

# HOUSTON house & home

THE COMPLETE RESOURCE MAGAZINE FOR YOUR HOME

SEPTEMBER 2007

## Houstonians Go Country

ROUND TOP ANTIQUES  
FILL HOUSTON COUPLE'S  
BARN/LOFT



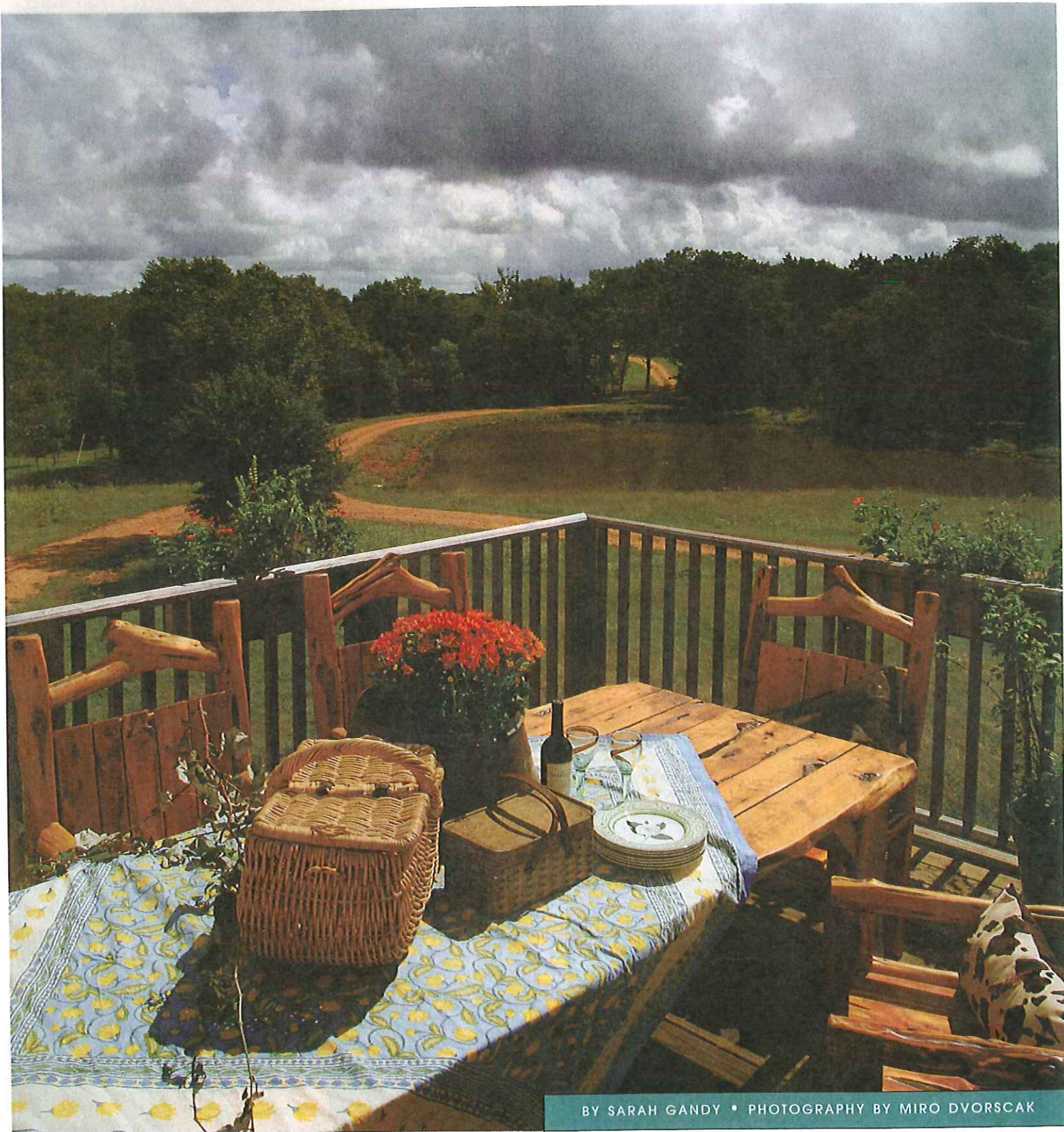
ANTIQUES WEEKENDS  
IN HOUSTON, ROUND TOP  
AND ENVIRONS

HOW TO DECORATE  
WITH ANTIQUES

DECORATIVE HARDWARE

FANTASTIC FRIDGES

FALL RECIPES FROM VIN



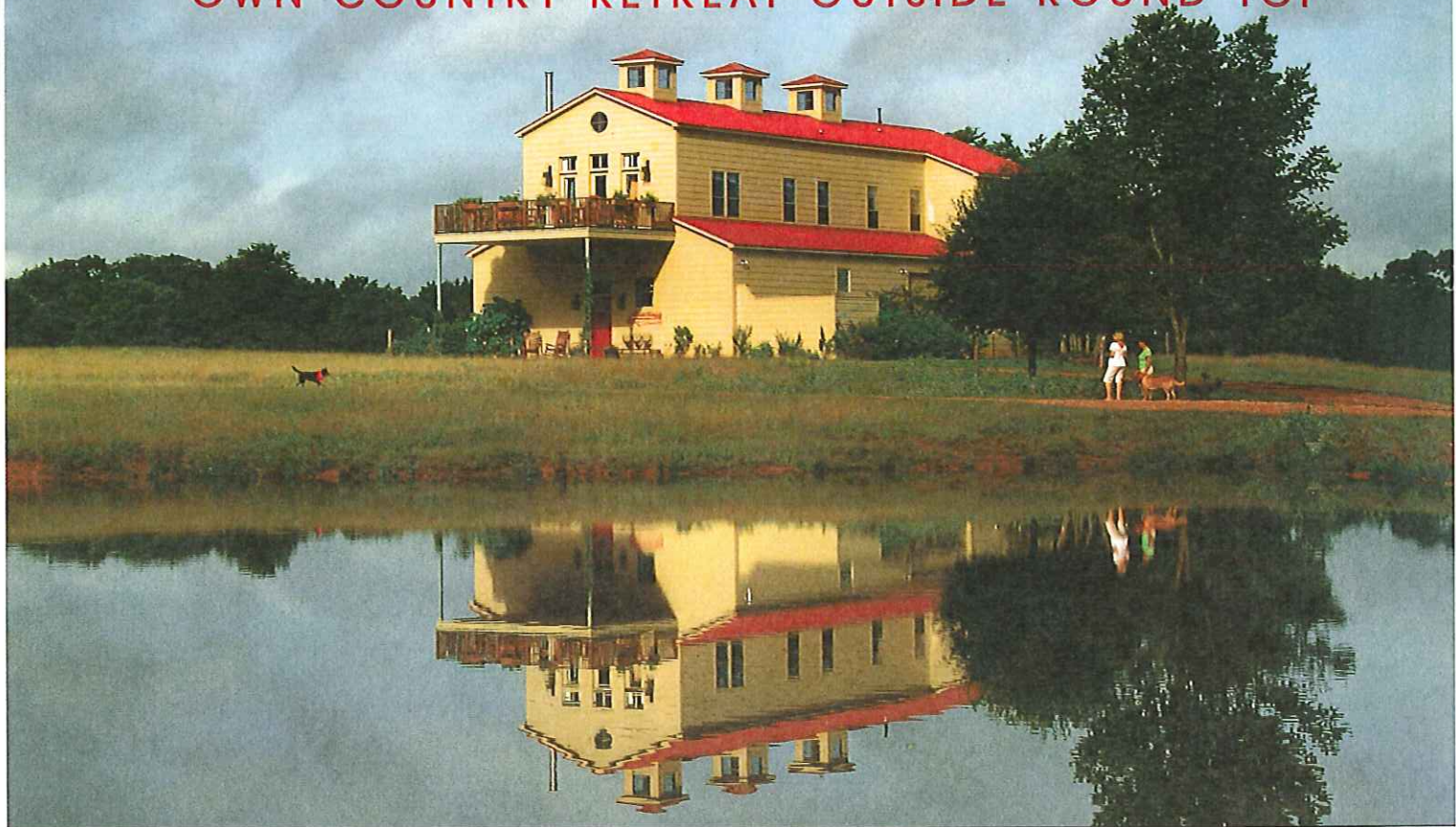
BY SARAH GANDY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIRO DVORCAK

*ABOVE: An open balcony at the front of the barn overlooks the farm pond. Cedar furniture designed by Kathryn Edwards was handmade in Boerne, Texas, for Savannah House.*

“We’ve already had 2 inches of rain today,” says the homeowner as she checks her rain gauge. She is speaking from the ranch she and her husband own near New Ulm, Texas, and Tropical Storm Erin is sweeping across the land.

# Barndominium

AN URBAN HOUSTON COUPLE CREATES THEIR OWN COUNTRY RETREAT OUTSIDE ROUND TOP



**ABOVE:** Ed Eubanks of Eubanks Group Architects designed the barn with living quarters upstairs. Its rectangular shape with square cupolas mimics the vernacular farm building architecture seen in the Fayette County area. The owners quickly dubbed their loft-like living space the "barndominium." A reflecting pond doubles the building's impact.

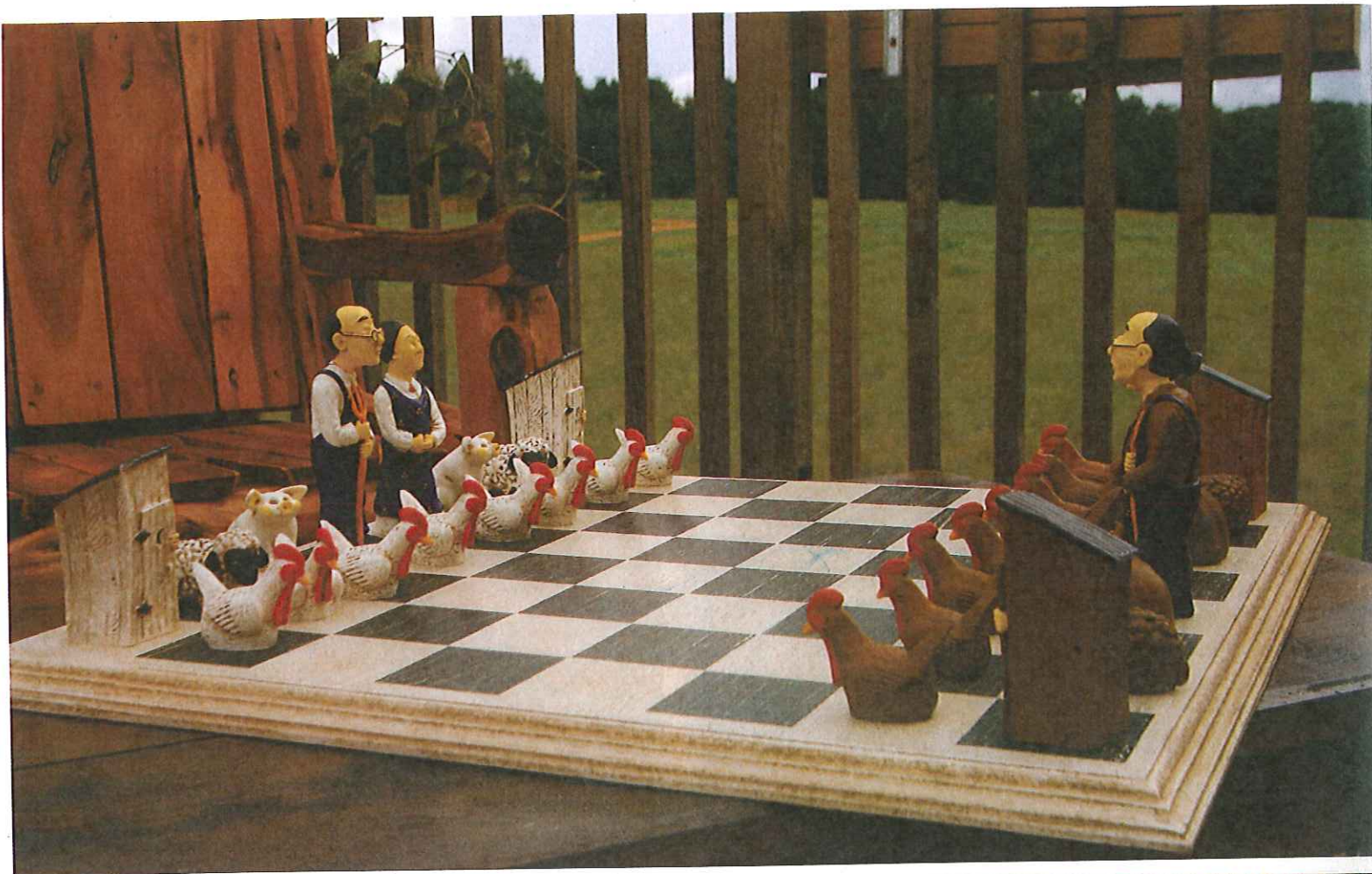
**BELOW:** Stepping stones from The Park lead across the creek.

The covered bridge designed by Eubanks holds plaques memorializing the husband's mother.

Seen from the hand-hewn cedar gazebo is a replica of a sculpture of the wife's mother.








In all likelihood, this is not a statistic that most Houstonians could give you. But as Interior Designer Kathryn Edwards notes, living in the country, even if it's only a few days a week, can change the way you think.

"Being out here you learn so much about nature that you don't notice living in the city," says Edwards. "You become very sensitive to the time of year, to what the animals are doing. You understand what springtime is about; you watch the birds coming and going with the weather and the seasons."

Edwards should know. She has served as an interior designer, friend and neighbor throughout the ranch's design process, drawing additional inspiration from her own property a few minutes up the road.

#### BECOMING RANCHERS

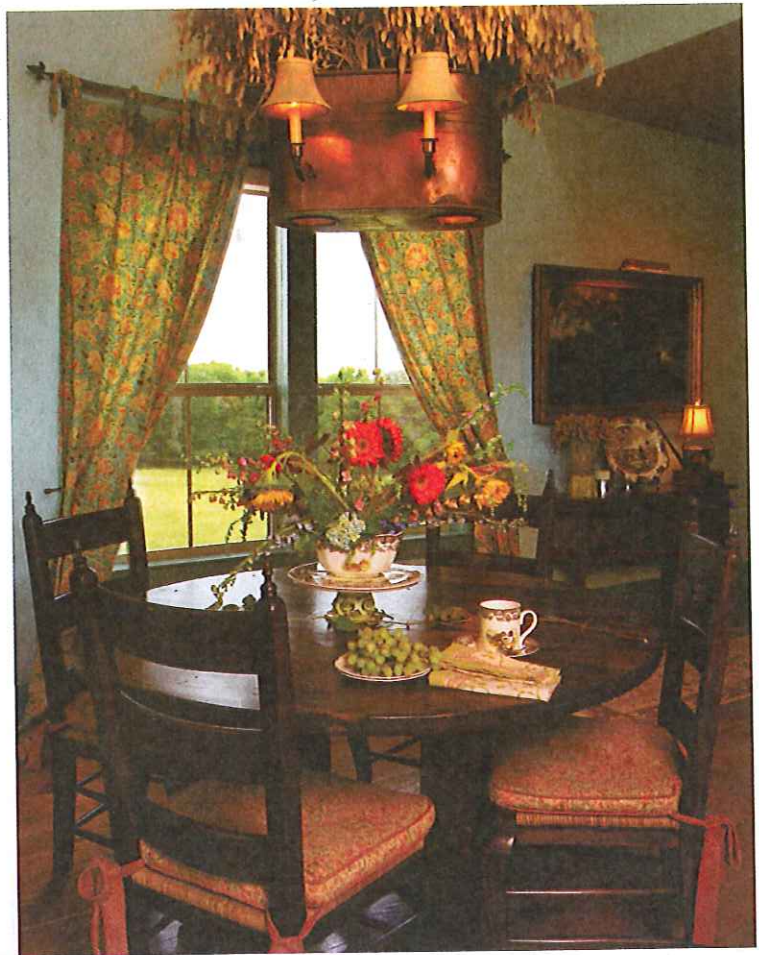
The initial plan for the country getaway was rather simple. "It started out that we wanted a weekend retreat within one and a half hours of Houston," says the homeowner. "We were looking for about 50 acres with a house, but we couldn't find what we wanted." 

**ABOVE:** *A playful farm-themed chess set*

**RIGHT:** *Sconces up the stairway leading to the living quarters are made at Savannah House from old hay rakes found at The Original Round Top Antiques Fair.*

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
*A sitting area on the balcony overlooks a cattle-grazing pasture.*





“We ended up buying raw land — no road, no electricity, no water. And then we started to build our dream.”

Of course, building a dream takes a team. The seller of the land suggested the new owners contact Edwin A. Eubanks, AIA, of Eubanks Group Architects, a friend he had known since college. The homeowners met with Eubanks and his design team, including project architect Michael Dreef, and hit it off immediately.

“Ed came and walked the property with us,” says the wife. “He helped us pick building sites. He had intuitiveness about where roads would go and how things would look. He was able to envision it far more than we could. He was the only architect we interviewed for this job.”

The new landowners had another somewhat unusual member of the design team: the U.S. Department of Agriculture. There already were cattle being run on the land and they wanted to keep it that way, in part to get the agricultural tax exemption on what is now 300 acres. The problem was that the owners had never owned that much land before and knew little about ranching.

“Because we were novices, we got (the USDA) involved,” says the wife. “They developed a plan for the fences, where the water would go, how everything would work. We worked with them to develop the business side of the ranch and Ed to develop the fun side.”

Among the many things needed for a working ranch is a barn in which to store hay, tractors and other farm equipment. And while the owners’ long-term plans for the property included a family compound with master cottage, pool, guesthouse and public living areas, they also wanted someplace they could stay at the ranch as all of that was designed and built.

To solve both needs, the architect’s first project became what is affectionately known as the Barndominium: hay and tractors downstairs, living quarters upstairs. The barn’s simple rectangular shape with square cupolas references the vernacular farm buildings found in this part of Central Texas settled by English and German families in the 19th century.

#### A SENSE OF PLACE

With the architecture under way, Edwards was called in to develop the barndominium’s interiors. “We didn’t want to do ‘Houston,’” says Edwards. “We wanted it to reflect the area.” As luck would have it, the area includes the famous antique havens of Round Top and Warrenton, both of which were heavily utilized in outfitting the interiors.

From collections of antique tools used as artwork to an old linen press used as a hall table, Edwards helped fill the home with one-of-a-kind pieces pulled from the area. One of Edwards’ signatures is creating light fixtures out of found objects, which she does regularly in her Houston shop, Savannah House.

“I really love Kathy’s whimsical touches in the house,” says the homeowner. “The wall sconces made out of pitchforks, the old copper pot made into a chandelier. She has a great eye for taking ordinary objects and making them extraordinary. It’s so much fun to watch people explore the house and see those unique touches.”

While the design team relied heavily on the area’s storied antiques, they also drew on the land itself for inspiration.

**TOP LEFT:** *The hutch is from the Marburger Farm Antique Show, and some of the owner’s brown transferware pottery is from The Original Round Top Antiques Fair and Marburger Farm.*

**TOP RIGHT:** *The dining table and antique copper washtub light fixture were custom-made for the homeowners by Savannah House. The oil painting to the right of the window is from the Marburger Farm Antique Show.*

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** *Comfortable upholstered chairs and sofas and brightly colored rugs from Emmet Perry & Co. make the living room an inviting space, as Black Lab-mix Buster will attest. An old-fashioned cast-iron stove cozies the room in winter.*





Curtain rods and mirror frames are made from cedar limbs that grow on the property. Dried cornstalks in the dining chandelier grew in a local field. When it came to choosing colors, Edwards simply looked outside.

"Ed did such a great job creating this panoramic view, so (the interiors) had to be about that," says Edwards. "We wanted natural colors that would blend so that we could really frame the view."

#### LIVING ON THE LAND

Though the family compound is still a year or more away from completion, the ranch owners have wasted no time in creating serene outdoor living areas. Among them are an outdoor chapel; a grassy wooded area with hammocks and picnic tables known as The Park; a more private area called The Arbor, which includes a statue of the wife's mother, who posed for the piece now adorning the American Cemetery and Memorial near Paris; and a covered bridge, which was dedicated in memory of the husband's mother. All areas nestle alongside the creek that runs through the property, though each has a distinct charm.

"They've had Easter morning services at the chapel, which is beautiful," says Edwards. "They'll ring the bell to call everyone to service."

**ABOVE:** *Shiloh, the cat, keeps watch in the master bedroom. Headboards are made from antique doors expanded to accommodate the width of the king-sized bed. The doors were purchased in Warrenton.*

**LEFT:** *A handmade quilt from Mustang Alley in Cat Springs is the focal point of the kitchen. Kathy Edwards of Savannah House designed and made the pendant lamps over the bar from old turned wood and lampshades; she also designed the lamp made from an old hand-cranked wash wringer seen on the sofa's console table. Buster rests on the sofa; Dubya, the yellow Lab, on a cowhide rug from Mustang Alley, which has a booth at the Marburger Farm Antique Fair.*



**ABOVE:** In the guest room, headboards made from an old fence are from a Warrenton antiques booth along Highway 237. Over the bed, Currier & Ives prints are from a vintage book found at a shop in Bellville called Nothing Ordinary. On the far wall is a barkcloth farm scene from GreenPeck Gallery in Round Top.

**RIGHT:** The curtain rods were made from cedar branches growing at the ranch. Curtain fabric is by Robert Allen Design.

“The park is great for big groups,” says the homeowner. “We had 150 people out here for the chapel dedication, then we all walked to the park where there were tables and chairs and a buffet. There were quilts on the ground and it was April, so the wildflowers were at their peak.

“The Arbor is perfect for smaller groups. Sometimes we’ll have wine and cheese down there in the evenings. And the covered bridge I think would be great for having a candlelight dinner party.”

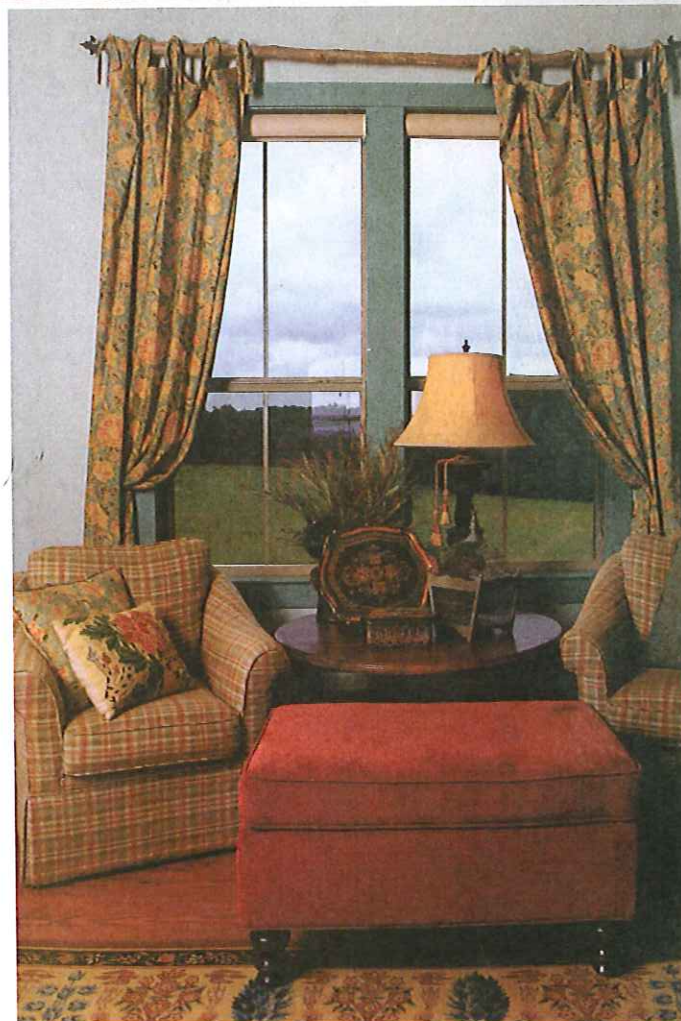
The landscaping is immaculate, thanks to three members of the Gonzales family—Alejandro, Froy and Antonio—who conceived the designs, installed the stone work, plants and irrigation and continue to maintain the ranch’s land. “They even planted every one of the 99 trees that line the entry drive,” says the homeowner.

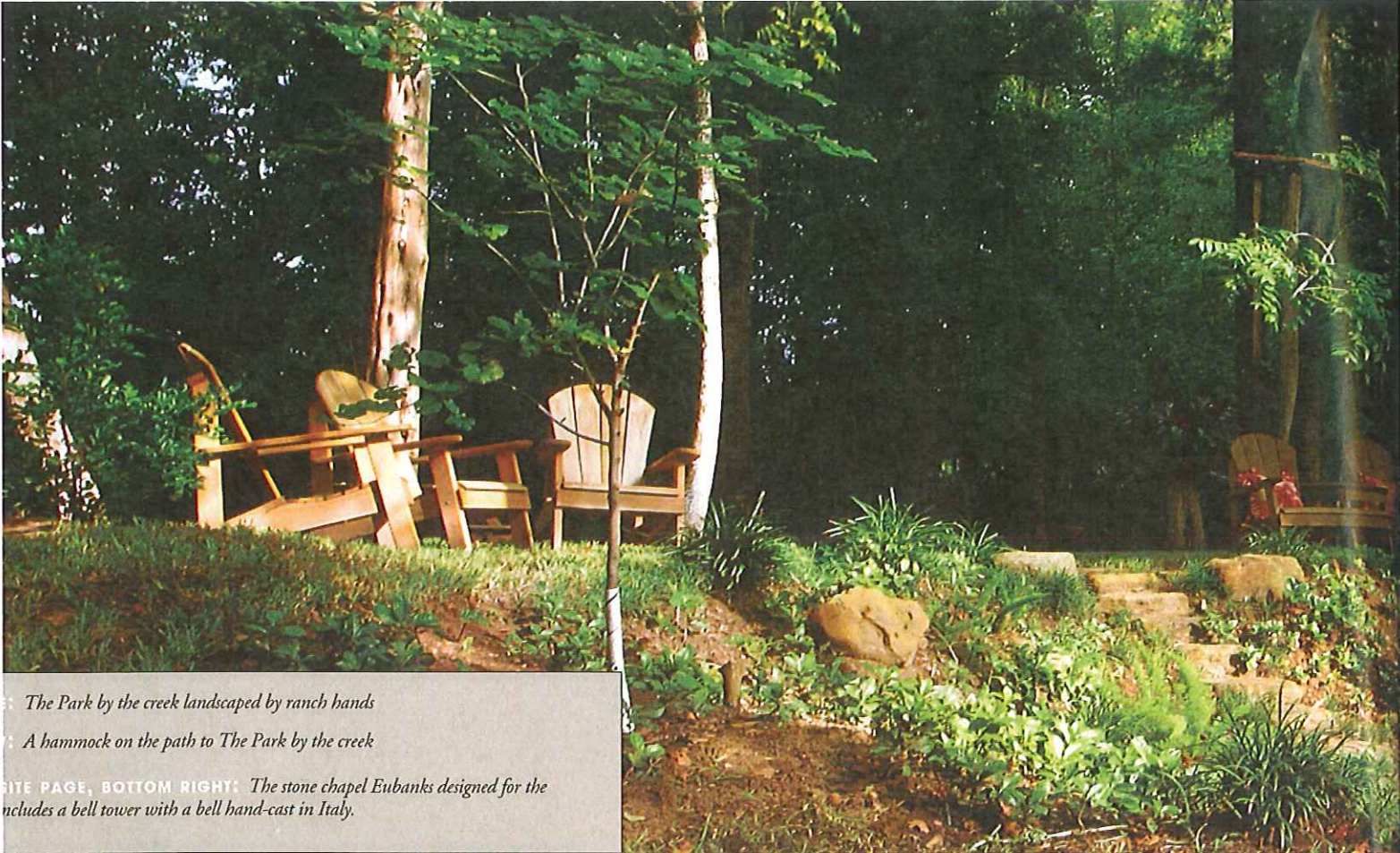
#### A GOOD THING MULTIPLIED

The new ranchers haven’t lost any time making use of the building that they do have. “We’ve had two barn dances,” says the wife. “We open up the barn doors, put tents outside, bring in a band and a buffet. It’s a lot of fun.”

“There are so many great things about the ranch,” says the homeowner. “Its peacefulness and its beauty. That it’s so close to Houston. I can come out here for the day and really feel like I’ve had a break.

“But mostly I love that we can share it with friends and family. And I love that they love, it too. It’s like a good thing multiplied. It wouldn’t be nearly so wonderful if we couldn’t share it.”

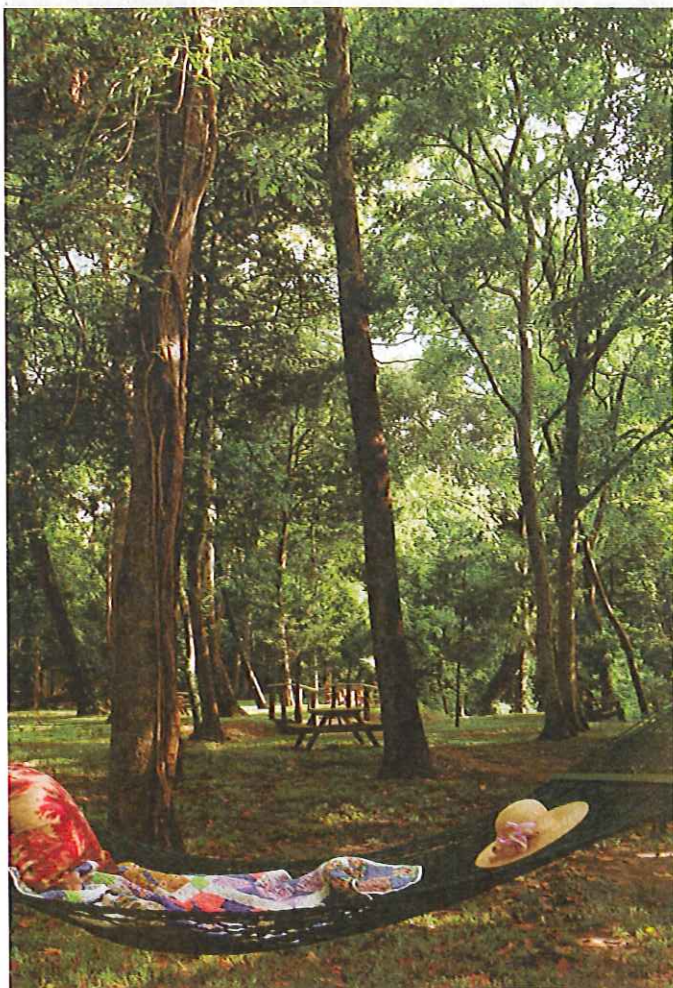




*The Park by the creek landscaped by ranch hands*

*A hammock on the path to The Park by the creek*

**SITE PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** *The stone chapel Eubanks designed for the includes a bell tower with a bell hand-cast in Italy.*



## RESOURCES

### **KATHRYN EDWARDS**

Savannah House  
8200 Washington Ave., 713.863.2948

### **EUBANKS GROUP ARCHITECTS**

3202 Argonne, 713.522.2652  
www.eubanks-architects.com

### General Contractor

#### **THEILEMANN CONSTRUCTION**

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#### **THE ORIGINAL ROUND TOP ANTIQUES FAIR**

Round Top, 512.237.4747

#### **MARBURGER FARM ANTIQUE SHOW**

Round Top, 800.947.5799

#### **WARRENTON ANTIQUES SHOW**

and dealers in surrounding fields  
along Highway 237 near  
Warrenton, Texas

