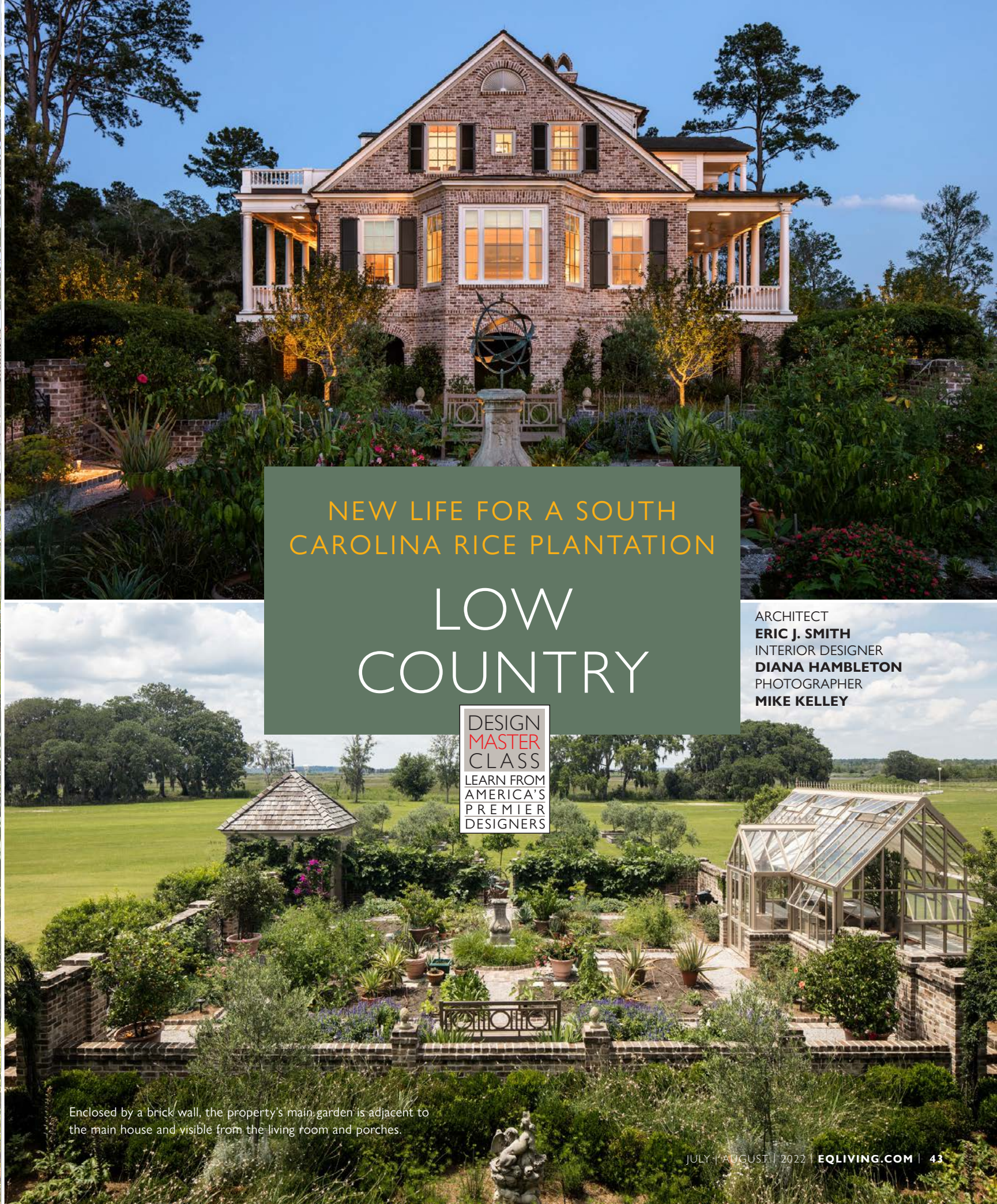


The main house features deep porches along the front and back facades, exterior staircases to the first floor, and high brick arches to protect the home during hurricane or flood conditions.



NEW LIFE FOR A SOUTH
CAROLINA RICE PLANTATION

LOW COUNTRY

ARCHITECT
ERIC J. SMITH
INTERIOR DESIGNER
DIANA HAMBLETON
PHOTOGRAPHER
MIKE KELLEY

DESIGN
MASTER
CLASS
LEARN FROM
AMERICA'S
PREMIER
DESIGNERS

Enclosed by a brick wall, the property's main garden is adjacent to the main house and visible from the living room and porches.

THE OWNERS of this Low Country plantation called upon **ARCHITECT ERIC J. SMITH** to design a primary residence where they could spend their retirement years, as well as several outbuildings, five in all, in the local vernacular of the region. Eric's goal was to create a new family compound that would feel as if it had always been there.

Originally part of a larger antebellum rice plantation, owners used the property for hunting, logging, and farm life over the past century. The land still had traces of a network of dikes for channeling water from the river into the various rice fields. The dikes, although in disrepair, were in part what made the property so attractive to the husband. Once he acquired the land, he began a program of restoration so that he could regulate the water's depth in various dikes and parts of the marshland, creating a more complex habitat to attract a greater variety of birds.

Just as the couple reclaimed the ancient dikes for contemporary conservation, they sought to use the Low Country's historical architectural vocabulary, adapting it for today's living.

The main house demonstrates how beautifully the local architecture's characteristic elements still respond to this geography

and climate. Eric situated the house at the edge of a field amid ancient live oaks and pine trees, overlooking both the restored dikes and a wide expanse of water and sky. This southwest-facing location was close to the water and promised beautiful sunsets and gentle breezes. It also meant the first floor had to be elevated more than eight feet above the ground to meet local regulations based on hurricane storm surges.

Eric and his team took inspiration from some of the area's earliest homes and built a foundation of raised brick arches. This approach endowed the home with elegance and solidity while at the same time allowing any floodwaters to pass underneath. (In fact, the house survived hurricanes Irma and Matthew without damage.) The arches also allow air to flow underneath the house for cooling during the long, hot, humid summers.

In Eric's opinion, the homes best suited for hosting extended family are ones that also let everyone have their own space. In full agreement, the husband suggested that Eric plan a generous guest suite, but not in the main house; rather in a wing attached to it by a covered, open-air porch. Knowing how much they desired tranquility in the main house, Eric added vestibules with sliding doors outside the master

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Top: The winding staircase in the main house features a corbel detail, designed by Eric J. Smith, based on the wave motif often seen in sea captains' homes.

Working in collaboration with interior designer Diana Hambleton, the furniture and color palette of the living room are in harmony with the architecture.



An old carriage house inspired the pool house, which features a wide-arched central walkway, shingle roof, and pergola.

Live oak and pecan trees border the secluded pool.





The game house is clad in sinker cypress clapboard and trim, enabling it to age naturally over time. Inside, it is equipped with a billiard table, board games, and other amusements and serves as a place to gather before and after a day of hunting.



The dining room in the cook house features a large fireplace that evokes a cooking hearth from an earlier time.



Eric envisioned the cook house as a separate building where the homeowners could entertain guests.



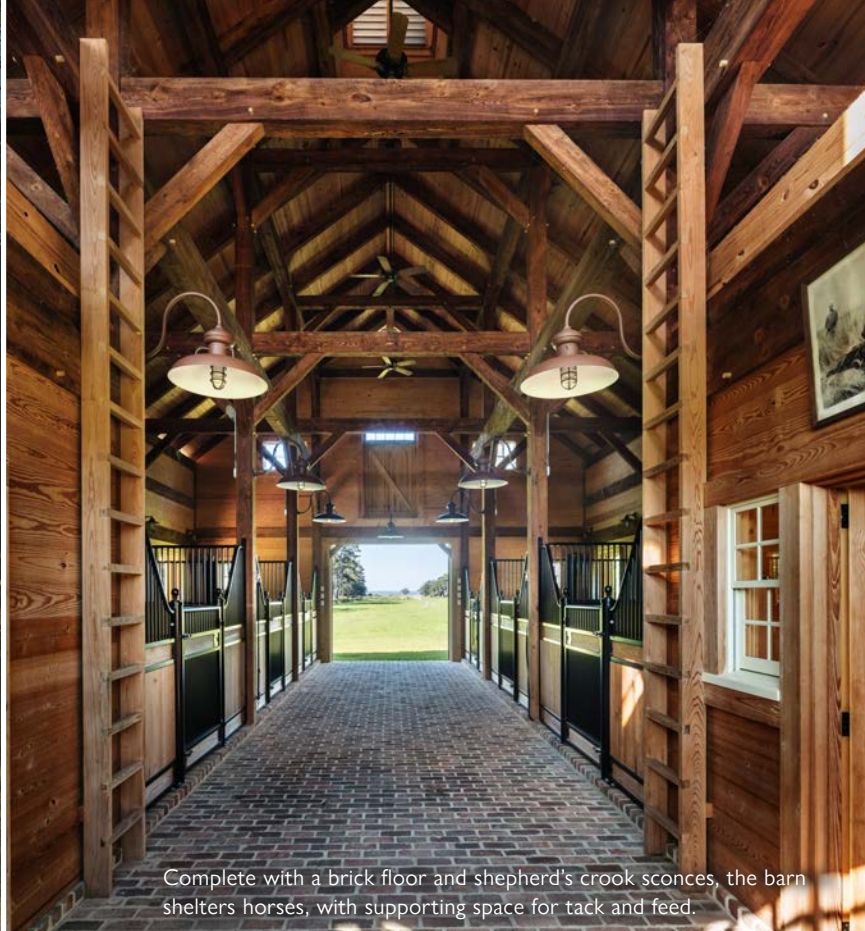
After dinner or on a non-hunting afternoon, the game room serves as the perfect meeting space for family and friends to enjoy the large sitting room, bar, pool table, TV, raised fireplace, and sunsets on the rear porch.



A small prep kitchen supports the dining room.



The horse barn includes spaces for tack and feed, as well as an office for the estate manager. To achieve a 19th-century feel, Eric J. Smith called upon the same Vermont-based timber wrights who worked on the game house.



Complete with a brick floor and shepherd's crook sconces, the barn shelters horses, with supporting space for tack and feed.



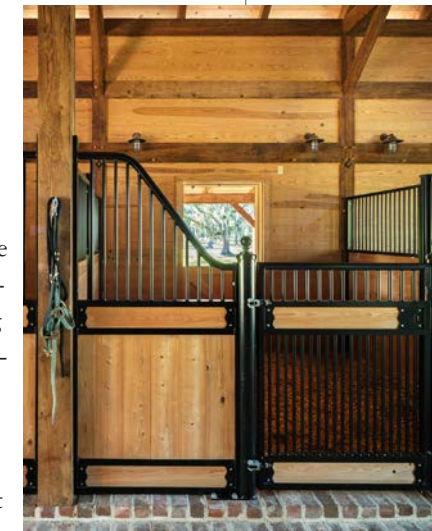
The extended roofs on either side of this classic timber barn create loafing sheds, which provide shaded areas to wash down the horses.

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bedroom to further insulate their rooms from the patter of high-spirited children.

While there are several areas in the main house for casual dining, the couple requested that Eric forgo a formal dining room and instead design a “cook house,” a small, separate outbuilding nearby. When they entertain on a larger scale, they have drinks with guests in the living room or on the porch before walking down a winding gravel path through beautifully landscaped grounds to the cook house. With the capacity to seat up to 14 guests, Eric modeled the cook house on the summer kitchen, a building type that was once quite common along the eastern seaboard that separated the functions and risk of fire from the main house.

With its rustic, natural cypress facade, working shutters, and bishop’s cap chimneys (a traditional Low Country feature that prevents rain from going down the chimney), the game house serves many functions. Part entertainment space, part hunting support, and part office for the husband, it also has an exercise room. The hub for activities before and at the end of every hunting outing, the game house is where the group meets to pick up or drop off their equipment and gear. After dinner or on a non-hunting afternoon, family and guests can meet here to enjoy its large sitting room, bar, pool table,



TV, raised fireplace, and sunsets on the rear porch.

The horse barn includes spaces for tack and feed, as well as an office for the plantation manager. To achieve the feel that the barn dated to the 19th century, Eric called upon the same timber wrights from Vermont who had worked on the game house. A significant challenge was engineering the structure to meet the hurricane codes and conceal all of the necessary steel connections, preserving the look of a true timber frame. The timbers were cut, adzed, hewn, fit, and pre-assembled in North Springfield, Vermont, then disassembled, labeled, numbered, and shipped 950 miles to the site, where they were re-assembled by the same team. The barn is the result of a great deal of effort, which successfully creates the sense of age, handwork, and custom joinery.

Eric hopes that, due to the attention he and his team paid to the siting, materials, style, and detailing of each building, guests arriving today will assume that all of these structures have been here for many years, maybe a century or more. This historically informed, modern compound, conceived for a 21st-century couple and their family and friends, treats all who visit to a remarkable Low Country experience.

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