



OLD BECOMES NEW AGAIN

A CLASSIC FARMHOUSE EVOKES OLD CHARLESTON

BY PATRA TAYLOR | PHOTOGRAPHY BY HOLGER OBENAU

Two decades ago, a visionary developer introduced a few old ideas into a new Mount Pleasant neighborhood. Achieving his vision meant putting the brakes on urban sprawl in favor of the “new urbanism,” featuring more traditional neighborhood development. Today, the iconic 243-acre l’On stands as a testament to the advantages of rediscovering the best of a bygone era. Its stately architecture represents Southern tradition at its finest; and its smaller lot sizes connected by extensive sidewalks radiate a dense, harmonic feel.

The nearly Greek Revival-style “farmhouse” exemplifies the best of timeless Southern architecture. The front porch was designed to be low to the ground, so the porch did not require a railing.

For one couple, the adventure of adding a bold brushstroke to the nearly completed l’On masterpiece began at Atlanta-based Historical Concepts. This architecture and planning firm, known for creating “timeless home designs inspired by historic precedent,” developed a conceptual plan that satisfied the owners’ sophisticated eye for detail and clear vision for their future home. The result was a symmetrical, classic farmhouse-style home that perfectly suits the neighborhood’s bucolic landscape, which includes parks, lakes, canals, trails and playgrounds.

Transforming the plan into reality required a true artisan in the construction of high-quality homes. That’s when the owners



Paneled wainscot in the entry hall is carried up the stairs. The mirrored-glass bell jar was made by The Urban Electric Company.



Looking through to the kitchen, the family room is distinguished, in part, by its coffered ceilings. A family hangout, the room's soothing colors offer a refreshing departure from the "grays."

turned to Structures Building Company, an award-winning custom homebuilder they knew largely by reputation.

"The floor plan of this house is meant to feel like a traditional four-square house with a wide center hallway," states Steven Kendrick, who founded the Lowcountry-based Structures in 1999. "The exterior colors are classic downtown Charleston—a white house with black shutters and a porch floor painted glossy Charleston green."

To add an additional measure of character, Historical Concepts included rooms that were intentionally made to look like additions. "Rather than continuing the traditional wood siding on the home's exterior, the exterior of the breakfast room and mudroom are clad in vertical board-and-batten to make it look as if it was added on later," points out Kendrick. "Features like this give the outside of the home a historical appearance."

To express the owners' discriminating taste throughout the home's interior, Structures' designer, Kathryn Elliott, joined forces with Mount Pleasant-based Anne Kelley Interior Design. "We collaborated to



Above: In the breakfast room, bead-board from the ceiling was reversed to create V-groove paneling for the walls. The room includes a broad bank of windows to capture the sunlight. **Opposite:** Different from the rest of the home, the dining room is painted a warm "pigeon" color selected from British paint manufacturer Farrow & Ball, which specializes in historical color palettes.

create a classic Charleston home with a warm feeling that is inviting and comfortable," states Elliott. "Instead of the cooler tones we often see today, the colors that were selected bring feelings of warmth and richness to the space."

Antique heart pine beams reclaimed from an old sugar factory in Honduras were cut, custom stained and used for the floors throughout much of the

home. "The floors are truly remarkable," says Elliott. "In order to preserve the floor's character, it was important to find the right stain color. We knew it would darken in time but wanted to avoid the yellows and oranges often associated with new pine floors."

Elliott continues: "One of my favorite aspects of the interior is how we tied the beautiful trim in with all the custom cabinetry. In



The kitchen's inset cabinetry was custom crafted by Charleston-based William C. Pritchard Company. The room also features elegant Calacatta marble countertops and kitchen pendants made by The Urban Electric Company, based in North Charleston.

the living room, we had to work through the ceiling details so that they fit perfectly with the built-ins and the fireplace trim. William C. Pritchard Company did an excellent job of seamlessly integrating the paneling above the fireplace with the built-ins, creating one beautiful, unified area."

Throughout the home the detailed trim really makes an impact. From the V-groove paneling in the breakfast room to the butted board on the kitchen ceiling and wainscoting in the foyer, no detail was overlooked. Carefully selected, the lighting in the home includes classic pieces as well as dynamic new fixtures. "Some of the lighting Anne selected appears to be antique, but they are actually new fixtures," notes Elliott.

The interior of this traditional Southern home incorporates a number of transitional spaces. Kendrick explains: "Rather than opening directly off a hallway, a number of the home's rooms are preceded by a vestibule, each with its own unique design. The owners' desire to include this architectural feature adds a tremendous amount of visual interest to the home while also offering more privacy





Above: The screened-in back porch provides additional quiet and comfortable living space for the whole family. **Opposite:** With its extra sink and additional cabinetry, the butler's pantry is the perfect place to prepare food and clean up after a gathering.

to each space."

The neighborhood of l'On blends the tradition of a bygone era with the lifestyle of the 21st century. "I think this house perfectly captures the best of the past and the present," concludes Kendrick. "Like many of the classic homes that define the historic neighborhoods on the Charleston peninsula, I'm confident that this home can survive the test of time. It was designed and built to last for generations to come." ➔

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