



## Sweet Languor



On the shores of Lake Martin, Alabama, architect Bobby McAlpine rethinks the concept of weekend living in a new "old" cabin for Melanie Benecki and her family. Here, modest sophistication is the order of the day.

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All of the walls and windows in the cabin, including in this intimate sitting area, are milled of hundred-year-old Canadian cedar. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A vintage messenger bag features a time-worn patina. Oversize crystal prisms were added to the antique chandelier. Rustic and contemporary design elements work in striking juxtaposition in a passageway on the main floor. Custom window hardware is elegant in its simplicity. A curtain wall of windows in the living room rises two stories. Sculptural pussy willows frame a photograph of a French garden scene.

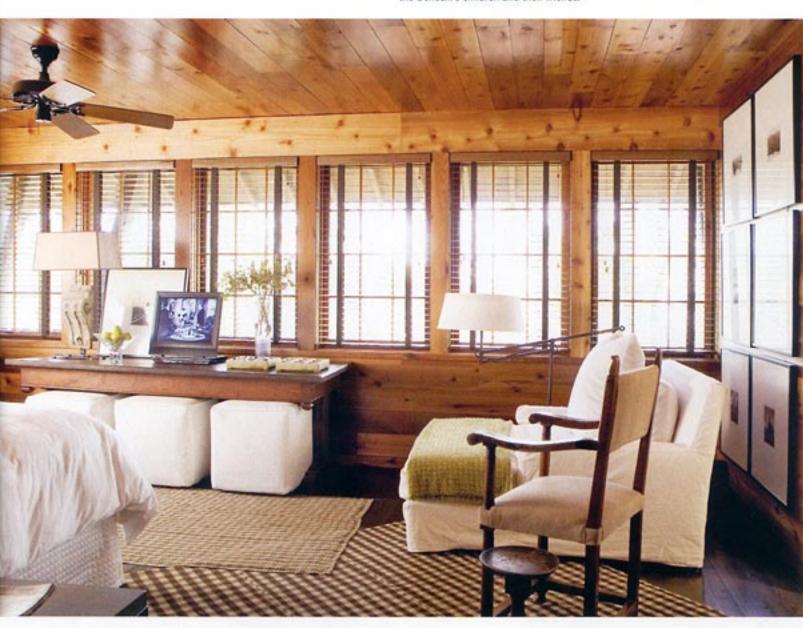




ust how much does Melanie Benecki love the lakeside cabin she shares with her husband, Stan, and their family? Well, a lot. So much, in fact, that she keeps a photograph of the home's architect, Bobby McAlpine, on her bedside table. While the picture is kind of a playful nod to the man who designed the house—and whom the Beneckis have since befriended—the sentiment is one of pure endearment.

"Years ago," says Melanie, "I used to go to bed, and in my prayers I would ask for a "Bobby" house. Now, I sleep in one and I With windows that wrap around two sides of their top-floor master bedroom, Stan and Melanie Benecki liken the space to a treehouse. 

OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: A powder bath features an elevated vanity that seems to float. Sink, Kallista. A combination game room and sleeping area is a favorite retreat for the Benecki's children and their friends.



have to pinch myself." The cabin, located on the shore of Lake Martin, Alabama, is where the Beneckis and their three children— Cydney, 18; Harrison, 15; and Colin, 4—wile away hot summer days.

Neither Stan nor Melanie had been to Lake Martin when Stan met McAlpine there one day to discuss business and to see The Camp at the Ridge, an enclave of cabins designed by the architect that's located within The Ridge at Lake Martin. (The Beneckis' company, Benecki Fine Homes, has collaborated with McAlpine on more than half a dozen projects across the Southeast.) While he was at Lake Martin, Stan toured one of the

finished cabins and was immediately taken by its charm. That was on a Saturday. By Monday, he had urged Melanie to fly down and take a look for herself. "I walked in and immediately said, 'done.' " says Melanie. "I didn't even go out on the lake and I hadn't even seen the view."

McAlpine's inspiration for this cabin, and the others at the compound, is based upon a cabin of his own that he built at the lake 20 years ago. The new versions, including the Beneckis', are more than just houses—they're statements about the sub-urbanization of the countryside.



When the barn-style doors and windows in the dining room are opened, the line between indoors and out is blurred. Windows wrap around the entire circumference of the house. The Benecki's dock provides easy access to the lake.



Surrounded by custom seating, the concrete-topped island is a favorite gathering spot for casual dining and conversation. When it's time to entertain, dual ranges and dishwashers are at the ready. Appliances, Jenn-Air. Simple buriap curtains conceal a well-organized butler's pantry.







"I wanted to build an exemplary project that is my understanding of how you should posture yourself when you're at the lake," says McAlpine. The houses should send a message that there is a better way of doing things, he adds. For starters, the cabin's basic design is a box, pure and simple. "That alone is very quietly teaching modesty," says McAlpine. "All you need, literally, is within those four walls." And because the architect fashioned the house entirely out of mature materials-primarily 100-year-old Canadian cedar-the cabin quietly fades into the surrounding wooded landscape. The result is a project that is modest, yet sophisticated at the same time. "You don't have to drag 'town' with you everywhere you go," McAlpine

says. As for the Beneckis, when they're at Lake Martin, there's no doubt that town is the farthest thing from their minds, both literally and figuratively.

## DESIGN DETAILS

ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN Bobby McAlpine

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