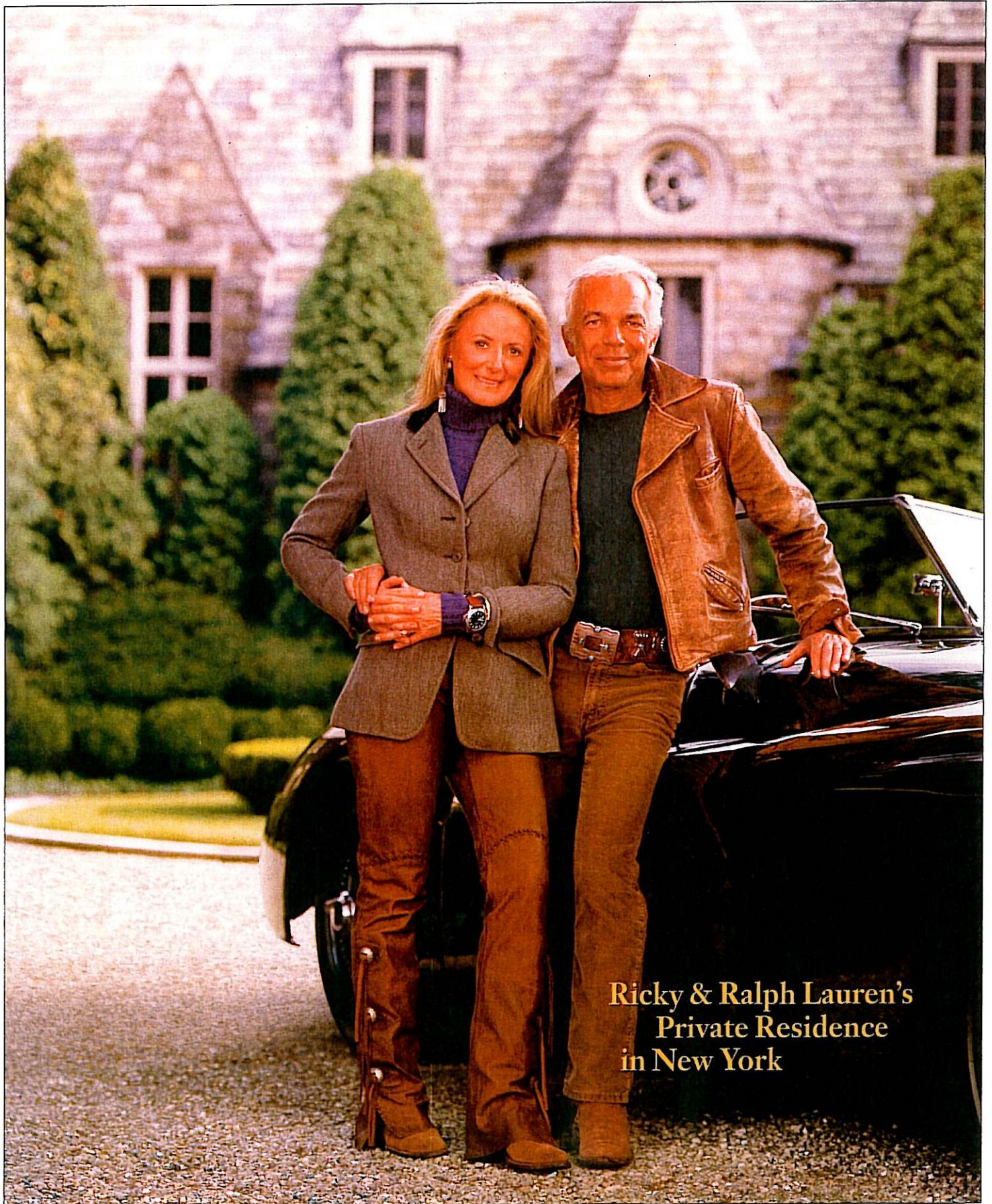


# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF INTERIOR DESIGN

NOVEMBER 2004



Ricky & Ralph Lauren's  
Private Residence  
in New York



# Homesteading in Georgia

Broadfield Plantation Re-creates the Classic Cracker—and Then Some

Architecture by Summerour & Associates/Interior Design by Lisa Torbett, ASID

Text by Wendy Moonan/Photography by Mary E. Nichols

**B**ILL JONES HAS A REAL love of American history," says Atlanta architect Keith Summerour. The fourth-generation head of the Sea Island Company, which owns 60,000 acres on Sea Island, Georgia, and the coastal areas surrounding it, A. W. "Bill" Jones III is now refurbishing and expanding The Cloister, the resort hotel designed by Addison Mizner in 1928.

At 46, Jones has been a lifelong student of the flora, fauna and architecture of this part of Georgia. A few years ago he and his wife, Sally, commissioned Summerour to design a new residence on Broadfield Plantation, their private 4,400-acre hunting preserve in Camden. Jones wanted it in a local style called classic cracker, which was a first for Summerour, a dedicated classicist.

"I've always admired Georgia's vernacular architecture, and I thought it would be appropriate here," Jones says. "This architecture has almost disappeared from the landscape," adds Summerour, also a native Georgian. "Bill wanted to preserve the idea of it."

Cracker was the style of house built by the rugged homesteaders who settled in north Florida and south Georgia in the mid- to late 1800s. These pioneers crafted their

*continued on page 148*



The Camden, Georgia, plantation of A. W. "Bill" Jones III and his wife, Sally, draws on a 19th-century regional style known as classic cracker. ABOVE: Cedar driftwood posts and railings enclose the lodge's front porch. LEFT: Metal roofs are typical of cracker style.





LEFT: The library is one of multiple buildings that make up Broadfield Plantation. Cypress trees found on the property were used for paneling. Sofa from Beacon Hill.

BELOW LEFT: Salvaged 19th-century Savannah gray brick was laid for floors. The countertops and sink are from Kohler. Cowtan & Tout drapery fabric, with Kravet trim.

*continued from page 146*

one-story, gabled houses with the materials at hand—pine, cedar and cypress—as they herded cattle and cleared land to plant cotton and citrus. (The term *cracker*, of uncertain derivation, may be an adaptation of *craic*—Gaelic for “entertaining conversation”—used by Scotch-Irish settlers in Appalachia.)

Their houses, roofed in shingles or corrugated metal, were simple wood-framed cabins raised off the ground on piers to avoid damp (and alligators), with big porches to catch the breeze. They were designed for hot, humid summers, with wide halls and tall windows. The kitchen was relegated to a separate building out back, so it wouldn’t heat up the house (or burn it down).

The interiors bear no resemblance to a cracker house; they have a European aesthetic, with upholstery, draperies and an eclectic collection of antiques.



The Joneses’ 6,000-square-foot house is a luxurious take on the cracker farmhouse. “It’s the wealthy man’s version,” comments Summerour. True to form, Jones’s house is one story and raised, with wrap-around porches, but it is approached via a quarter-mile-long allée of live oaks on a driveway of crushed oyster shells. Here, the roof is standing-seam copper, and the heart-pine siding is reclaimed from old barns.

Jones was planning the house in his head for a long time. “I had a very good idea of what I wanted,” he says. “For the posts on the porches, I went around the property picking out the straightest eastern red cedars. Then I laid them out, to choose

*continued on page 150*



*continued from page 148*

which post should go where."

He also recovered cypress from the property and used it for paneling, and ceilings are built from pecky-cypress logs salvaged from rivers. This was Mizner's favorite wood (he used it at The Cloister), and it is ubiquitous in Mizner houses in Palm Beach.

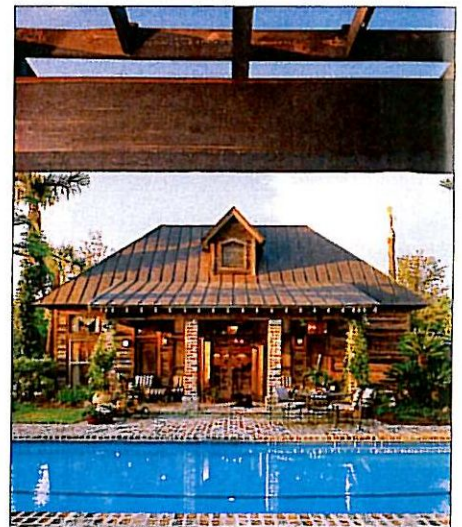
Lisa Torbett, a designer for The Cloister, put together the interiors and, with Jones, fur-

nished the porches with wood ceiling fans and a collection of hickory chairs that Jones "picked up here and there," he says. They decorated one side porch with an antique bench, a pine-straw basket, African shields, carved wood farm tools, an old canoe chair and a collection of vintage shotguns.

The kitchen floor, pool surround and chimneys are fashioned from gray Savannah brick, which Jones had been

The plantation "reflects Bill's sporting lifestyle," says interior designer Lisa Torbett (below). **BELOW LEFT:** Still life paintings by Christophe Goodstein hang in the poolhouse.

**BOTTOM:** A copper roof tops the poolhouse and painting studio, which was constructed with reclaimed-heart-pine siding and Savannah gray-brick columns.



salvaging from torn-down buildings and stockpiling for years. "The clay ran out after the Civil War," Summerour explains. "Now people prize the vintage brick."

Like the early plantations, Broadfield is composed of a series of structures. To create a sense of intimacy on the vast property, Summerour clustered the main cabin, the poolhouse and painting studio, and the library around a courtyard dominated by a swimming

*continued on page 152*



*continued from page 150*

pool. Slightly removed are two guesthouses, and quite a distance away are the farm buildings: barns, dog kennels, hog pens, meat lockers and a working smokehouse.

The interiors bear no resemblance to a cracker house; they have a European aesthetic, with upholstery, passementerie, draperies and the Joneses' eclectic collection of antiques. "I knew Bill's vision," says Torbett, who artfully blended family heirlooms—such as a sugar box in the master bedroom and a hutch table in the poolhouse—with his myriad collections, including "turkey paintings, old Georgia and South Carolina history books, English creamware,

antique furniture and turkey calls, a form of folk art."

In the cypress-paneled library, Torbett mixed an antique wrought iron chandelier with Windsor chairs, a Moroccan stool and antique porcelain guinea hens. In the master bedroom, she placed a linen press and a four-poster on an Oriental rug, then decorated the mantel with a tortoiseshell box and a pair of Staffordshire figurines.

So it goes all over the house—upholstered pieces, favorite paintings, antiques and precious accessories, often from Europe. "Of my three houses, it's my favorite," Jones remarks. "When I'm driving here and I get close, I can feel the stress leaving." □



**ABOVE:** Tole beds and antique sconces give a guest room an Old World feel. Greeff green velvet and drapery print. Schumacher bed-skirt stripe. Kravet drapery trim.

**BELOW:** The architect, Keith Summerour, arranged the poolhouse, library and main cabin around the pool, which serves as a courtyard and "creates a sense of intimacy," he remarks.

