

Southern Living

SOUTHERN CHARM

Inspiring
Mountain,
Lake, and
Coastal
Homes

THE ONLY
WAY TO MAKE
SWEET TEA

TEXAS'
COMEBACK
BEACH TOWN

FRESH
BLACKBERRY
DESSERTS

THE JOY OF
CHOCOLATE
ICEBOX PIE

AUGUST 2022



high COUNTRY

A new build in the Blue Ridge Mountains is given
an old soul by designer Rachel Halvorson.
Her first move? Collecting vintage quilts

style

Mountain Magic
Bark siding and
natural stone
set an inviting
tone on a porch
that's wrapped
in views.



BY GRACE HAYNES PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE SCHLECHTER STYLING BY RAINA KATTELSON

FOR DESIGNER RACHEL HALVORSON,

this project was personal. After all, she has spent her whole life visiting this close-knit North Carolina community in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her family. When a Nashville couple was searching for a trusted guide to give a dose of rustic charm to their new build in the High Country, they were certain that Halvorson was the right person to bring their vision to life. “Here, there’s an open-door policy. I grew up going in and out of friends’ houses before leaving for hikes, so I really got to know the homes,” says Halvorson. “It’s kind of like a summer camp.” The homeowners also called on Charlotte-based architect Don Duffy to design the rambling mountain house to accommodate their visiting children and grandchildren. When it comes to giving new construction a long-standing appearance, Duffy offers this wise advice: “Look at what old homes have, and then bring in that rich palette of authentic materials.” Here, he opted for bark siding as well as stone fireplaces. Halvorson knew how the interiors needed to function: durable enough to withstand muddy hiking boots, spacious enough for entertaining friends and houseguests, and cozy enough for the couple to feel comfortable when staying there by themselves. “I really wanted to decorate it in a way that seemed undecorated,” she says of her approach to creating a relaxed, layered-over-time aesthetic.



DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK

“It wouldn’t make sense to walk into a bright, all-white house here,” Halvorson says. “There’s something comforting and nostalgic about keeping certain parts of the interior dark and woodsy.” Taking a design cue from some of the older homes in the community, she clad the entry in chestnut paneling. “In some houses, it’s everywhere—on the ceilings and the walls,” says the designer, who used it more sparingly to establish a sense of place right at the front door.



SIT AND STAY AWHILE

Since the back of the house faces the scenery, Halvorson oriented the outdoor spaces around the view. "It's a very social porch," she notes. The wraparound design provides several conversation spots for chatting in front of the fireplace, relaxing in the living area, or taking in the landscape from rocking chairs. "Because it's where everyone hangs out, I thought, 'How can I fit as much seating as possible?'" she explains.

