

# STABLE VIEW

## *A Gathering Place*

*Story by Susan Victor // Photography by Shelly Marshall Schmidt*

*Design by Sue Shannon and Susan Victor*

First-time visitors arriving at Stable View located in Aiken, South Carolina, will recognize immediately that they have entered a first-class equestrian facility. What is not apparent at first glance is what takes this unique property and venture from first-class to world-class. The barns and stables, state-of-the-art arenas, and newly constructed multipurpose pavilion place Stable View in an equestrian class of its own, one of only 14 chosen by the United States Equestrian Federation for use by high performance teams. Earlier this year, the United States Eventing Team used Stable View for its final practice site before going on to win the gold medal at the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru.

Dig a little deeper and you begin to realize that it is the emphasis on community, environmental preservation and ecotourism that makes Stable View much more than an equestrian venue.



**"For me there is something almost spiritual about this property and the way it feels. It invites people in. I knew immediately this was right, this was the one."**

*Cyndy Olliff*



**W**hen owners Barry and Cyndy Olliff initially purchased the property in 2010, they had no idea it would morph into not only an equestrian mecca, but also a flora and fauna ecological preserve and a Native American archaeological find. "Cyndy and I never said, 'Let's go develop a legacy,' " said Barry. "It all came about through a fortuitous set of circumstances, good partnerships, an open and welcoming community, and most of all, our willingness to go where the land led us."

They were initially drawn to the land by Cyndy's passion for horses. In Aiken for the first time during Hunt Week in 2008, Cyndy fell in love with the horse-loving community and urged Barry to join her the following year. As is their habit when traveling, they toured the area to explore their surroundings. "Almost immediately I recognized there was an opportunity here that hadn't been capitalized on," explained Barry. "We were in the middle of the financial crises and we toured several equestrian communities that had sunk most of their resources into developing the infrastructure required for the homebuyers and then were unable to complete the equestrian amenities like stables, arenas, trails, and paddocks."

The Olliffs spent every weekend for six weeks looking at properties; nothing really clicked until they found Stable View. "It felt right," said Cyndy. "For me there is something almost spiritual about this property and the way it feels. It invites people in. I knew immediately this was right, this was the one."





*The most recent additions to the vast selection of rental accommodations on the Stable View property are the "Hunt Box" apartments that feature a main floor efficiency style layout and an open loft bedroom with two queen beds. Each apartment is uniquely designed and represents the character of the overall property. Comfortable sitting areas open to fully equipped kitchenettes. There are quiet desk nooks in every loft bedroom that feature a peaceful view of the tree-lined property.*



*Many of the efficiency apartments are located within the actual confines of the barns that have the stalls for the renters' horses. The Hildago efficiency above is beside a series of stalls; riders literally live with their horses!*



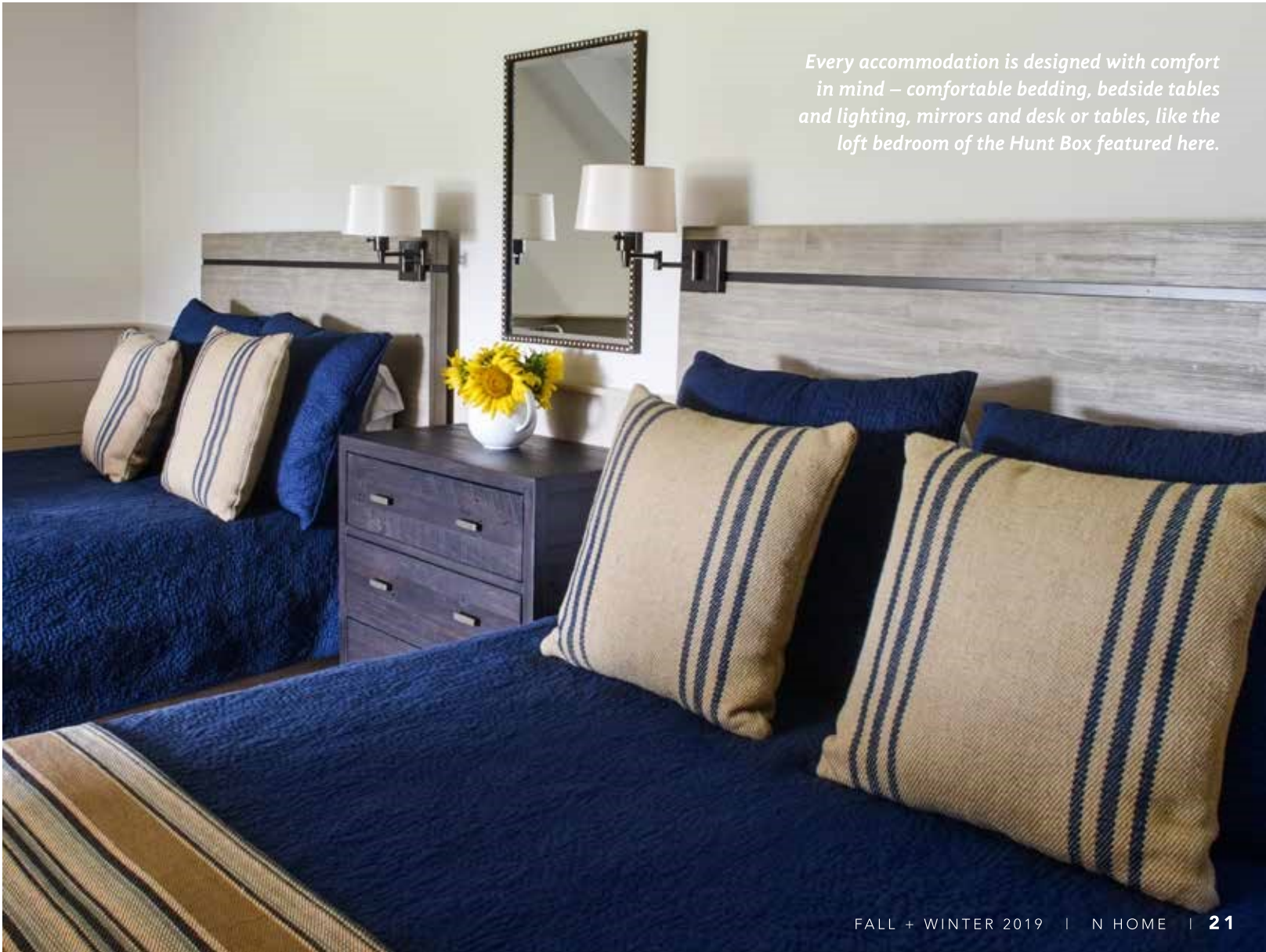
In the beginning, the Olliffs focused on developing Stable View with the equestrian amenities they believed would be a big draw to the Aiken community. "We thought to ourselves, 'What does Aiken need? What are people willing to travel for and what could make this place a destination spot?' The answer was more than just a show arena. What they really want is an experience. They want to make a weekend of it, bring their family. That is what drove our development of accommodations," stated Barry. "We started with the equestrian focus, branching immediately into short and long-term rentals for that population. Then we decided to make available some lots that could be developed into on-site homes. Actually the home that Cyndy and I live in now was originally supposed to be a spec home, but midway through the process we fell in love with the design and the site and made it our own."

The Olliffs credit Stable View's success to their partnerships developed from the beginning with Todd Gaul of Designer Builders and Sue Shannon and Susan Victor of Nandina. Although the Nandina team was originally chosen based on recommendations, it has an ongoing role in the development of Stable View because the Olliffs have come to trust them,

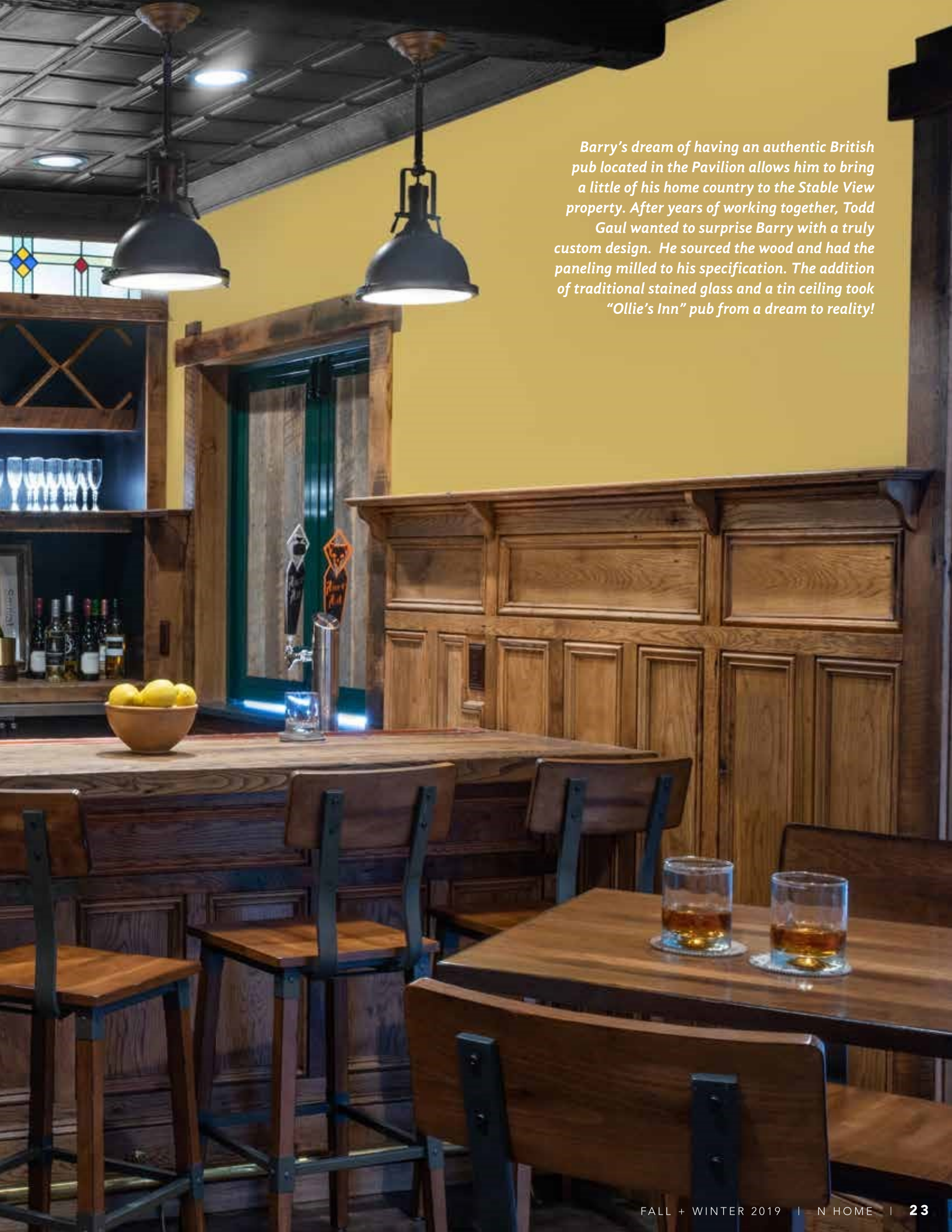
and their commitment to the goals of the facility. Sue recalled that the Olliffs approached Nandina to help design unique accommodations that would be both affordable and beautiful for both short and long-term rentals. "From barn apartments to single room efficiencies connected directly to the stall that house their horse, every space has its own personality while remaining true to the overall design of the entire property. Throughout the process, if Susan and I came up with some new idea or design option, Todd was there to execute it," she said. "And when we took on the design of what became Barry and Cyndy's personal home, the Olliffs were always willing to take chances and move in new design directions."

As for Todd Gaul, he was very familiar with the property when the Olliffs purchased it, having built the original barn for the previous Stable View owner. That barn is now the familiar, cohesive feature of the venue and the focal point of the Stable View logo. It was also serendipitous to find that he and the Olliffs were on the same page when it came to building a premier equestrian property with state-of-the-art facilities for all breeds of horses and their owners; all of this has cemented his role in the Stable View team.

*Every accommodation is designed with comfort in mind – comfortable bedding, bedside tables and lighting, mirrors and desk or tables, like the loft bedroom of the Hunt Box featured here.*





The image shows the interior of a rustic pub. In the foreground, there's a wooden table with two glasses of amber liquid. Behind it is a bar with a wooden countertop, a bowl of lemons, and a beer tap. The background features a wall with extensive wooden paneling and a doorway. Two large, dark, dome-shaped pendant lights hang from a dark, paneled ceiling. A shelf with various bottles is visible on the left.

*Barry's dream of having an authentic British pub located in the Pavilion allows him to bring a little of his home country to the Stable View property. After years of working together, Todd Gaul wanted to surprise Barry with a truly custom design. He sourced the wood and had the paneling milled to his specification. The addition of traditional stained glass and a tin ceiling took "Ollie's Inn" pub from a dream to reality!*

*The expansive great room in the Olliffs' home was inspired by a modern Australian farmhouse design with white walls and a subtle palette of gray, black and white, with pops of red. The sitting area features an uncluttered English arm sofa, a tufted bench and modern wing chairs with an exposed frame, all by Lee Industries. A custom patchwork rug by Nomadic Traders grounds the area and adds a sophisticated feel to the farmhouse.*





"Barry is the kind of partner who expects you to stay on budget and time frame," noted Gaul, "but once the trust develops, he recognizes value and creativity. He is the kind of partner who makes this job fun! He might approach me and say, 'I have an idea. Can we do it?' "

Each new phase of the project continues to expand the scope of the property and its facilities. The recent addition of a LEAD Gold Certified 15,000-square-foot multipurpose pavilion is spot-on with the Stable View commitment to sustainability and environmental protection. With its high tech amenities and rustic, open-beam, light-filled event spaces – not to mention a one-of-a-kind, custom-designed British pub – the Pavilion expands the reach of Stable View outside the equestrian community to corporate events and amazing destination weddings.

The latest additions to the long list of on-site rentals are the Hunt Boxes. These communal spaces offer places to meet, eat, do laundry, etc. "The tag line of Stable View is a constant reminder that this property is first and foremost 'A Gathering Place,' " emphasized Barry. He refers to this concept as the driving force for Stable View's growth. "We have always believed that building strong partnerships allowed us to see Stable View in a much larger context. Initially we focused on the

equestrian side, and collaborated with some of the best minds in the industry, like Captain Mark Phillips and Boyd Martin (Pan Am 2019 Gold Medalist in Eventing), but we realized that as much as we are committed to this specific group, we are just as committed to community, diversity, and the environment. We want to build something that will support this land and the multiple communities that enjoy it."

As for the ecotourism side of Stable View, Cyndy's strong passion about the environment has led to successful efforts to restore the bluebird population and the habitat of screech owls. "In addition, Kestrels have started nesting, and an endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker has naturally migrated to Stable View. This place is becoming a birdwatcher's haven," she beamed.

Recently, the Olliffs have commissioned flora and fauna audits for the property and have brought in an archaeology expert to identify and date the vast number of arrowheads discovered around the property. One arrowhead alone dates back 15,000 years. "Finding so many arrowheads proves to me that Stable View was historically a gathering place. We are just here to preserve it for the next generation!" exclaimed Barry.





▲ The cobalt blue, black, and bright white color combination of the master bedroom is refreshing and soothing at the same time.

◀ The open concept kitchen has a feature wall of subway tile and open shelving to display Cyndy's vast collection of Fiestaware ceramic china. The island was custom-designed and built from reclaimed lumber, and the countertops are classic soapstone. Currey & Co. pendants and dining room fixtures enhance the rustic modern vibe of the interiors.

**“When we took on the interior design of what is now Barry and Cyndy’s personal home, the trust and collaboration had come full circle. The Olliffs were always willing to take chances and move in new design directions. This house remains one of my all-time favorites, and Susan’s as well!”**

*Sue Shannon, Designer*



**“The home that Cyndy and I live in on the property was originally supposed to be a spec home, but midway through the process we fell in love with the design and the site and made it our own!”**

*Barry Olliff*



*Custom features throughout Barry and Cyndy's personal home provide the unique character and welcoming interiors they love.*