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DAVID SIMONINI

BUILDING NEW STANDARDS FOR LUXURY

By Denise Lorraine Davis

After spending 15 years in real estate investments, land development, and commercial construction, one of the quintessential trend-breaking trailblazers in home design, David Simonini, is back on the scene with all his creative juices on fire, bringing a fresh new perspective to what luxury living should be.

Born in Elmhurst, Illinois, to an entrepreneurial dad, David knew that he had a design gene early on. He was drawn to great design in clothing, cars, decor, and architecture. After his father sold his commercial cold storage business, the family moved to River Hills, SC. There, his father formed a partnership to build custom homes in the Sea Pines community. At a towering 6' 3", David naturally loved sports and became the #2 tennis player in South Carolina, earning the title Athlete of the Year.

David earned a bachelor's in marketing at the University of South Carolina. Then, after a two-year stint with Oscar Meyer, he joined his brother and father in the custom home building business.

David would soon launch his own business and build the first million-dollar spec home in Charlotte, NC, with his unique design vision. It was a Charleston Low Country design with a covered porch. In the early '90s, Charlotte was replete with two-story Georgian-style homes, and David wanted to break through that barrier. One of many more of his significant breakthroughs to come, due to him being tired of "old boring [expletive]."

After building a few more customs, David purchased 6 acres from the Pell family to bring his most expansive vision to life: Pellyn Wood. He had traveled extensively through the south of France, studying the architecture of Provence. He used Pellyn Wood to introduce authentic European architecture to Charlotte and build twelve stunning French country estate homes with an unwavering mission to break through barriers again.

Pellyn Wood also became home to an enclave of 17 French Provencal limestone exterior cottages; he called “Courance.” This parcel of land was hilly and in a flood plain. But that did not deter David. He spent $1.5M to remove the bad soil and build a central pond. The entire community shares cobblestone streets, waterfalls, and gas-lit street lamps. The interiors are for a Francophile’s utter delight, featuring French doors, authentic historically designed see-through fireplaces, and La Cornue stoves. One of the estate homes even has a wooden bridge, as if in a fairytale. Such a fairytale that Gwyneth Paltrow lived there during the shooting of Shallow Hal. “When I was finished developing Pellyn Wood, I bought two black swans for the pond, and that swan family still lives there today,” beams David.

Not surprisingly, this groundbreaking work earned David many awards, including Charlotte’s Entrepreneur of the Year, Professional Builder Magazine’s Best Community in America Award, and Custom Builder Magazine’s Best in Design Award.

Nationally renowned interior designer Scott Carpenter and home designer Christopher Phelps have worked alongside David for decades. Both concur on one thing: When David has a vision, he goes big. Nothing less will do.”

Soon David became fixated with English Country architecture. For inspiration for his next community, he traveled to Cotswolds and Prince Charles’s Poundbury in England. David set out to one-up Prince Charles and build a superior, authentic European townhome community called “Chipping Campden” in Charlotte. The 15 luxury cottage-style residences feature slate roofs, stone exteriors, wrought iron window boxes, and carriage-style oak garage doors. A stunning English garden is the central focal point. Another step back into time to be cherished for perpetuity.

As he re-enters the luxury residential construction field, David’s passion is now expressly modern, and his visions are unabashedly daring mash-ups of architectural vernaculars. His latest creation is a modern rustic cottage at Quail Hollow Club, home of the PGA Wells Fargo Championship. “This may sound cliché, but everything David does is ‘next level,’ remarks Phelps, “and he pushes all of us to go there creatively with him. Everyone who works with him knows what it means when he barks in his Cowboyesque voice, ‘Let’s Roll!’”

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The thick cedar shake roofed home declares a new standard of luxury. One that is "not showy from the street," David explains, "Simple elegance." But there is nothing simple about this home in terms of construction. The cottage features museum-like floating walls, a modern, weightless feel of clean, uninterrupted contemporary lines of zero trim, and millwork, a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. The windows go all the way to the floor, which "is very difficult," David concedes. His longtime Construction VP, Rick Williams, adds, "David is very picky, and sometimes he gets an idea out of left field, and I have to figure out how to get it done. For example, he wanted the Crestron shades to roll up and hide behind the walls. Creating these pockets was no small task!"

And, in pure David form, there is nothing inauthentic or conventional either. Modern black all-clad doors and windows are juxtaposed with the centuries-old mortar wash technique called German schmear. Carpenter selected Iron Ore color for the Artisan shiplap, nickel board siding accents. "David is always open to doing the best and the newest. He is very involved and hands-on. We work together as a creative team; in whatever way he needs my input," he explains.

More aptly described as an American Modern Farmhouse, the 5,000 sq. Ft, 4 Bed/6 Bath residence features custom-built cabinets that Carpenter sketched out on paper, a stand-alone wall in the foyer tiled in Dolomite limestone. "It's a bold move to build an understated residence in a neighborhood of architectural opulence," explains Phelps, "but that is what David does. He is a stand-out. He's bullish and nails it every time."

David himself is the most ardent critic and sets the bar so high that it is easy for him to put himself in his clients' shoes, no matter how discerning they may be. The client is #1, and his boutique business, David Simonini Custom Homes, will likely never build enough homes to satisfy all those who want to be in his orbit and own one of his one-of-a-kind masterpieces. David's recent Quail Hollow client and seasoned custom homeowner, explains it best: "We know what it took on David's part to make this home come together. Our requests were never simple, yet he took them all in stride and delivered exactly what we envisioned. If I build another house, he will be the only person I call."

David has a $4.5M modern estate home currently under construction and two lots where he plans to build two 4,000 sq. Ft Modern English Revival homes. His visions are at work yet again as he sees them. "I see things complete before they are," muses David, and is that ever true.

To view the entire American Modern Farmhouse,
visit www.davidsimonini.com and follow @davidsimoninicustomhomesnc on Instagram.

Architectural Photography: @metropolisiconicshots

Portrait: @glynastanleyphotography

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