



Atlanta Magazine's HOME

9-DAY
MAKEOVER
BY HGTV'S
BRIAN
PATRICK
FLYNN
PAGE 30

simply modern

- ▶ Prefab and fabulous in Serenbe
- Gulf-front glamour at Alys Beach
- Contemporary kitchen showrooms

Atlanta Magazine's HOME \$4.99

9 1 >

0 86441 18362 5

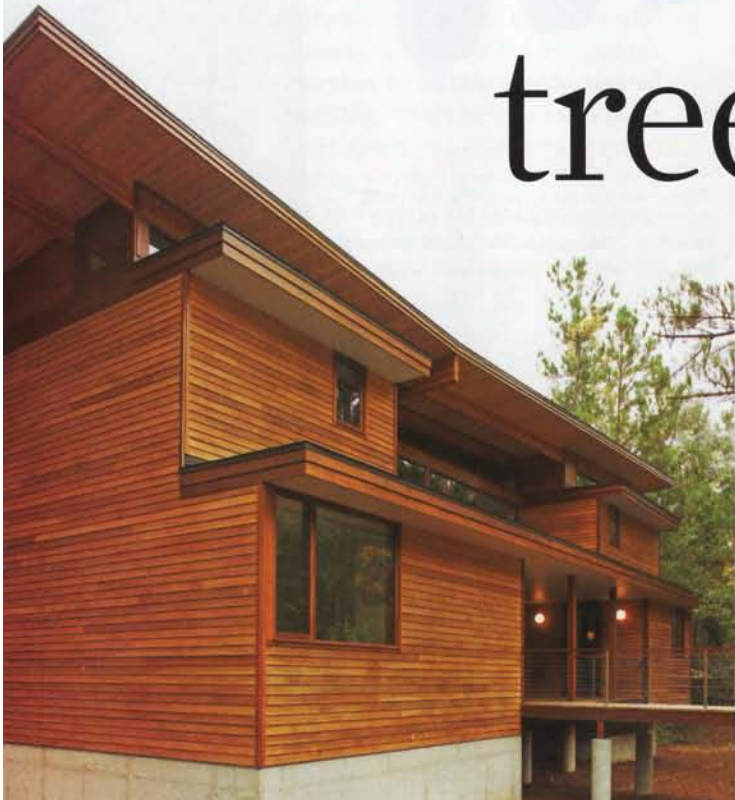
Reproduced with permission of *Atlanta Magazine's Home*.



tree house

Ron and Sandy Simblist build their mid-century dream house far from the city.

Text by **BETSY RILEY**. Photography by **JEFF HERR**. Styling by **ROBERT GAUL**.



open deck

The glass wall along the rear of the house can be pulled back accordion-style, and, a little further out on the deck, a second, screened wall can also be raised or lowered—creating varying degrees of openness to the outdoors.





red, white, & cool The Simblists equipped their kitchen with top-quality, energy-efficient appliances. "We might not figure out how to use them all in my lifetime," quips Ron. "But they look good." The Simblists had used the square table and bentwood chairs in previous homes, but they were excited to finally have the right spot for a Nelson Bubble Lamp. The red glass tile mosaic provides a vivid contrast to the stainless steel appliances and white quartz composite countertops.

Ron Simblist often jokes that he went to **Serenbe** to buy a cookie and came back with a house. Before his friend

Angie Mosier invited him to visit her Blue Eyed Daisy Bakeshop, Ron had never heard of her new community, let alone the town of Palmetto where it was located. But once he and his wife Sandy drove down pastoral South Fulton Parkway to the new urbanist hamlet founded by a group that includes former Atlanta restaurateur Steve Nygren, they were hooked. "The place is genius!" he says now. "How this area ever got forgotten [by developers] is beyond me."

The Simblists selected their wooded site, which backs up to a lake, before the street was ever platted. Then the empty nesters, whose primary residence is a 1904 bungalow in Atlanta's Lake Claire district, began pondering their dream house. "I was sitting in the bakery, and Marie Nygren asked what kind of house we were going to build," recalls

Ron. "I said, 'Think Frank Gehry.'" Marie ran across the street and brought back a book on modernist prefab architecture she happened to be reading. Fate at work again.

Internet research led Ron to Joel Turkel, an award-winning architect known for pioneering prefabricated residential architecture. He and the Simblists chose a red cedar house with glass walls and an inclined butterfly roof, a deep front porch reached by an elevated walkway, an open floor plan with a second-story gallery, and multiple levels of decking out back. Rainwater collects in the center of the sloped roof, then runs along a fourteen-foot, cantilevered trough, tumbling out onto boulders two stories below—creating a dramatic overhead water feature above the deck. As are all Serenbe buildings, the Simblist home was designed according to environmental sustainability principles. Turkel specified all-wood construction,



including mahogany trim (even outdoors), bamboo flooring, and ipe decking.

To make the Massachusetts architect's vision a reality in Georgia, Simblist hired Moon Bros. Inc. "If it had been mere mortals trying to put this together, we never would've seen this quality," says Ron of the long-time Candler Park architects. "You could eat off the floor during construction." He cites their meticulous craftsmanship and clever adaptations to Turkel's design—such as cutting out one side of the fireplace or leaving beams exposed along the tops of bedroom walls.

The furnishings were also a labor of love. The Simblists teamed up with designer Robert Gaul, who has helped outfit Ron's AmericasMart gift showrooms for years. Ron credits Gaul with many key suggestions, such as the bold red glass tile mosaic backsplash in the kitchen or the subtle wallpapered accent walls in each bedroom. "I lean toward clean lines and contemporary overtones, but I'm not afraid to use color," says Gaul. "I like to interject color to give a room life."

The Simblists found themselves drawn to classic mid-century furniture by the likes of Charles and Ray Eames, Marcel



Breuer, Warren Platner, and Eileen Gray. "We didn't do this stuff to name drop," Ron says. "They just happen to be iconic pieces. It's all the stuff we used to dream about when we were young." They bought other pieces from Bungalow Classic and Room & Board, a Minneapolis-based retailer coming to Atlanta this year.

An obvious focal point is the Rex Ray painting over the fireplace. When a book about Ray's work arrived at Ron's show-

room, Ron got on the phone immediately and tracked down the California artist, known best for his album covers and posters for performers like David Bowie, Joe Satriani, R.E.M., and The Flaming Lips. Ron visited the artist in person and purchased this painting before it was even complete. The musical connection is appropriate for Ron, a part-time music promoter known for managing jazz artists from Aaron Goldberg to Lizz Wright.

The harmony is definitely right for the Simblists at Serenbe, where they spend two or three days every week. "It's sanctuary," says Ron. "And it's only thirty minutes from Downtown."

H See Resources



falling water Large rear windows on both levels blur lines between indoors and out. A trough extending from the roof channels rainwater away from the house and shoots it out onto boulders two stories below.