arnold's past into the present.

other craftsmen were called upon to add to the eclectic atmosphere. The impressive ironwork on the spiral Several staircase was created by James Minter of Imag-ine Ironworks in Brookhaven to bring the organic feel of the outside landscape into the cabin. Cole Ellis Designs of Madison built both the pavilion's bed swing and the bunks for the main cabin. "The bunks were built in Cole's work space, disassembled into 50 pieces, and moved carefully up the spiral staircase to be reassembled." Math-ison notes. "If Arnold ever sells the cabin, he will be selling those with the house!" The impressive mirror the master bedroom was handcrafted by Greg Morlino of Ron Carroll of Carroll Landscaping in con-structed the rustic fire pit area and stone patio with Adirondack rocking chairs and Carroll can also take credit for designing the surrounding grounds.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The day cabin is one of Arnold's favorite spots. He notes, "I have probably spent the most time here on this front porch in a rocking chair surrounded by kids, grandkids, and dogs." Times like these were his inspiration for cre-ating Georgetown. All of the structures relate to Arnold's family farm in Tennessee in some way. Mathison created an homage to Arnold's grandfather in galvanized letters spelling Tataw. The interior of the day cabin had great character and good bones when Arnold purchased the property. The existing pine walls and flooring create a warm base that Mathison embellished with metals and leather finishes.

Arnold can't quite put his finger on his favorite aspect of the Georgetown prop-erty as he oversees his brood. "I have probably spent more time on the front porch in the rocking chairs surrounded by kids, grandkids, and dogs than anywhere else," Arnold notes. "I have never spent the night here because it was built for the children, but I do love the amount of impromptu time that we spend as a family that you can't do as easily when everyone is in their own home." He is thrilled with the team he compiled to create his vision. "I explained what I wanted and trusted their expertise, experience, and creativity to make it happen. I couldn't be more pleased with what they did to make it even better than I imagined."

When Arnold drives down the hill to Georgetown and sees the lake and red barn reflecting in the water, he is transported to his childhood. He can also take great joy in the knowledge that he is creating lasting memories for generations to come. M