

# A Homeplace In... GEORGIA

*Pecan trees line both sides of the drive leading to the old-fashioned house. A gazebo and a lake are situated just outside the back door. Ferrell and Pam Scruggs call this country place home.*

BY NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN O'HAGAN



"I grew up in a large, comfortable farmhouse with lots of big, squishy furniture and a fire in the fireplace and cookies in the oven," Pam Scruggs says. "Mama never fussed if hunters came through the door, tracking in mud."

In the room where Pam is sitting, there is no fire in the fireplace, but sunlight warms the comfortably stuffed sofas; the heavenly scent of biscuits, not cookies, wafts invitingly through the air; and laughing friends and family amble in and out as Pam chats about her and husband Ferrell's country place just outside of Valdosta.

She laughs at the comparison and says, "Yes, but I stop anyone with muddy shoes from coming through!"

"I bought this property in three phases, starting as far back as 20 years ago," Ferrell says. When the couple decided five years ago to move from town to a country place, they couldn't find a house to match their dreams. So they built a house that looked as if it had been on the land a hundred years.

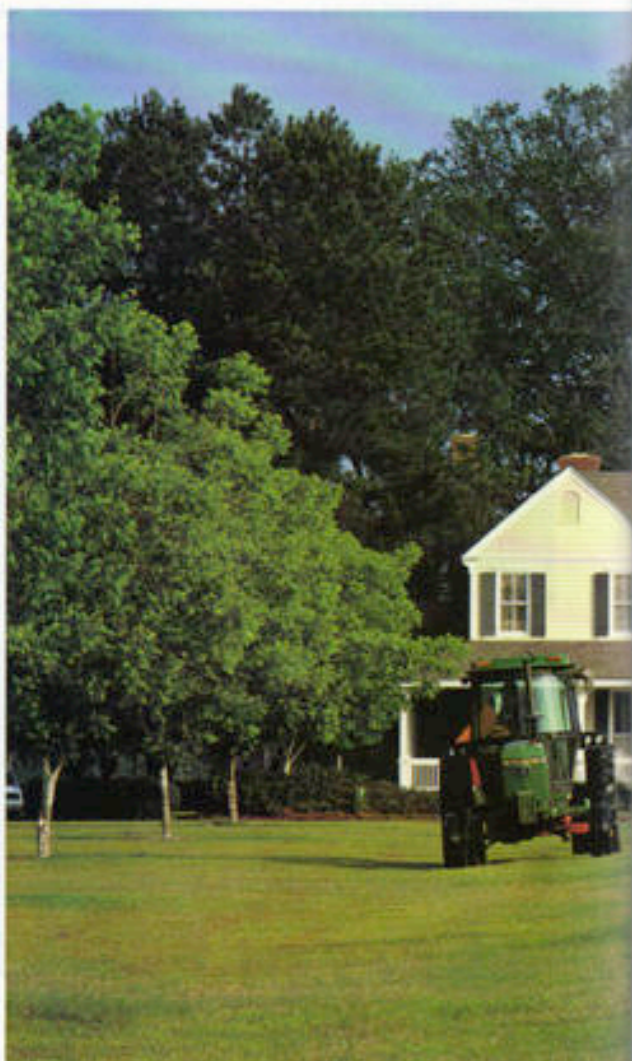
Inside, special family treasures add grace and warmth to the Scruggses' home. The colors used in their sun-room, for instance, were chosen because of the intricate postage stamp quilt made by Pam's Aunt Bert. The quilt hangs on the wall.

The kitchen practically begs people to sit a spell. "I sit at the kitchen island many mornings with my coffee and watch the sun come up over the pecan grove," Pam says.

Ferrell planted pecan trees on both sides of the long drive leading up to the house. "As it turns out, the beauty of the pecan trees far outweighs the economics of growing them," he says.

In the backyard, folks can sit in the gazebo, shaded by a massive old oak tree with gnarled roots and moss-covered limbs. The tree was among those saved when the Scruggses cleaned up the property. "This was where some people dumped their trash," Ferrell says.

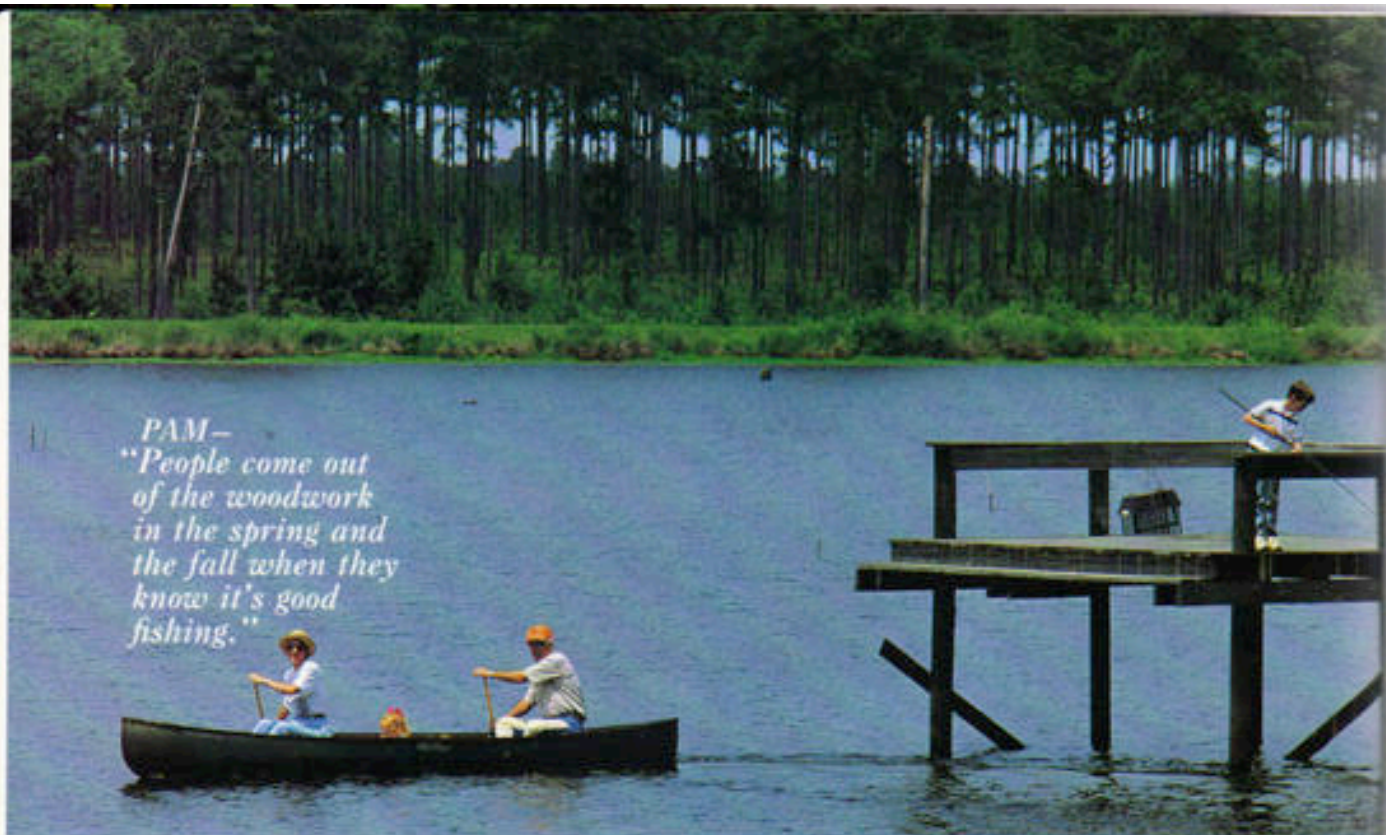
Now, the lush lawn is a living legacy to Pam's devotion to gardening. "Ferrell and I have mixed feelings when it



*PAM—  
"The happiest part of my day is  
when I take our dogs for a long  
country walk around the lake."*



*FERRELL—  
"The house looks like  
it's been on the property  
a long, long time, and  
that's exactly what  
we wanted."*



*PAM—  
“People come out  
of the woodwork  
in the spring and  
the fall when they  
know it’s good  
fishing.”*



*Pam’s niece, Ashton Miller, 5, is a frequent visitor at the country place of “Boom Boom and Sissy.” “Ashton is famous for her biscuits,” Pam says.*



*Long, four-pane windows open the house to a gorgeous view of the lake, gazebo, and lush backyard.*

ruins,” she laughs. “I love it for the flowers, but he doesn’t because he can’t work.” Ferrell owns and operates The Scruggs Company, a construction business in Valdosta.

Pam is active in the local garden club. “A friend gave me a sprig of this,” she says, as she clips some hydrangea blooms. “She died a short while afterwards. Every time I see it, I think of her.”

One of Ferrell’s favorite pastimes is training hunting dogs. More often than not, he and the dogs end up by the windmill he had moved from the farm of Pam’s great-grandfather in Brinson, Georgia.

“We have a big creek that comes through the place,” Ferrell says. “Over the years, the beavers have built multiple dams. It’s provided a habitat that’s perfect for wood duck.”

The property is also bordered by the Withlacoochee River. “Just a couple of hundred yards and we can have a canoe in the river,” he says. But it’s the lake Ferrell created almost at their back door that the couple and visitors relish most.

Friends often drop by to fish. Such is the case one recent morning as Ferrell drives around the lake. He calls from the bank to the two friends fishing in their boat, “Having any luck?”

“Nope, not much,” one replies.

“Want me to show you how it’s done?” he ribs the luckless fishermen.

Do the Scruggses miss city life? “Not at all,” Pam says.

“We love it enough to choose to be buried out here,” she says. Then, she laughs and adds, “It’s going to be interesting since the local funeral home won’t do it. We may be getting a backhoe from The Scruggs Company. But I’ve promised Ferrell, and he’s promised me.”