

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

JULY | AUGUST 2011

ALABAMA

25

BARBECUE FAVORITES

Fairhope's
Allure

Lake Martin
Music Fest

BATHING
beauties

\$4.95





AN ORANGE BEACH
GETAWAY'S OPEN
FACADE EMBRACES
GLORIOUS GULF VIEWS.

ONNO ESCAPE

On Ono Island, a tiny stretch of land near Orange Beach that extends just five and a half miles into the Gulf of Mexico, stands a home that embodies the nostalgic notion of summertime. While today's hectic pace often allows little room for true relaxation, family and friends gather at this gracious house each year to reconnect and rejuvenate.

Approaching the structure from the waters of Bayou St. John, which gently lap at the pier, you're greeted by a broad porch on the lower level and a corresponding deck above. These Old South signatures beckon visitors to pull up a rocker or claim a spot on a bench swing and sip some fresh-squeezed lemonade or icy sweet tea.

Architect Lea Verneville, a partner with Walcott Adams Verneville Architects in Fairhope designed this oasis

TEXT BY JULIE HALL BOSCHÉ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHERWOOD COX





with input from the homeowner. "The client desired a very clean and welcoming architectural style with a unique presence," he says.

And that's just what she got. Built on the site (and using the same structural piling supports) of its predecessor, which was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, this house's design suggests a place with a rich history. "The home has an emotional appeal that is confidant and exuberant, but appropriate to the island's casual lifestyle," Lea says.

General contractor Joe Sledge, of Sledge's Custom Building Inc., made the concept of the house a reality. He employed Galvalume roofing and stainless steel cable railing for a sleek look. The exterior trim is crafted from 2,000-year-old cypress, and the decks and stairs outside are ipe,

also known as Brazilian walnut. "For a contemporary but still beachy feel inside, we used a gray wash on the floors to make them almost look like driftwood," says Joe.

Landscape architect Paul Fontenot of Garden Design Solutions set about creating an outdoor setting worthy of such an architectural gem. Palm trees, those ubiquitous icons of coastal life, shade the entrance. The landscaping also incorporates plenty of natural grasses and a striking, 125-year-old sand oak that stands sentry next to the home.

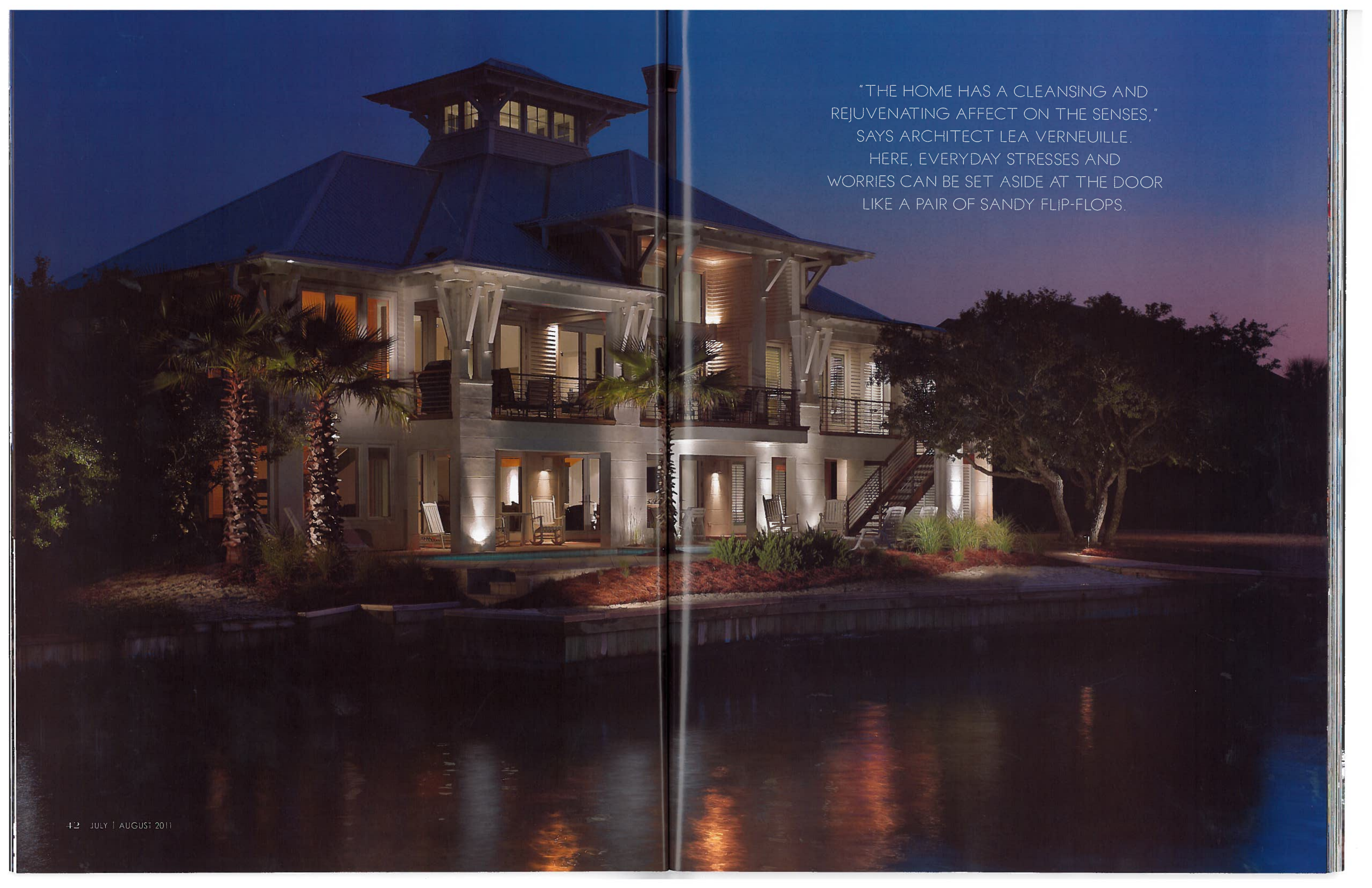
Lea incorporated large expanses of glass into his design to take advantage of the scenery. The effect creates a seamless transition between indoors and out and infuses the home with light. The resulting interiors feel fresh, bright, and open.



With ample space to stretch out (5,800 square feet of living area, plus five bedrooms, each with a private bath, and a downstairs game room), the house welcomes a rotating roster of guests: perhaps most notably the homeowner's teenage grandchildren. They spend breaks here, swimming in the crystalline pool, fishing off the pier, boating to meet friends who live nearby, or just lounging about with a good book. More than anything, this house is all about recapturing the quiet diversions of a classic Southern summer.

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"THE HOME HAS A CLEANSING AND
REJUVENATING AFFECT ON THE SENSES,"
SAYS ARCHITECT LEA VERNEUILLE.
HERE, EVERYDAY STRESSES AND
WORRIES CAN BE SET ASIDE AT THE DOOR
LIKE A PAIR OF SANDY FLIP-FLOPS.