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THE

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HOMES
HOMEBUILDER

WORTH THE WAIT

*A new home on the Stono River features quality
craftsman touches in every room*

by ROBIN HOWARD / photography by HOLGER OBENAU

Shiplap runs floor to ceiling in the kitchen and throughout most of the home. Wide double doors provide easy access to the screened porch.

previous:

The new home is set back from the river to protect the ancient live oaks and make the most of river views.



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AS THE LARGEST ISLAND IN SOUTH CAROLINA, Johns Island is where people go to spread out and enjoy the outdoors. The island is known for scenic views of the broad Stono River and abundant wildlife, including birds, deer and otters. When building a home here, design decisions revolve around living close to nature and enjoying a relaxed lifestyle.

Settled into a bank of grand, historic live oaks, the house we're going to see today rests on a remarkable 700-foot-deep lot on the bank of the river. The property had an existing structure when the homeowners bought it, but they knew they wanted to tear it down and build a new home that would take better advantage of the river and tree views.

After the existing home was demolished, the clients spent time on the newly defined land, getting a feel for where they wanted their next home to sit. They wanted to move the footprint back to protect the live oaks and open up a broader perspective of the river.

As empty nesters with grown children and two grandchildren, the homeowners were intrigued by a home they'd seen on Daniel Island built by Structures Building Company. Known for its creativity, craftsmanship and exquisite attention to detail, Structures is behind some of the most interesting contemporary Lowcountry homes in the Charleston area. The clients asked the architect, Herlong Architects, and the Structures team if they could design and build a similar home as their inspiration home on Daniel Island but with touches and functionality that would make it uniquely theirs.

"The land has an amazing view that's framed by two mature live oaks. It presented unique opportunities to maximize outdoor living space and create a harmonious connection with the landscape," says Jim Henshaw, architect at Herlong Architects.

One of the hallmarks of Structures' design-build process is that everyone on the building team, including the project managers, values the creative process and input from architects, homeowners, designers and tradespeople. To bring this home to life, the Structures team had to

gather and consider a significant amount of input and interpretation, a process they're known for undertaking with grace and respect.

"This house is an important place for their family," says Structures owner Steve Kendrick. "They wanted a place that would be comfortable when it was just the two of them but could expand to accommodate friends and family, including their two young grandsons."

Using their client's inspiration home as a starting point, Kendrick, Herlong interior architect Layne Nelson and project architect Brooke Gerbracht, and Structures project manager Daniel Peek and interior designer Kathryn Elliott worked to design a contemporary farmhouse-style home with functionality and interiors that embrace outdoor living. "They're not fussy; they wanted everything to be open, airy and livable," Elliott says. "A lot of the design was to allow them to transition easily from the pool to inside."

Shiplap features prominently in this home, and in the living room, shiplap walls run to the ceiling and even wrap around rounded corners.

As for materials and color palette, the couple wanted a neutral scheme with pops of blue, green and yellow. "Each room has a bit of blue to pick up the color of the pool and the river," Elliott says. The home's wood accents, trusses and cabinetry are white oak with a light golden oak stain, while brick on the mudroom floor and bar backsplash provide texture and contrast.

The build began in early 2020, just as COVID-19 was playing havoc with the supply chain and material prices. "There were challenges due to COVID, so having good chemistry with the client was really important," Kendrick says. "By the time we started building, we'd earned their trust, and they understood the quality of home we were giving them was going to be worth the wait."

The new home is a 3,400-square-foot house clad in white board-and-batten siding with a silver metal roof



An open living room has river views and exposed wood beams. A gas fireplace keeps the room cozy on chilly evenings. The home furnishings throughout the home were done by Kathryn Elliott Interiors.

and sophisticated black-clad windows. The house and outbuilding include 500 square feet of flexible living or work space over the garage, a 700-square-foot pool house, almost 1,000 square feet of porches, four bedrooms, four and a half baths, a combined mudroom and laundry, and an office.

Most of the home is on the first floor, with the rooms the couple spends the most time in, such as their bedroom and living areas, laid out in the back to take advantage of river views. To give guests their own space, the primary bedroom and bathroom are on one side of the home, while the office and guest bedrooms are on the other.

The home's footprint is long instead of deep; as we enter, we see straight through the open living area past the porches, pool and a grove of live oaks to the blue water of the wide Stono River. A cozy foyer opens to a dramatic living and kitchen area with soaring 25-foot ceilings that feature magnificent white oak trusses.

Natural light spills into the living and kitchen area from three dormer windows on the exterior. To the right, a wet bar with a brick backsplash is conveniently tucked in beside the foyer for easy access from the dining room and living area.

To the right, the kitchen features floor-to-ceiling shiplap, Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, a cooking niche with a wood-wrapped vent hood, open shelving and a ceramic tile backsplash. The large island has a handy prep sink and seating for six. Two oval glass and iron pendants hang from the ceiling to define the space.

The main sink and counter area run along the exterior wall, so whoever gets to do dishes can enjoy the view. Down the hall, a generous butler's pantry also has a prep sink and counter space, a second refrigerator, a wine fridge and plenty of storage.

Two tall oak French doors separate the kitchen and living room, providing easy access to the generous screened porch with a paneled ceiling, sconces for soft lighting and traditional tabby floors made of concrete mixed with oyster shells.

Shiplap features prominently in this home, and in the living room, shiplap walls run to the ceiling and even wrap around rounded corners. A gas fireplace keeps the room toasty on chilly evenings. Since the family uses the kitchen island or back porch for meals, the dining room is home to a beautiful grand piano.

Down the hall, a combined laundry and mudroom connect the garage with the living space. On the laundry side of the long space, a side-by-side washer and dryer are flanked by a long folding counter with drawers below and cabinets above.

On the other side, a nostalgic wash sink and mirror sit alongside a row of vintage-inspired hooks to hold pool towels, sweaters and coats. Above, a row of cubbies provides storage for infrequently needed items. Though it's not a main living area, with its brick floors and vintage touches, this room nearly steals the show.



opposite: The colorful downstairs powder room has plenty of personality with its vintage-feel wallpaper and reverse board-and-batten that runs a third of the way up the wall.

Brick flooring, vintage-inspired fixtures and generous custom-built storage add character to the combined mudroom and laundry room.

The primary bedroom features 180-degree views of the trees and river. Custom sliding barn doors conceal a media cabinet and storage.



In the pool house, a curved bar is a favorite place to hang out and watch the game. Doors on either side of the bar lead to storage and a changing room.



Back through the kitchen and living room, the powder room also has delightful farmhouse touches, including reverse board-and-batten paneling on the bottom of the walls, topped by elegant wallpaper with a vintage vibe. Throughout the home, small touches such as the arched mirror over the white oak vanity give the new build just enough age and character to make the house feel lived-in.

Down the hall, the homeowners wanted a simple primary suite with access to an unscreened porch and the pool. The room is light and bright with clean lines, vaulted ceilings and painted beams. Custom white oak sliding doors on a white shelving unit conceal an entertainment center when closed. In the bathroom, a large zero-curb glass shower replaces a tub, which wasn't necessary for the clients. Dark porcelain tile in a herringbone pattern provides a crisp contrast to the white walls and tile in the shower.

The build began in early 2020, just as COVID-19 was playing havoc with the supply chain and material prices.

On the other side of the home, two guest suites with en suite baths also have views of the river. Subtle geometric patterns in tilework add visual interest to the soothing palette, while white oak vanities and accents carry the wood tones from the public areas.

Outdoors, beyond the comfortable screened porch, the pool and pool house are the real heart of this home. "The configuration of the open-concept main house, pool and pavilion ultimately accentuated the serene views while maintaining a comfortable relationship with the natural surroundings," Henshaw says.

The expansive pool house has storage, a changing room, a lovely warm wood bar, a grill and a speaker system. The lack of railings is a favorite feature for project manager Daniel Peek. "We didn't have to put a rail around the pool or pool house, so you have unobstructed views," he says. "The home is in a flood zone, so it's on a raised slab, but we kept it as close to grade as possible to connect it with the pool and avoid the need for a lot of stairs or railings." The pool also has a low-profile, built-in spa to avoid disrupting river views. Peek says thanks to river breezes and ample shade from the live oaks, the pool area is consistently five to 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the property.

The exterior of the home embraces traditional Lowcountry materials, such as board-and-batten siding and metal roofing. A suite over the garage provides extra room for guests.



Above the garage, a flexible living space is used primarily as an exercise room but can be converted to a guest suite if needed. Currently, it houses fitness equipment and a big-screen TV, but because it has a kitchenette with a sink, refrigerator and a full bath, it can be used as guest space as their extended family grows.

“Even through the ups and downs of COVID, this was such a great project,” Kendrick says. “We’re big into communication, which is important with so many trades involved. Given the situation, we couldn’t have asked for a better client. They really trusted the process.”

“It is always gratifying to work with enthusiastic clients who complement each other and communicate well,” says Henshaw. “I can’t say enough about how much these clients trusted the design and construction process and made informed, well-timed decisions that led to a beautiful, functional and sustainable family home. Knowing that Structures would be the ideal partner on a project of this complexity and scale, Steve and his team were welcomed early in the design process to provide consistent valuable input on design, budget and constructability. Their interiors team worked closely with interior architect Layne Nelson and project manager Brooke Gerbracht to develop concepts and details that complemented the home’s architecture, and the execution was excellent.”

Founded in 1999, Structures Building Company maintains a rigid core value of quality and craftsmanship, and it shows. The company has won dozens of Prism Awards for customer service and best product, four Builder of the Year awards and others for its adherence to building science and high-quality construction. The team is also a vital part of the community, as a longtime member of Habitat for Humanity and supporter of other local and global philanthropic building endeavors.

From historic neighborhoods to beaches, golf courses and marshes, Structures’ award-winning homes can be found all over the Lowcountry, including Sullivan’s Island, Isle of Palms, Mount Pleasant’s Old Village, I’On, Daniel Island, James Island and Johns Island. *

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