

atHome

A magazine for Upstate Living

Summer 2019

CONTINENTAL
INSPIRATION



AL FRESCO
LIVING



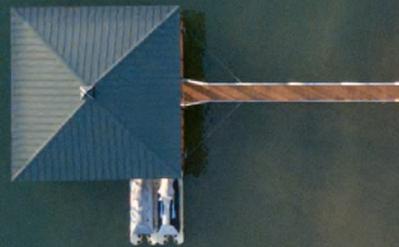
ATTRACTING
SONG BIRDS



CONTINENTAL EXPECTATIONS

/by **Brendan Blowers** / photography by **Neil Landino**

Ray Foral knows
a perfectly
built home is an
impossibility, yet
it didn't stop him
from trying on
the shore of Lake
Keowee.







The sun cast a golden glow on the shimmering water as Ray Foral, one of the founding partners and owner of Ridgeline Construction Group, took in Lake Keowee from the site of their new home construction project. This was a coveted plot of land, located at the Cliffs of Keowee Springs, part of South Carolina's "golden corner," an area prized as much for its family friendliness as its private access to the crystalline lake.

Foral knew it was an ideal spot to build a beautiful, European-inspired home; he also acknowledged that the grade and steep angle would mean moving a lot of dirt. Still, he was optimistic, excited even, after seeing the blueprints for a dwelling that called for the same materials and quality of construction practiced a hundred years ago.

The architect, Jerry Hupy, had created something Foral had scarcely seen in his twenty years in home construction. Unraveling two massive rolls of paper weighing in around ten pounds each was a complete bible of building details, right down to the final trim cut. "Everything was so well thought out," Foral says, from the Dutch-lap paneling in the foyer to the moisture-resistant cedar shakes. "It enabled us to do a good job on pricing."





The American artist Robert Rauschenberg was always in pursuit of what he called "relaxed symmetry" in his paintings, but how to achieve that in a home? Every archway, soffit, and shingle of this house was precision cut and made to fit-yet the completed picture, as a whole, never feels cold or uninviting. It welcomes the laughter of children, the tangle of fishing tackle, and the dance of playful breezes through collonades of cedar and stone.







Ridgeline believes in the benefit of meticulous planning before breaking ground. Once a bid is won and the burden shifts to the builder to produce what an architect has imagined, the adventure of material sourcing begins. Windows were ordered from Germany, shower fixtures from London, lighting was design by Pete Romaniello of Conceptual Lighting in Connecticut. Every luxury feature created extended lead time, but Foral says all of it was worth the wait.

Stones from quarries all over North Carolina began showing up and he placed each sample on the ground at the site, matching them to photos provided by the architect. Each was hand-selected for its color and quality. To tie the stonework to the shingles, solid pieces of Pennsylvania Blue Stone were shipped south, each nine-foot piece thermal treated and cut to fit above the lower terrace.

Crown molding and frames were laser-cut for the project, with the interior grill work and casing scaled and implemented for its traditional feel. Not only is this house stunning to look at, it's also solid and sturdy. The roof of just the garage is held up by one solid 76-foot long steel beam.

The home is roughly 7,000 square feet of heated space with only three bedrooms. Common areas and open rooms make up the majority of this lake house, designed for a family to enjoy fun and recreation.

No room epitomizes the active lifestyle of its occupants more than the massive garage/gym, featuring a climbing wall, badminton court, batting cage and basketball hoop. The ceiling of this recreation space is wood-paneled with a fabric backing to absorb sound. A nine-hole putting green from Heritage Turf was installed outside while the house was being built. Outside there are terraces and porches and patios, a pergola and fire-pit and in a space originally designed to store water toys now stands a guest suite. "There are very few TV's in the house," Foral says. "This property is a real-world Xbox."





Tischler windows from Germany transform from clear to frosted glass with the flip of a switch. Another example of uncompromising attention to functional details. The windows are all matching sizes and heights exhibiting a sense of measured order inside while offering a panoramic view of the beautiful liberty of great outdoors.

A flagstone water table opens onto a nine-hole putting green that dog-legs around the waterfront property. At night, Adirondack chairs are pulled up to the circular fire pit-where warming blazes dry off the remains of a day spent in and around Lake Keowee.





Two years in the making from design to completion, the challenge of implementing 300 pages of drawings into reality is a goal met. The process, Foral admits, took patience and planning. “I probably spent 40 hours on the kitchen cabinet layout and design alone,” he says.

Being so near the lake, terrace windows are fitted with remote screens and shades for the hours when natural light isn’t flooding the wire brushed wide-plank oak floors. The beauty of symmetry and line can’t be overlooked in places such as artfully bowed soffits connecting to a gently sloping roof and the footprint of the home’s indoor and outdoor spaces, nearly 13,000 square feet, are nestled inside a deep pocket of Lake Keowee’s mature trees.

The project ran a little over its intended target date, however it came in underbudget. “When you’re aiming for perfection in every detail, you might not get them all, but you’re going to get close,” Foral says. This meticulously planned and now finished home is certainly a site to behold. **atH**