

Southern Living
SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Porch Style

**Classic
Southern
Charm**

EASY, BREEZY
IDEAS TO UPDATE
YOUR SPACE

Throw a Porch Party!
OUR BEST RECIPES & ADVICE

I grew up in the storied city of Natchez, Mississippi. The oldest town on the Mississippi River, Natchez may not be as rowdy as New Orleans or as famed for historic architecture as Charleston, South Carolina, but when it comes to good times in grand houses, this place can hold its own. Around here, many of us could mix perfectly proportioned sweet tea and differentiate between Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns by middle school. The best examples of both hospitality and history can be found on the spacious porches throughout town.

My childhood home, an 1837 Federal town house facing Main Street, boasted one so wide that I learned to skate on it. Downtown Natchez is composed of well-preserved 19th-century buildings—Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian—most with large porches (or “galleries” in the local parlance), which were originally built to escape the heat. It wasn’t until I became an adult and was looking to buy my own home in the Northeast that I realized that a good porch—as standard-issue to me as a kitchen—wasn’t a given everywhere.

Thankfully, my parents still live in Natchez, now a few blocks closer to the river in a French Second Empire home with a mansard roof, decorative ironwork, and a deep gallery that’s filled with wicker furniture. This extra room, not inside but not outdoors either, gets more than a little credit for the laid-back, welcoming nature shared by the people of this city.

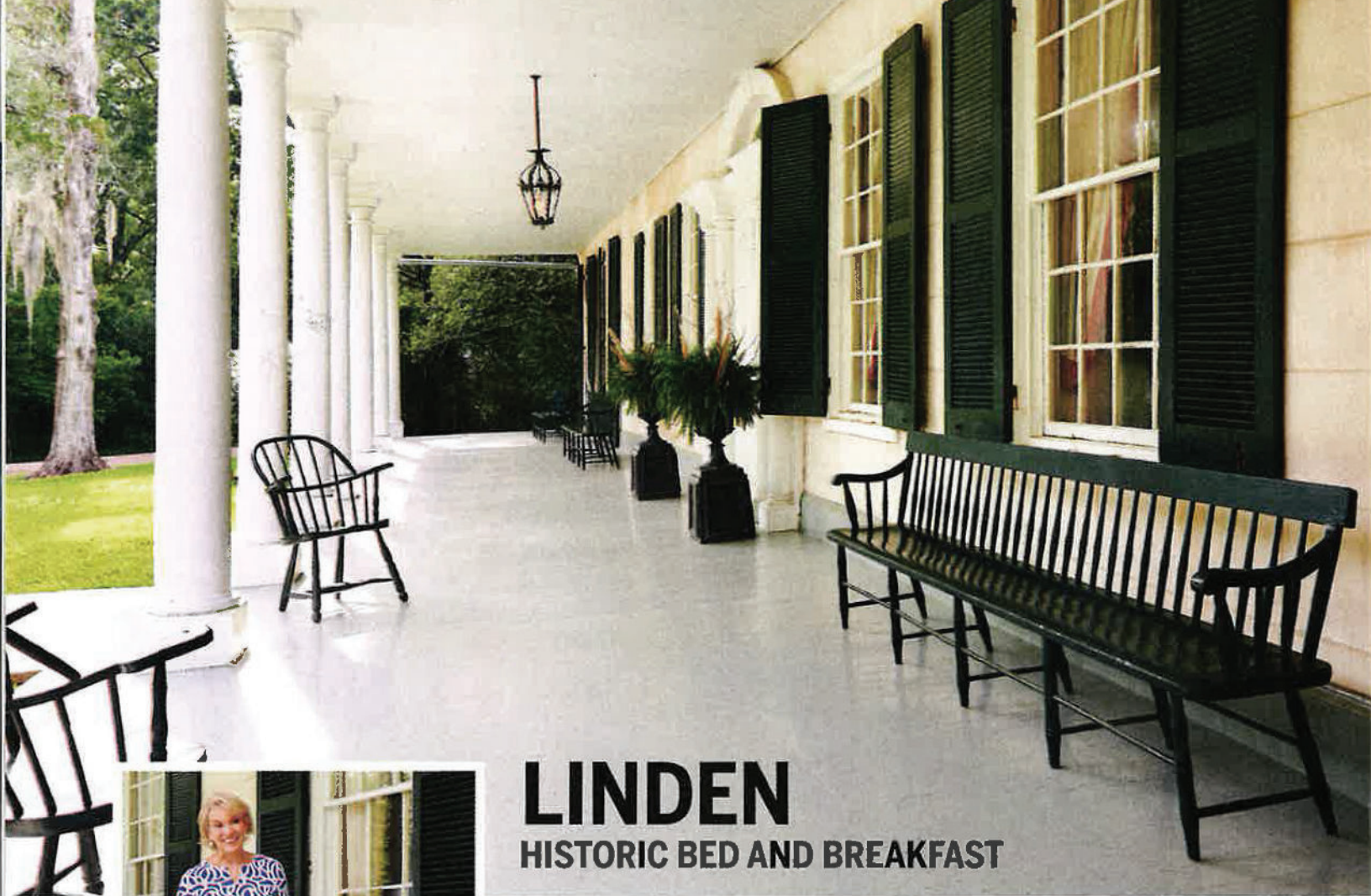


THE PORCHES OF NATCHEZ

Five historic homes with some of the prettiest views in Mississippi—and you

can stay in all of them

BY CATHERINE TILLMAN WHALEN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANE TASHIMA | STYLING BY PAGE MULLINS



LINDEN

HISTORIC BED AND BREAKFAST



FAMILY HOME

Marjorie Feltus Hawkins with her late mother, Jeanette Feltus, at Linden

ASK MY HUSBAND, David, how many U-Haul trailers he's had to drive from Nashville to Natchez," says Marjorie Feltus Hawkins, an interior designer who grew up in this Mississippi town but moved to the Music City after college. Two years ago, they began making the trip regularly to revitalize Hawkins' family home, Linden.

The original section of this mansion dates back to 1780; Hawkins' ancestors have owned it since 1849. Probably best known for the stunning, almost 100-foot-long front gallery that runs the entire width of the house, Linden has always had a busy schedule of tours and guests.

Hawkins' mother, Jeanette Feltus, had been directing operations here for four decades when COVID-19 hit. (Feltus passed away on October 1, 2021, after our interview and photo shoot.) It was a longer visit during lockdown that prompted Hawkins to start revamping

the property. "Our wonderful general manager, Christy Williams, felt that Linden could become a spot for destination weddings," Hawkins notes. "But if we were going to expand, we knew we'd have to update. Closing when the pandemic hit gave us the time."

Turning her decorator's eye to the six guest rooms, she worked to bring a boutique feel to the place, with high-end linens and spalike baths. And though the grand gallery out front will

**MARJORIE
FELTUS
HAWKINS &
JEANETTE
FELTUS**

probably always be the home's claim to fame, it is the two-tiered back gallery that has become the family's go-to spot. Now that Linden is accepting bookings again, the wedding

calendar is filling up and people have returned from all over the country. Meeting on the back gallery nightly, guests often stay past sunset. Hawkins admits, "Sometimes, even when they have dinner reservations, no one wants to leave." lindenbandb.com