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EDITOR'S WELCOME



M. Lindsay Bierman

As a young architect, I admired avant-garde design but advocated traditional building principles as vital to neighborhood planning and placemaking. This month, I can practice what I've preached with the debut of the *Southern Living* Inspired Communities program. To explain, I'm sharing a Q&A that I did with Wofford College student Sari Imber for our blog, *The Daily South*. Creative talent runs in Sari's family—she's the daughter of the great San Antonio-based architect Michael Imber.

Lindsay

No. 1: For almost 25 years, *Southern Living* has designed and built beautiful Idea Houses to bring the *Southern Living* ideal to life. What is your favorite SL Idea House and why?

I'm proud of the collection as a whole because it represents a great diversity of vernacular Southern styles. But if I had to choose one for my own home, I'd take what we built last year in Nashville. I love its rustic-meets-refined, gentleman's-farmhouse vibe.

No. 2: You earned a BA in history from Georgetown and a master's in architecture from the University of Virginia. How would you say your love of history and your passion for great design have influenced your idea of a quintessential community?

Living in the heart of Georgetown profoundly shaped my personal taste and vision. I value the harmonious mix of building types, the gracious human scale, and the sense of civic grandeur and beauty amid the romance of secret gardens and inner sanctums—all magically infused with the patina of age and a distinct Southern drawl. The same could be said about

the Lawn at U.Va. I consider Jefferson's masterful integration of public and private spaces one of America's greatest models of urban and community planning—right up there with iconic cities like Charleston and Savannah.

No. 3: Fill in the blank: I can feel at home anywhere in the South as long as I have... a deep porch and lush garden.

No. 4: Three things that make a community lovable: Residents who express a passionate pride of place, a tight-knit architectural fabric that reinforces an authentic sense of place, and public spaces that cultivate a deep connection to nature.

No. 5: On a scale of one to "Heavens to Betsy!," how important are using local materials and choosing regional architectural styles to creating a strong sense of place? Oh Betsy, for sure! In more and more places you go these days, you find no *there* there. You see the same chain stores cropping up on every strip and soulless suburban sprawl spreading out from every

town, draining the life from Main Street until it suffocates and dies. In the South especially, a sense of place roots and defines us.

No. 6: How would you define a *Southern Living* Inspired Community?

An SL Inspired Community embodies timeless design, planning, and construction principles that never go out of style. I could get into all kinds of specifics about the importance of scale and proportion and materials, but it really all boils down to this: No matter how great a community looks when first completed, it can be considered a success only if its buildings and landscape improve with age.

No. 7: What are you most looking forward to in launching the *Southern Living* Inspired Communities program? Leading by example.

No. 8: Imagine this scenario: You're retired. It's a lazy Sunday in March. You have a pitcher of sweet tea and a loyal Labrador retriever by your side. All you need is a wraparound porch, a great view, and the perfect neighbors.

If you had to choose, which SL Inspired Community would you pack up and move to and why?

I always thought I'd end up back in Virginia, on the outskirts of a town like Staunton or Charlottesville. But lately I've been longing for the Lowcountry—so I could be quite happy living in a modern Mayberry like Habersham in Beaufort, South Carolina, one of the most beautiful towns in America.

No. 9: How will this program change the way readers daydream about their own future home sweet home? It allows our readers to engage with the brand like never before, by actually living it. Simply choose your SL House Plan, and hire an SL Custom Builder to build it in an SL Inspired Community near you. Then decorate with SL products and landscape your yard with SL plants. Serve no-fail SL recipes at your housewarming...and so on. I don't expect anyone to take it to that extreme, but this program will radically simplify some of the major design decisions that make building a home one of life's most stressful events.

No. 10: Favorite part about living in the South? My job as Steward in Chief of this beloved, iconic brand. 🍷

FIND OUT MORE

Visit southernlivinginspiredcommunities.com for details. Chances are, there's one near you, but if not, there may be soon!

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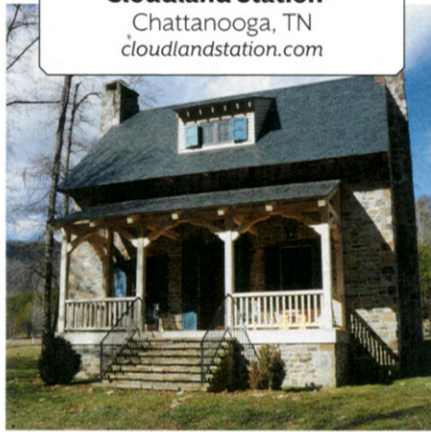
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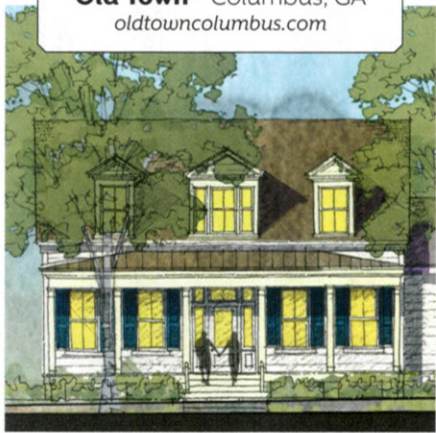
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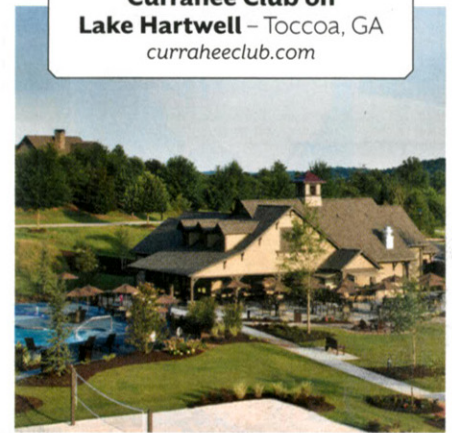
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