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(Opposite) Jack, 15, and Kate, 12, invite everyone to contribute to the dry-erase wall in the upstairs playroom.

(Left) Bella, the family's Havanese, lounges at the head of the table in the breakfast area.

THE *perfect* PLAYHOUSE

A Ballantyne couple built a home that tweens and teens, as well as adults, enjoy

BY **Lori K. Tate**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **Dustin Peck**

There was a lot of wasted space. The two-story floor plan with vaulted ceilings worked when Courtney Smith's children were younger, but not in their tween and teenage years. Courtney, who asked to use her maiden name for this story, and her husband, Scott, needed a home that allowed for shared personal spaces, a place where everyone could do their own thing together.

More than that, the couple wanted their home to be the house where all the neighborhood kids enjoyed hanging out, and they knew that their current 3,400-square-foot home didn't have the right flow for that.

With those ambitions in mind, they set out to find the perfect "playhouse." They searched and searched but came up empty-handed. Finally, they decided to build exactly what they wanted and lucked into a lot in their current neighborhood of Ballantyne Country Club. From then on, everything else fell into place.



(Left) Swivel chairs surround the concrete coffee table and provide a second seating area in the living room.
(Above) Built-in shelves surround the brick fireplace.
(Below) The taupe granite island in the kitchen provides plenty of space for food prep, buffets and homework.



"I wanted a place where people could come and put their feet up, but I still wanted it to look classy." —COURTNEY SMITH





(Left) In the dining room, a round table fits perfectly in the square space. (Above) Hand-placed cabochons adorn the two mirrors in the room.

THE DREAM TEAM

Scott and Courtney soon started working with Arcadia Homes on the 7,000-square-foot house of their dreams. When Christopher Phelps' name came up as a potential residential designer, it was serendipitous—Phelps once lived across the street from the family in Ballantyne. With the exception of a few minor tweaks, they went with his initial plan.

"We knew we wanted more space. We wanted the kids to have a playroom, and downstairs we have a basement that has some fun things. We have a pool table and an air hockey table," explains Courtney. "I wanted a place where people could come and put their feet up, but I still wanted it to look classy."

With the addition of Traci Zeller of Traci Zeller Designs to the team before the project broke ground, they got all of that. Courtney found Zeller on Houzz.com and immediately clicked with the clean look of her work. "It's really a privilege for me to be brought in on projects that early," says Zeller. "You have the ability to change, add or tweak things before it's too far along in the process and truly customize in a way that you can't always do when it's 80 percent finished."

Scott and Courtney worked closely with the design team to achieve what they wanted. The color scheme for the home started with the granite countertops in the kitchen, which is open to the breakfast area, living room and a screened-in porch, complete with a grill. The couple didn't want the maintenance of marble, so they selected a neutral granite called Taupe from AGM Imports Granite &

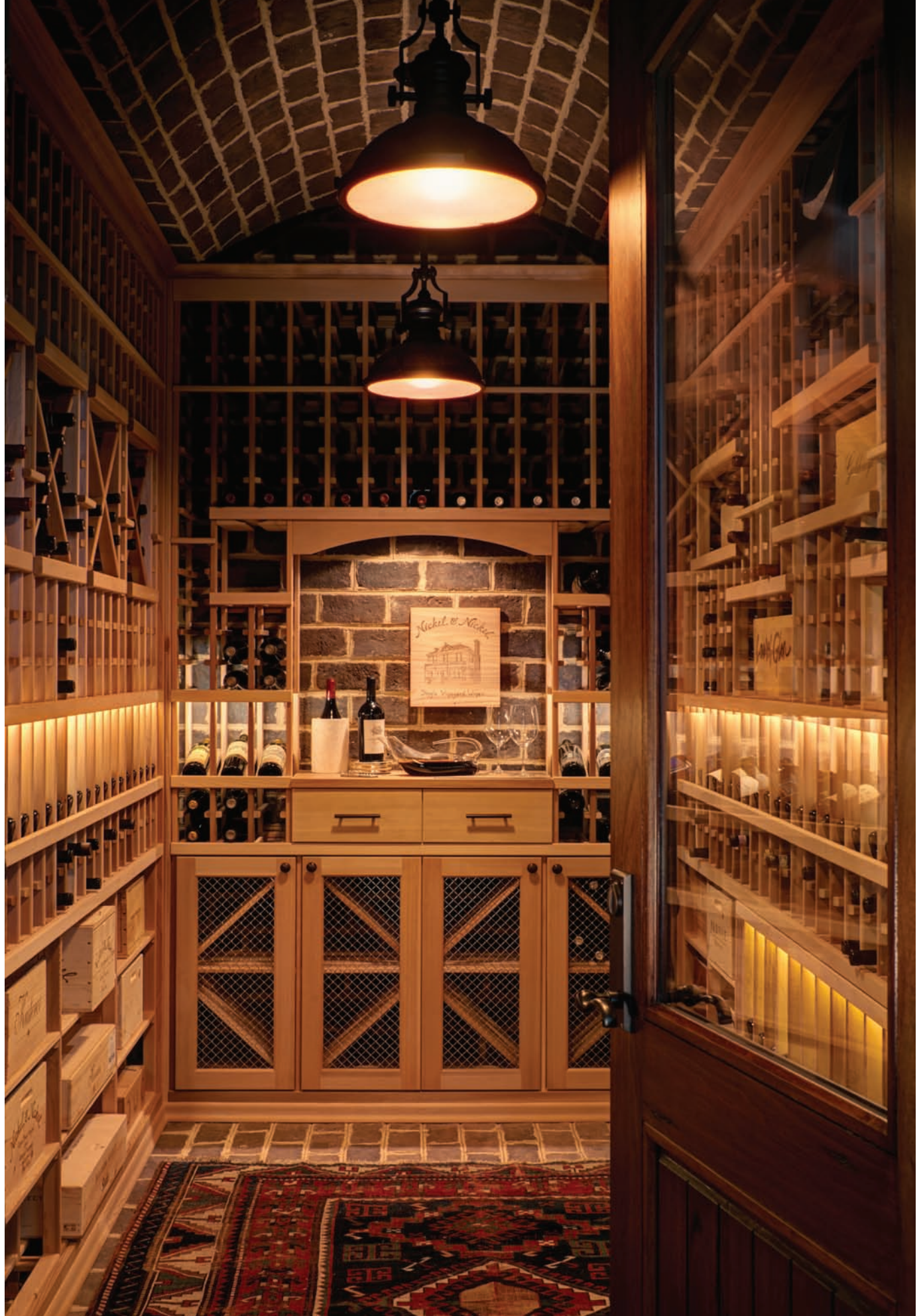
Marble. Topping the island, which measures 168 by 54 inches, the granite serves as a statement piece.

Throughout the design process, Courtney tried to shrink the island, but Phelps insisted that it needed to be large to architecturally balance the space. He was right, and the island offers plenty of room for food prep, buffets, and homework. Chartreuse bar stools from Wesley Hall blend the granite with the custom cabinets painted in Sherwin Williams' Dover White. The granite centerpiece also works well with the hammered copper sinks and custom kitchen window treatments by Kravet that include blue, green, and brown florals.

A sofa and swivel chairs by CR Laine offer two areas to congregate in the living room, where the walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Manchester Tan. The window treatments feature the same fabric that hangs in the kitchen, while a round concrete coffee table by Bernhardt adds a modern point of interest.

"My husband and my daughter sit in here and watch television," says Courtney, who likes to sit in a swivel chair and read. Even Bella, the family's Havanese, has a favorite swivel chair.

Across from the living room, a square dining room affords the perfect space for a custom round table by Charlotte's Kauffman & Co. Six chairs sit around the table, but there's room for more when friends come over. Two mirrors from Emporium Home framed by hand-placed cabochons enlarge the space and continue the fresh look.





(Far left) The wine cellar is built from Old Carolina Brick and holds up to 1,800 bottles of wine.

(Left) Courtney, Jack, Kate, and Bella enjoy the fire pit in all seasons.

FUN ON ALL FLOORS

In addition to a guest room and two bedroom suites for their children, Jack, age 15, and Kate, age 12, there is a playroom on the second floor. While the playroom has a TV and ample space to play games, the highlight of this room is the wall painted with a finish that allows it to serve as a dry-erase board.

"This was my husband's idea. They did this where he works, and he said, 'We have to do this,'" explains Courtney. "It's fun. Every kid and every adult who comes over signs it."

Scott is also a wine connoisseur, so he had a wine cellar built in the basement beside a custom zinc bar by Savannah's Bastille Metal Works. With a barreled ceiling constructed of Old Carolina Brick accented with wine

racks by Wine Cellars of the Carolinas, the room offers a cozy space for up to 1,800 bottles of wine.

While adults enjoy the wine cellar and bar, the kids enjoy the pool, Jacuzzi, and fire pit that are adjacent to the basement. "The kids don't get out of the pool during the summer," says Courtney. "We used the fire pit a lot during the summer. All of the kids would come over, and we'd roast marshmallows. It was fun. In fact, we had an adult party, and all of the adults wanted to roast marshmallows."

Inside and out, the flow of the house accommodates guests of all ages. "We do a lot of casual entertaining," says Courtney, "but we can do it on such a bigger scale than we used to." ❄️