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ALL TO— —GE TH— —ER

Come for the Ole Miss football,
and stay for the family time and
the lake views. Interior designer
Betsey Mosby thought of
everything at her in-laws' cabin
in Oxford, Mississippi

NOW

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTA XOCHILT PEREZ
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JUST ONE MILE FROM THE OLE MISS FOOTBALL FIELD

in Oxford, Mississippi, is a certain forest and a lake. On that lake is a house, and on that house is a beloved screened porch.

“That’s where we live,” owner Lesley Mosby says. “If you ask anybody in the family, they’ll say, ‘We want to be out on the screened porch.’”

“Ask anybody in the family” sums up how the getaway came to be. Lesley and her husband, Rush—who met at Ole Miss and try not to miss a home game—polled everyone for ideas, wanting the house to be a draw for their two grown children plus their children’s spouses, two granddaughters, and two grandsons on the way. Rush chose a lot on a hill overlooking the water. He said “cabin,” but Lesley’s style isn’t rustic. Luckily, she had an ally in shifting the plans to something more modern—her daughter-in-law, Betsey Mosby.

Betsey, an interior designer, stepped up to plan and manage the build while fielding a family’s worth of wishes. Lesley requested high windows and accordion doors to the porch. Betsey’s husband, Will, wanted pecky cypress at the bar. Rush chimed in asking for anything but a white kitchen. Then to that list, Betsey mentally added creating a light and contemporary feel with stonework and a bunk room.

The first goal: Maximize that hilltop view. It was so glorious that Betsey and architect Jonathan Mattox designed the house around it, building a vaulted living room with cathedral windows that frame the lake. “Your eye goes out immediately to see all that’s beyond,” says Betsey.

Although she pulled off the near impossible—crafting interiors that marry cabin comfort with modern elegance in a way that pleases the entire gang—the rooms are often empty because everyone’s on a porch, either the one for grilling, the one for eating, the screened one above, or the covered one below. There are six in all. But everybody says they could get by with just one, as long as the whole family is on it—until the game starts, that is. “We can get to the stadium in three minutes,” Betsey says. “It’s the best of both worlds.”



Nix the Sofa If You Want

At the cabin, everyone gets to put their feet up, Betsey says. She means that literally and figuratively: The pair of lounge chairs invites relaxing by the fire. (“We almost fight over who gets to sit there,” she admits.) Nearby, two recliners take in the view of the lake out the cathedral window. Everything is upholstered in outdoor fabric so no one spends the bulk of their vacation cleaning. A coffee table styled with breakable treasures didn’t make sense for the grandchildren, ages 5 and 2, so Betsey subbed in a leather bench for flexible seating or napping.



Essie claims her spot on a coveted lounge chair in the living room.

Build In Some Practicality

Make it formal on the surface but nearly invincible beneath. That was the plan for the dining room, which typically hosts their celebrations (everyday meals are enjoyed on the screened porch). Betsey met the challenge by enriching the color palette with blush pink and black furniture finishes, selecting pieces with heft and curve, and hanging a chandelier that's just this side of extra. She can't say enough about the vintage Oushak rug (kingshouseorientalrugs.com). "It's probably the most cleanable type of rug," she says. If there's a spill, the color variation alone helps hide it, but it's also easy to lift stains from the wool fibers.



Paint Your Way to a Feeling

A white kitchen? Not here, Rush said. Darker cabinets and rich finishes were his main requests for the interior, so Betsey chose an earthy gray (Benjamin Moore Galveston Gray, AC-27) and gave it more definition with black hardware and lighting. The tone is neutral enough to have longevity, she says. White marble countertops and a slab backsplash contrast with the color. "In a normal design, we do a lot of brass and polished nickel, but here we chose brushed finishes and bronze—they don't need as much upkeep," Betsey says.



Draw Eyes to the Prize

Wood-paneled walls didn't fit Betsey's vision, so she used wood as a highlighter instead. The bar that sits between the kitchen and the living room benefited. Cypress-lined shelves inset in the wall give the entertaining space its own identity—and showcase three generations' worth of china, stemware, and sterling silver. "The wood gave it a rustic feel, but everything on it is sophisticated," Betsey says. "It's an interesting juxtaposition."



Create Harmony Inside and Out

Wanting to boost the rustic quality of the screened porch (at left), Betsey gave a hat tip to the pavers outside and in the lower level (shown below) with a concrete coffee table. "It reinforced an element already being used, so there was continuity," she says. Since food crumbs and spills are the norm here, Betsey anticipated the messes with washable fabrics, wipeable furniture frames, and an Annie Selke outdoor rug that they regularly clean with bleach and toss in the sun to dry.



Make Private Spaces Special

"Lighting can dictate the feel of a room, so we used it to signal those changes," Betsey says. Spaces meant for indulgence, such as the main bedroom, got crystal or more shapely fixtures to tip the scale toward fancy. "My mother-in-law loves pink," Betsey says, so it's sprinkled throughout the bedroom and bath.