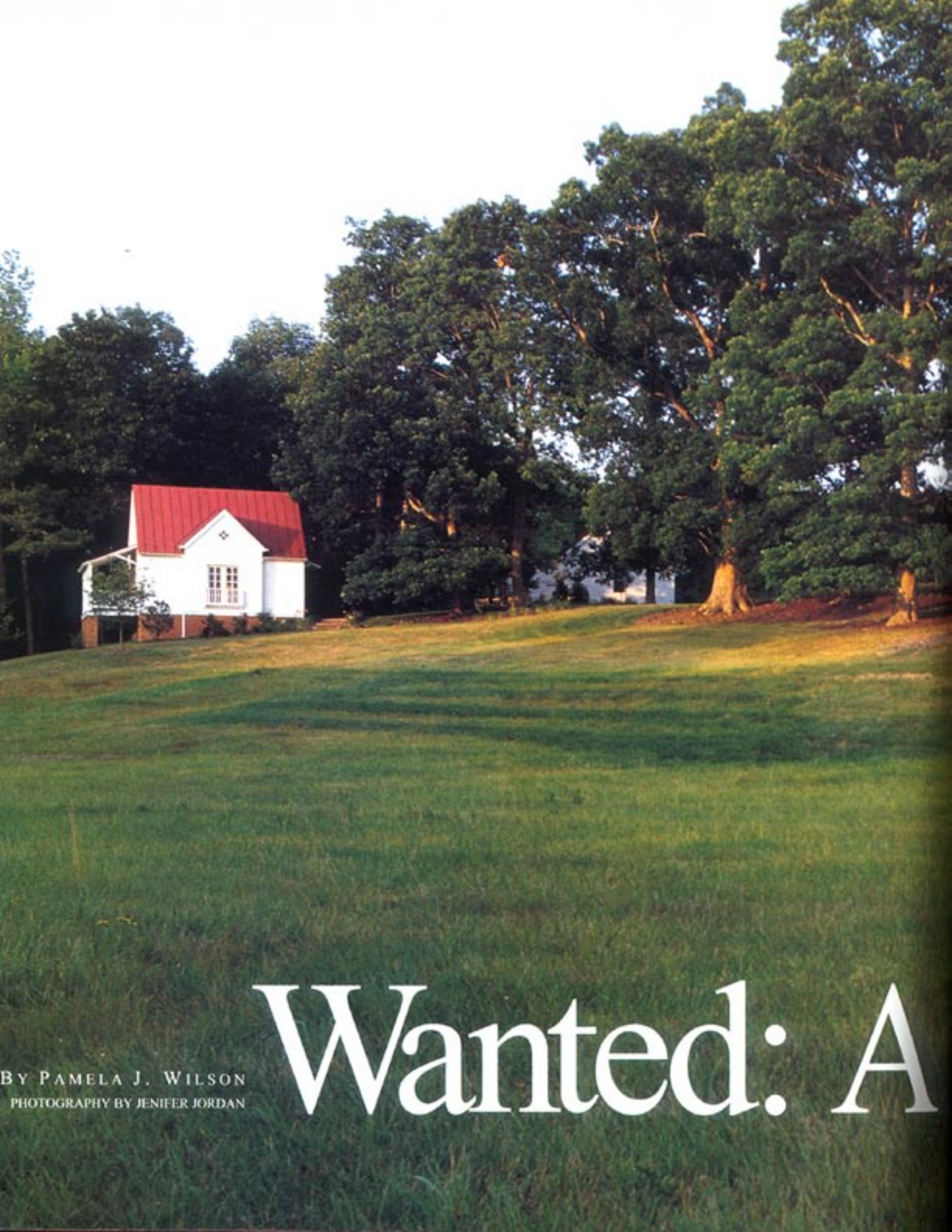


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BY PAMELA J. WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENIFER JORDAN

Wanted: A

*By providing architect David Neumann with
a thoughtful three-page "wish list,"
Virginians Judith Jahnke and
Kenneth Simmons
got precisely the house
they had in mind.*



Architect: David Neumann

Red Tin Roof

Architect **David Neumann** was so impressed with **Judith Jahnke and Ken Simmons'** new-house wish list that he now gives it out to prospective clients. Why was the list, or as Neumann refers to it, "the program," so special? **"Because,"** he says, "it was so helpful in understanding not only **the kinds of things they wanted in their house,** but also the kinds of spaces and how they wanted them to function. Prior to coming to us, Judith and Ken had given a great deal of thought as to how they wanted to live. **They** were enlightened clients by any standard—self-assured in their tastes and desires, but always open to ideas and suggestions they may not have thought of before."

Judith and Ken, who both have strong interests in history and historic preservation, began their list shortly after purchasing 200 acres of idyllic farmland near Charlottesville, Virginia. "We had moved seven times in our eight years of marriage and we were ready to buy or build our 'forever' house," Judith relates. "We came to Charlottesville with thoughts of buying an historic farmhouse, but when we saw this property and learned that it was for sale, we decided it would be wonderful to build our own house, just as we wanted it."



Enticing in its simplicity and symmetry, the new farm-style house near Charlottesville, Virginia, features wings that extend, telescope-fashion, from a single great-room core.





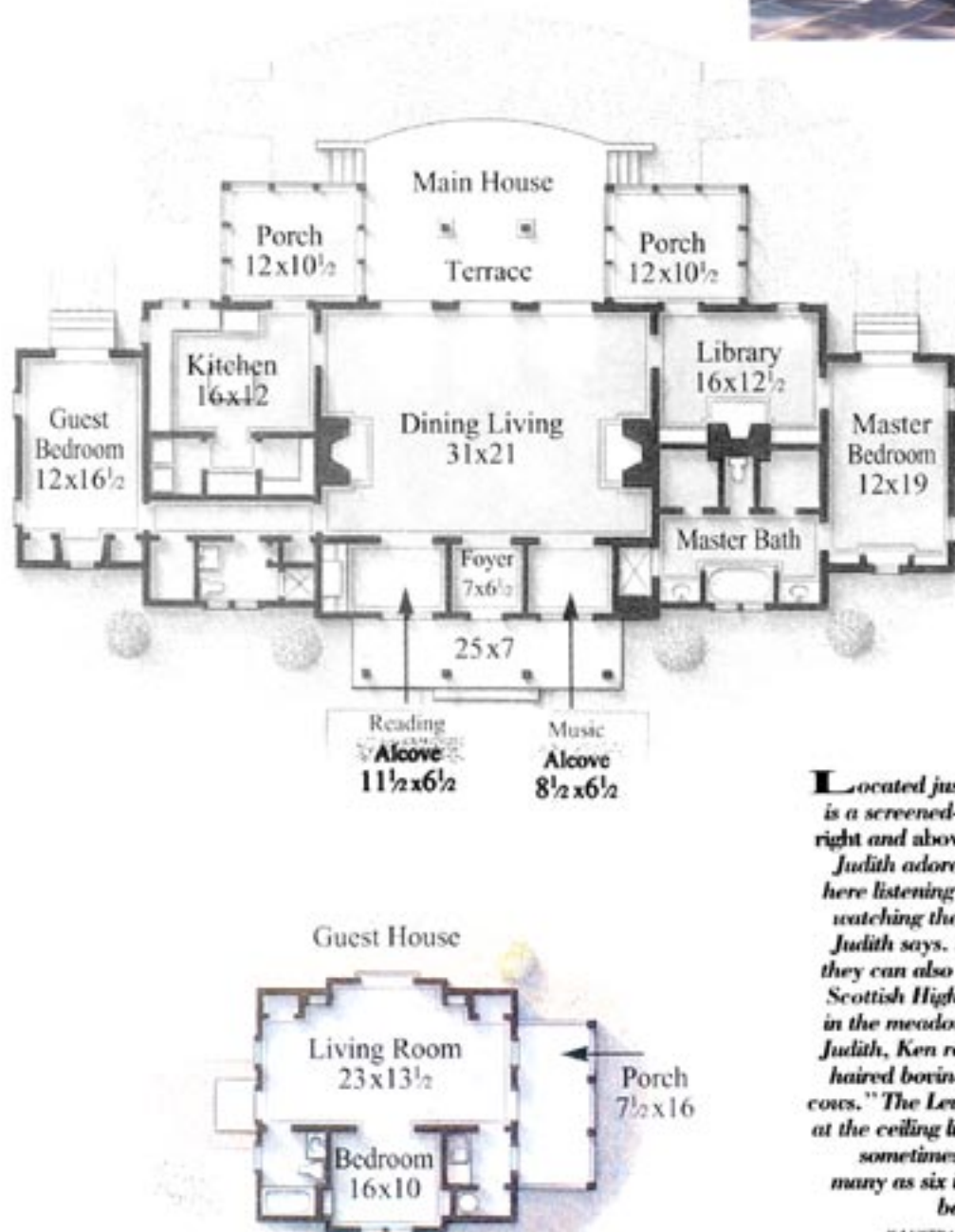
Furnishings in the great-room, left and above, are simple and unassuming. At the old Virginia farm table is a mix of Baltimore straight-back and Philadelphia fancy chairs.



Judith Jahnke and Ken Simmons, left, with their beloved border collie, Joy, pause for a moment on a simple garden bridge that spans a small stream running through their 200-acre property.

With visions of gently rolling meadows, sylvan woods, meandering streams, and heavenly views in mind, the couple collaborated on the house of their dreams. By the time they enlisted the Washington, D.C., firm of Versaci, Neumann & Partners as their architects, every nuance of the house—and its relationship to the landscape—had been considered.

Ken and Judith's program specified three structures—a two-bedroom main house (not to exceed 2,500 square feet), a one-room guest cottage, and a separate garage/machinery shed. According to Neumann, "They wanted the house to be historic in feel but definitely not a reproduction—a traditionally styled farmhouse that was unique, but not likely to look dated after the passage of years. They wanted it to look as if it had always been here: very solid, with high-quality construction, and symmetrical in design." Thomas Jefferson,



Located just off the kitchen is a screened-in eating porch, right and above, that Ken and Judith adore. "We love to sit here listening to the birds and watching the gardens grow," Judith says. From the porch, they can also watch their four Scottish Highland cows graze in the meadows. According to Judith, Ken refers to the long-haired bovines as "decorator cows." The Lewis Carroll quote at the ceiling line reads, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

ILLUSTRATION: GRAVES NELSON,
KEN TATE ARCHITECTS



NY AS SIX IMPOSSIBLE THING





a stickler for symmetry himself (and whose magnificent house, Monticello, is nearby) would have approved.

Porches and patios were a must for the nature-loving couple. There are six in all: a welcoming front entry porch; private patios for both bedrooms in the main house; and a pair of screened porches (one for eating, the other for reading) flanking a trellised bluestone terrace. **The porches are special.** "I am a strong believer in a screened porch as a screened porch," says Neumann. "Many people think they can create a porch with casement windows, but the truth is, only a true screened porch feels like one. What we did was create two sets of frames for each window, one glass and one screened. This way, they can enjoy the porches in all but the coldest months." And they do. Says Judith, "Ken and I are avid readers, and there's no more wonderful place to sit and read than on a screened porch."

In approaching the design of interior spaces, Judith and Ken again put **scale, symmetry, and simplicity at the forefront.** "They



Judith, opposite, loves tending the gardens that surround the house. Cat Sybil can often be found pussyfooting near a particularly handsome catmint specimen.

The 12x16-foot guest room above is the mirror image of the master bedroom. Just for a lark, Judith hung the "Canaries" sign—found in an old tin shop—above the pair of rope beds.

Ken refers to the glass-front fridge in the small, efficient kitchen, left, as a "refrigerator with an attitude."



were insistent on having the house not exceed certain parameters," Neumann says. "They wanted to ensure that it would not be overly large or ostentatious in any respect. They kept our feet to the fire in holding the overall size down to two thousand five hundred square feet." Neumann's solution was to establish a hierarchy by organizing the principal rooms in the main house in a central space with high ceilings and clerestory windows. Secondary rooms, which flank the central volume, are organized in telescoping wings.

The core of the house is a 21x30-foot great-room that combines living and dining functions. Though open to each other, the conversation area and the dining area each feature their own fireplaces. Enhancing the farmhouse feeling are floors of broad-board quarter-sawn red oak, and walls—from the floor to the sills of the clerestory windows—paneled in tongue-and-groove 1x4 fir wainscoting.

Topping it all off, literally, is the most nostalgic of all elements: a red tin roof. "I liked the idea of being able to hear the sound of rain on the tin roof," says Judith. "But as it turns out, the roof is so well insulated, the sound is quite muted." Not muted, but much enjoyed, are the sounds that emanate from the four Scottish Highland cows,



two goats, four chickens, one calico cat, and one border collie that share this God's green acre (make that 200 acres) with Judith and Ken. And while they weren't on the original wish list, the animals make it delightfully complete. □

Architect: David Neumann, Versaci, Neumann & Partners
Interior Design: Celeste Hart
Landscape Design: Ian Robertson, Ltd.
Regional Editor: Eileen A. Deymier

For more information, see Reader's Resource on page 130.



The 575-square-foot guest cottage, right, was planned to accommodate the visits of friends and Ken's grown children. Consisting of one large living area, left, with a sleeping alcove, above, the cottage mimics the main house with its tin roof, clapboard siding, wood double-hung windows, and French doors. Also like the main house, the cottage offers glorious views.

