

An award-winning musician and his family have made a historic home near Nashville into their respite

# Peacefield

INTERIOR DESIGN BY *Rachel Halvorson*  
ARCHITECTURE BY *Wade Weissmann*

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Opening page: For their home in Franklin, Tennessee, Lauren and Chris Tomlin bought the front porch rockers at Cracker Barrel, a chain of rest stops throughout the South. These pages: The dining chairs and the Oushak rug came from the Tomlins' previous home. The farmhouse table is an antique and the multi-lamp chandelier was purchased with the house. Favorite family heirloom pieces include the hutch and the silver service. The draperies are Fabricut.

In the library that houses the homeowners' collection of antique hymnals, a settee by Lee Industries and vintage French salon chairs are upholstered in fabrics by Mark Alexander. The bronze and glass coffee table is by Lucy Smith Designs, and the drapery fabric is Rose Tarlow's *Trieste*.





Left: In the kitchen, vintage-look hardware from Rocky Mountain Hardware complements the log cabin chinking on the walls. The light fixture is from Lowcountry Originals. The island is painted with Sherwin-Williams's Agreeable Gray. The range is by Wolf and the gooseneck faucet is from Waterworks. The wall color is Benjamin Moore's China White. This page: On the screened-in porch, a vintage table is surrounded by a Lee Industries dining bench and a Janus et Cie Arbor dining chair. Pillows on bench and chair cushion are Perennials.



This page: The headboard and bed surround were purchased from the previous homeowners, because their soft fabrics and pale tones fit in perfectly with Lauren Tomlin's vision for her house. Bedding is from Matteo. Opposite: In her master bath, the ceiling is painted a shade of pale blue, from Benjamin Moore, that is popular on porches throughout the South. The pendant in the water closet is from Waterworks.



**AS ONE OF** the top names in contemporary Christian music, Grammy winner Chris Tomlin spends months at a time on the road—sleeping on tour busses, eating lousy food, and missing his wife, Lauren, and their two young daughters. It's no wonder, then, that when the last gig has been played, all he really wants is to go *home*.

For the last few years, that home has been the Franklin, Tennessee, property the Tomlins call "Peacefield," history buff Chris's homage to President John Adams, who called his Massachusetts farm by the same name in the 1770s.

Peacefield is an apt name for these twenty-five acres of rolling hills that feature graceful trees and a calm, beautiful house at its center. But the process of acquiring the place wasn't exactly relaxing—even though it started as a lark.

"Chris is a Zillow addict," his wife jokes, referencing the popular online real estate site, "and he just kind of stumbled on this house." The listing's link was inactive, meaning the property had been sold. But the Tomlins—who were about to build a brand-new house in a nearby development—decided there was no harm in pursuing it anyway.

"We drove over," Lauren recalls, "and left a note in the mailbox saying, 'If you ever want to sell, please be in touch.' We figured it would be years, if ever, before we heard back."

To the Tomlins' delight, though, the owners actually were considering selling. But then they weren't. And then they weren't sure. "It was six months of courting them while we put our other building plans on hold," recalls Lauren. "Notes and emails back and forth, hesitations, negotiations...until they finally agreed to sell to us."

After moving in and living in the house for a while, the Tomlins realized that as much as they adored the place, it didn't quite suit their day-to-day lives, so they hired architect Wade Weissmann to update the structure without sacrificing its charm—or its history, which pre-dates the Civil War. Originally built as a settler's cabin near Hartsville, Tennessee, in 1830, the house was subsequently disassembled, moved to Franklin, and expanded somewhat over the years. Through the relocation and modifications, many of the original elements, including the "chinking" characteristic of log cabins, remained in place, lending the house its unique character.

It was that historic character that drove interior designer Rachel Halvorson's plans for the home's décor. Together,

Halvorson and Weissmann made sure the newer portions of the house feel as if they had always been part of the original building. So, while the kitchen was enlarged and modernized, it is in keeping with the rest of the structure, thanks to thoughtful choices of finishes and hardware. In the expanded master suite, the newer elements—a dressing room for Chris, a private bath for Lauren—look as if they might have been built with the original cabin. "We were specific in the materials," says Halvorson. "For example, in the dressing rooms, we have a light *strié* effect with the paint to make it look more worn."

Halvorson's choice of furnishings also nods to the past without being hamstrung by history. Where she could, she incorporated furniture from the Tomlins' previous homes; however, when she felt it was appropriate, she urged the couple to give away or sell existing pieces and choose something else. Such was the case with a formal dining table the designer replaced with a more casual farmhouse-style piece. "The old table was beautiful," the designer says, "but this just isn't a house for anything too fancy."

Opportunities for relaxed dining abound not just indoors but also on the screened-in porch and out back in the garden, decorated simply so as not to distract from views of the property. "One of the things Rachel really understood about me," says the homeowner, "was that I don't want my house to compete with nature; I want it to be an extension of what is around me." Those surroundings provide not only lovely things to look at, but a beautiful way to live, as well. "Chris and I wanted a place where we could tell our girls, 'Go play outside,' and they're out there picking flowers in the meadow," Lauren says. "This is really our respite."

That respite is a welcoming haven not only for a road-weary musician and his family, but for the Tomlins' extended circle of relatives and friends, as well. "We have a lot of people coming here all the time," says Lauren. "Whether it's women who come to talk and pray with me or musicians coming over to write songs with Chris. And when they hit the pebbled driveway and they hear it crunching under the tires, we want them, too, to feel like they've come home." ■

"Every project is special in its own way, and no matter who lives in it, I like the challenge of creating a modest home," says Rachel Halvorson.

*"Renovations are all about working within limitations and problem solving."*

—Rachel Halvorson

