



Some people spend years searching for their dream home while others are lucky enough to build from the ground up! Rare is the dream-home searcher who can come across a nearly completed home and visualize the final dream.

Homeowners Kirt and Stephaney La'Mark weren't originally looking to buy a home in The Village at Oakland Springs. They weren't even looking to buy a home in Alabama. The couple moved to Alabama from Texas in 2020 with plans to stay for no longer than two years. Like many of us, Stephaney, a software architect, had spent years compiling ideas and features she wanted in their future dream home. She had collected custom home plans and created a Pinterest page bursting with design and decorating ideas. She and Kirt knew exactly what they wanted. But, as is so often the case, fate had a few surprises in store for the house-hunting couple.

STYLE



The pair found searching for homes during the pandemic to be difficult, but while they were touring the Village, one home, in particular, caught their eye. The white brick exterior with eye-catching black window frames struck Stephaney as a little unique, and something about the design spoke to the couple's Louisiana roots.

After the initial viewing, Stephaney was not ready to pull the proverbial trigger. Kirt, a principal field engineer, knew how quickly homes were selling in the area and that they didn't have much time to decide. They knew how competitive the market was here, so they decided to give (the Realtor) some deposit money to buy some time to come to a conclusion.

The next day, the La'Marks came back with fresh eyes, and Stephaney was able to see how her inspiration could translate into reality. "The engineer in me is always looking past what I see and focusing on what I can make of this. I started thinking, I can make it mine," she says with a smile. Kirt agrees, "If the house has 75% of our must haves, we can make the other 25% happen."

The couple purchased the home in April of 2021. At the time, the house was 90% complete, and the builder graciously allowed the new owners to make a few last-minute changes like removing upstairs carpet. Then the creative pair went to work, completing

23 projects after closing. For Stephaney, the whole experience is still surreal. "We ended up getting our dream home and we weren't even planning on staying here."

It's a rare thing to achieve—to live in a place that you love and reflects who you are, yet the La'Marks seem to have achieved this effortlessly. The gas lanterns added to the front porch intensified the New Orleans feel of the home and speak to the couple's Creole and West Indies roots. Inside, the home's interior also leans toward a French/Creole influence and would be right at home in any residence of the French Quarter. It's a design style that Stephaney noted seems to follow her no matter where she lives, a testament, we think, to how inextricably connected we each are to our culture.



Each Detail Considered

A glass door refrigerator and brass detailing throughout the kitchen makes every meal feel a little more luxurious.



The crown jewel of the home is the newly constructed outdoor living area, bathed in white brick and rooted in an intricate herringbone-patterned brick patio. Again, there's no shortage of New Orleans influence here—from the patio brick to the rustic chandelier that replaced a ceiling fan, to the bubbling fountain in the yard. It is reminiscent of those secret, tucked away alcoves you might spy as you stroll down Bourbon Street. It's a peaceful respite that invites visitors to sit a spell and stay awhile... reading, praying, meditating, or working from home (if you must).

The love the La'Marks have for their new dream home spills over into the community

itself. At the time of writing this piece, the mixed-use space within The Village is under construction. The couple looks forward to using this much-anticipated feature of the development! For Kirt, the friendliness of the people living in the community hasn't gone unnoticed. "We call everyone here a neighbor—from the people who live right next door to those who live a street away. Everyone is friendly and welcoming." Both Stephaney and Kirt are happy to have their projects completed and are looking forward to celebrating with friends and loved ones in their new home - their dream home, this holiday season.

Home Builder: The Builders Group