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MAGAZINE

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FALL/WINTER 2019-20

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Riding High

A focus on warmth and family steers a new build at The Ford Plantation

By JEN MARIE WIGGINS

Photography by RICHARD LEO JOHNSON

DURING SOME free time on a business trip to Savannah in 2001, Jeff Fusile decided to visit The Ford Plantation. What he found was a close-knit, private community and a relaxed, Lowcountry lifestyle. He was sold — and he purchased a lot the very next weekend.

The Indiana-based Fusile family — Jeff, his wife Teresa, daughter Regina, now 19, daughter Alex, 16, her twin brother

Joe, 16, and youngest son Wade, 15 — had vacationed in Savannah for years. Jeff and Teresa knew they wanted to retire in the area, hence purchasing the lot. But their move happened much sooner than expected when Jeff received a job offer in Georgia.

“We were excited because this would allow the kids to have a connection to The Ford Plantation before they went off to

college,” Jeff says. “We also thought the experience of moving and living in such a unique place would offer opportunities they couldn’t get elsewhere.”

Plans fell into place quickly: the family would build a home at The Ford Plantation while Jeff commuted between Richmond Hill and Atlanta. The children warmly embraced the many Lowcountry activities available to them, including »



golfing, boating and swimming, plus riding and boarding their new horse, Fresco. This outdoor lifestyle ultimately served as inspiration for the design of their home, which broke ground in 2016.

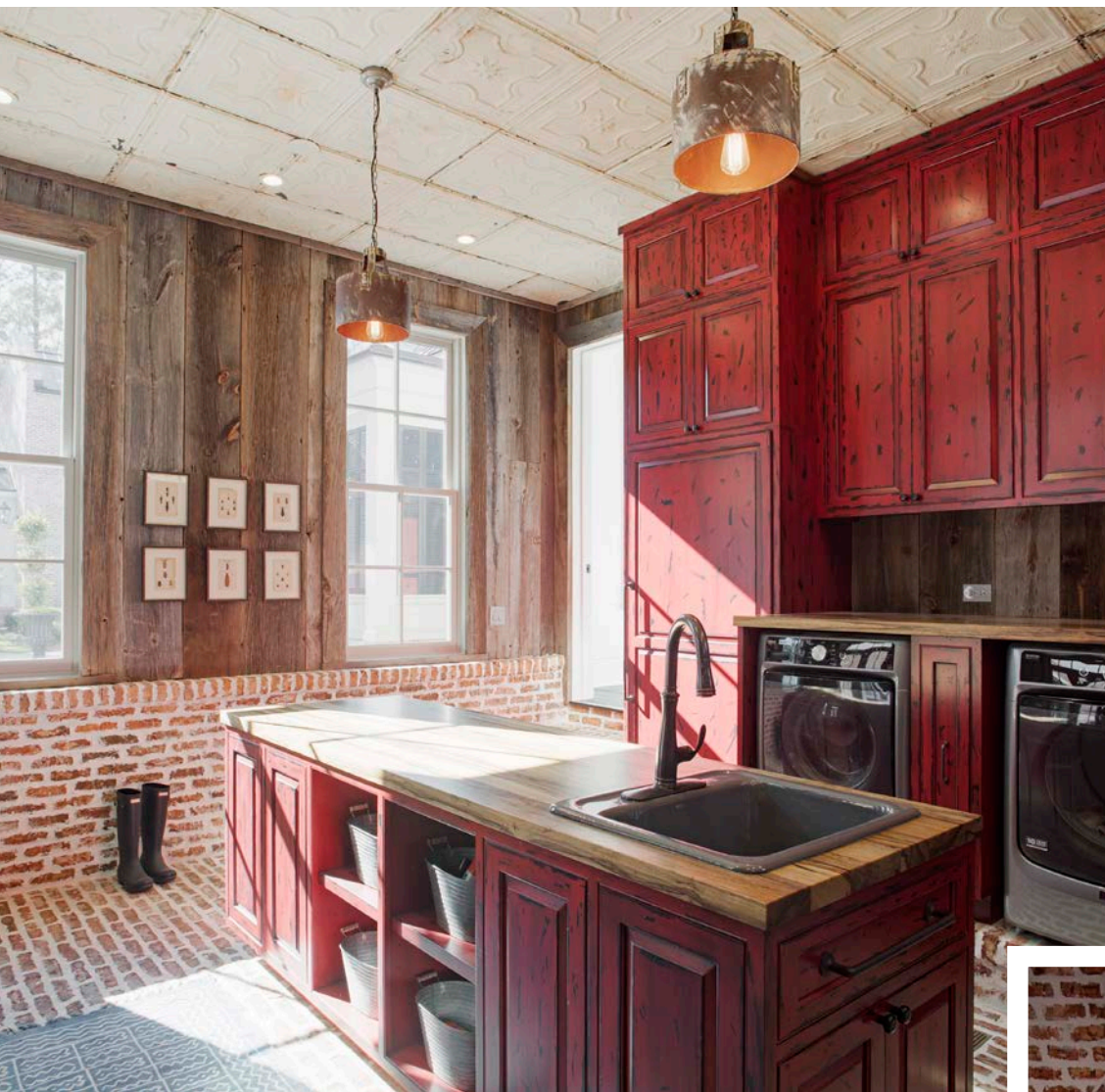
The 6,000-square-foot, 4-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom house is actually a downsize for the Fusiles. During the design process, they were mindful that their four children were already in middle and high school and would soon be out of the house. Thus, instead of building the

usual four bedrooms, they opted for two separate wings — one for the two boys, and one for the two girls. Each wing contains a large shared bedroom (about 20x40 feet) and is reminiscent of the old stone homes that Jeff grew up with in Virginia.

“We loved the idea of letting the kids share a room for a few years now, then later they will be able to come back with their own families and have plenty of space to stay together,” Jeff says. »







“We get to live in our dream house in our dream neighborhood. What could be better than that?”





Their children's personalities also play into the decor of their respective wings. While the boys' side reflects a more rustic aesthetic, with a reclaimed wood ceiling and nest chandelier over the staircase, the girls' wing takes a softer approach. From furnishings to accessories, the "sister side" showcases the girls' love of all things riding and equestrian.

Even the home's laundry and mudroom were designed with a Southern mentality and a nod to equitation. Rustic red cabinets, tin ceiling tiles, brickwork and barnwood accents mimic the feel of a carriage house, where a stable owner might clean up after his daily ride. Most other places in the home, the Fusiles chose espresso-hued, wide wood plank floors to ground the space with white furnishings and all-white walls and ceilings to keep things light and bright. »



The family is always entertaining, so they opted for five sets of French doors, which spill out onto a large covered porch. There, the kitchen and main room's space is amplified by the expansive views of Habersham Lake and The Ford Plantation Golf Course beyond.

Since both Jeff and Teresa were drawn to the aesthetic and durability of brick, it became a focal point. The moment guests step through the Fusiles'

front door, they are greeted by a dramatic brick galleyway that opens into the main room. Arched walkways and the three barrels of the main room's ceiling echo the substantial entryway and offer a striking balance of warmth and symmetry. The overall effect is stunning, and hard to pigeonhole: inside and out, the home incorporates tenets of farmhouse, colonial, European and Federalist design styles.

The masonry work throughout the home took about eight months to install, and the homeowners chose smaller antique bricks — more than 250,000 of them, all told — paired with a thicker mortar for a timeworn feel. From start to finish, the home took a year and a half to complete, but it was worth the wait.

"We get to live in our dream house in our dream neighborhood," Jeff says. "What could be better than that?" ■

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REAL HOMES

Details

Owners: Jeff and
Teresa Fusile

Year built: 2018

Lot purchased: 2001

Square footage:
6,000 square feet
plus a detached
cottage and garage

**Number of
bedrooms and
bathrooms:** 4
bedrooms and
4.5 bathrooms

Time to complete:
18 months

Cabinets; Robin
Upchurch Allen

Lighting design:
Robin Upchurch Allen

Landscape design:
Danny Nelson,
Nelson Landscaping

Hardscape design:
Ryan Shrack,
Megastructures

Electrician: Stanley
Hurd, CS Hurd
Electrical Contractors

Audio/Visual: Larry
Pawlowski, Sight &
Sound Technologies

Carpenter: Josh
Brooks, Brooks
Construction

Plumber: Adam
Moody, Hutson
Plumbing Co. Inc.

Landscaper: Danny
Nelson, Nelson
Landscaping; South
Georgia Lawn

HVAC: Chris Sturgess,
Downs Heating &
Air Conditioning

Furniture: Stephen
Anderson, Jaws
Enterprises; Robin
Upchurch Allen;
Anne Pappas

Appliances: Ferguson
Bath, Kitchen &
Lighting Gallery

Accessories: Anne
Pappas, Anne
Pappas Interiors

Brickmason:
Ryan Shrack,
Megastructures

Shutters: Palmetto
Shutters

Resources

Architects/planners:
Becky Lynch, Lynch
Associates Architects

Interior designer:
Robin Upchurch Allen;
Anne Pappas, Anne
Pappas Interiors

Contractor/builder:
Josh Brooks, Brooks
Construction

Tile/flooring: MT
Adams Tile & Stone

Paint/Wallpaper:
Paint Pros of the
Lowcountry

Windows/doors:
Toby Tift, Coastal
Sash & Door

Kitchen design:
Custom Cabinets;
Robin Upchurch Allen

Bath design: Custom

**all resources supplied by homeowners*