



# Into the Woods

Rustic landscaping and natural building materials connect a hillside home with its surroundings, encouraging a Georgia family to put down roots.

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Stone and copper  
seating, highlighted by a  
hand-painted wood box.  
Santitas (Santitas) are carved  
out of Dan Kalmuski and Sandra  
Mandl's sheep. The stone walls outlining  
the terrace also serve as retaining walls.



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nce a weekend getaway, Sandra Moreland and Dan Kalinowski's house and 3 acres along Georgia's Lake Lanier has become their full-time residence—and a backwoods discovery zone for their two teenage sons.

The stone house nestles comfortably on the sloping, wooded lot. But when the couple bought the property in 1999, the outdoor living spaces were less than idyllic, with haphazardly laid brick, a rotting dock, and structures built of bare metal poles and concrete.

Dan and Sandra asked Tom Flowers of Sanctum Design Group in nearby Roswell to renovate the landscape to enhance the natural surroundings—a number of mature Japanese maples, cedars, and dogwoods decorated the lot—while maximizing lake views and taming the slope.

#### AT HOME WITH NATURE

"We started with a good canopy of trees and the bones of a nice landscape," Sandra says. "But we needed someone like Tom to assess the strengths of the existing property and put in materials that reflected its natural state."


Because the couple's sons, Roman and Sevin, like to fish, go boating, and sail model boats, Flowers designed the space as an adventure park of sorts. "There are different points of discovery all around the property," he says. "You can't stand in one spot and see it all."

Flowers replaced the old dock with a new circular one constructed of composite lumber and accessed by a lighted footbridge. Two small patios carved from the



■ Autumn paints the landscape with the red hues of Japanese maple, *opposite*. ■ A cedar arbor, *right and opposite inset*, forms a gateway to the house. ■ A round dock, *above*, seems to float in a pond that was formed by damming a small tributary of nearby Lake Lanier. ■ Sandra, Dan, and son Sevin, *below*, toast marshmallows in the fire pit on the lower terrace. The fire pit and retaining walls are built with Tennessee fieldstone and capped with crab orchard stone.





sloping ground function as gathering spaces where the family can relax, check out lake views, and warm themselves at a fire pit. A lighted path through the woods leads to Lake Lanier, and a new parking pad and entry arbor welcome visitors and direct them to the front door.

#### **DESIGNING A RUSTIC RETREAT**

In keeping with the wooded lot, Flowers used natural and natural-looking materials in his design. Cedar, Tennessee fieldstone, and tumbled pavers lend a refined native quality. The circular designs of the dock and hillside terraces reflect the curvilinear tendencies of nature.

When the landscaping work began in 2002, the family was still using the lakeside home as a getaway. They requested low-maintenance plants and an automatic watering system to keep the workload down, but Sandra and Dan liked the renovated house and grounds so much they couldn't stay away. In 2005, they moved to the lake full-time.

"Tom helped us create the kind of lifestyle we wanted to have," Sandra says. "We're so glad we made the transition. It's like a little oasis up here." □



■ The round dock, *opposite*, is reached via a footbridge with light posts constructed of native stone and cedar. ■ Four stacked-stone spillways, *above left*, recirculate the pond's water. At night, lights underneath each stream of water illuminate the pond. ■ Bronze mums and *Lamium* spill from a window box, *above right*. ■ The asymmetrical shape of a "sweep down" entry gate, *below right*, reflects the property's sloping terrain and naturalistic style. ■ Climbing hydrangea, *below left*, masks a downspout against the home's shingle and stone walls.

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