

LAKESIDE LIVING IN STYLE



Modernized disco-era home reflects the whimsical personalities of its owners

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Photographed by **TUCKER WEBB**

If you had seen Shawn Reese's house on the Logan Martin shoreline before he modernized it, you might have wondered why he bothered.

However, after two years of sweat, toil, and even a few "what-have-I-gotten-myself-intos," the 1970s-era single-story home is not only livable but a lakeside jewel reflecting the style and sense of humor of Shawn and his wife, Susan Pruitt.

Along with their dog, an excitable blue heeler/poodle mix named Gracie, the first-time newlyweds who met a bit later in life (Shawn graduated from Pell City High School in 1988, while Susan graduated from Hewitt-Trussville High School in 1998), are having a ball living, creating, and entertaining in their updated disco-era home.

It was built almost 50 years ago by the father of one of Shawn's aunts, who worked at a cement plant in Leeds. He framed the house out of ammunition crates from the Anniston Army Depot, which made the house darn near



indestructible but also made it challenging to renovate due to the unusual way it was constructed.

"These crates are something like 33 inches long and six inches deep, and he just stacked them up and nailed them in. He went a little overboard with the nails, though," explains Shawn. "It's really sturdy, but it makes it difficult when you want to rewire things."

The denseness of the interior walls made them a major hassle to remove, a problem Shawn discovered while creating an opening from the kitchen into the living room. Shawn, who spent more than 15 years in New York as an actor and admits he's not the handiest of fellows, was forced to enlist a pair of uncles, Jack and recently deceased Dennis, and some creativity to bring the wall down and

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“ Sean and Susan have made many updates to the mid-70s house, inside and out. ”



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assist in the total renovation.

Shawn says that he and Jack stopped trying to cut through the wall after a couple of hours of futility. The next day, Shawn said, Jack decided to employ a little “good old boy” ingenuity.

“He came in the very next day and brought a chainsaw, and he’s like ‘Okay, we’re going to do this.’” Moments after his uncle began sawing, he hit a nail, breaking the chain. “So he put me to work pulling out nails wherever he was going to be cutting and then he would cut it. We finally developed a method where he would cut and then use a crowbar and just pry these things loose. It just took forever to get them out.”

Susan and Shawn credit Jack and Dennis for the time and effort they put into the house, but Shawn says the renovation project also gave the two men a chance to reconnect after drifting apart over the years.

“They hadn’t seen each other in a long time because they came from two different sides of the family. One was my dad’s brother, the other was my mom’s brother, but they used to always pal around in their 20s,” Shawn explains. “It was great because they get to hang around each other for like six to eight months. I got to listen to their old stories and see them having fun every day.”

The home’s quirks allowed Shawn the opportunity to

make other improvements, such as converting a room housing the furnace into a third bedroom after relocating the furnace into the attic and turning a small room off the living room into a cozy but funky library.

“My dream was to always have a library,” says Susan, adding that the home she owned in Trussville for several years prior to marrying Shawn was too small for one. What Shawn describes as a junk room with his computer gaming system in it was reimagined by Susan into a library with a painting created by her father, other unique pieces of art,



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Shawn and Susan's view of Logan Martin Lake.

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and what she calls her “cabinet of curiosities” – a display of antique medical equipment reflecting her work as a clinical research coordinator at UAB and her quirky sense of humor.

Shawn Reese and Susan Pruitt haven’t just updated a house; they have created a space that reflects their shared sense of style and humor, and the house represents a fresh chapter in their lives together. “It was nice to come together and kind of have a new beginning,” Susan says—and the result is a home that’s not only livable, but a one-of-a-kind retreat.

