

HOME DESIGN / ART / WINE / LIFESTYLE / REAL ESTATE

# CHARLESTON STYLE & DESIGN

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# A LONG-AWAITED DREAM

*Thoughtful design and meticulous detailing emphasize amazing waterfront views from a new Daniel Island home built by Structures | Alair*

*by DANA W. TODD / photography by HOLGER OBENAU*





Every room in this home has a view, and every main living area has an architecturally significant ceiling. In the kitchen, designer Millie Eggert accented coffered ceilings with a Visual Comfort double-armed lighting fixture and shimmering turquoise tile from Melcer Tile laid in a brick pattern for a backsplash.

**previous:**  
The secluded Captains Island community sits between Ralston Creek and the Wando River and is only accessible via a bridge constructed of imported Italian cobblestone or by boat.

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HE SEARCH BY A RETIRED COUPLE FOR JUST THE RIGHT Lowcountry lot on which to build a home spanned a solid decade and involved lots of patience and contemplation. Though they are native Northeasterners, they have a long history of owning property on South Carolina's sea islands. While they lived in a condo on Daniel Island and later a Kiawah Island home, they bought lots on both of those barrier islands over the years in the hopes of building a home, but none of them seemed to be the right place to build their final dream dwelling.

"While living on Kiawah, I researched architectural firms and watched the work of one particular architect for seven or eight years while he designed other homes on the island—Bill Huey of Bill Huey + Associates," says the homeowner. "When we met face to face, it was a good connection. He and I speak the same language and are both very much into the details of a project." The homeowner also became acquainted with builder Steve Kendrick of Structures | Alair and appreciated the company's luxury custom homebuilding process with its relentless attention to detail.

In the meantime, the homeowner also kept an eye on Captains Island, an exclusive community on Daniel Island that is reminiscent of waterfront villages such as Mount Pleasant's Old Village. He and his wife felt it would make a perfect location for the final home that they would build to live out their retirement years, a place to welcome family and friends. They put their names in the hat in three different lotteries to have the chance to purchase a Captains Island lot. Nothing seemed to work out in their favor until the person who received a chance to buy the largest lot on Captains Island in Lottery #3 backed out. "We were second in line for that particular lot and were given just one hour to decide if we wanted to buy it," the homeowner says. With all of the years of research, watching and planning well underway, it only took them one hour to decide this was the lot of their dreams, and they bought it. They called on Bill Huey + Associates and Structures | Alair to help them design and construct the casual Lowcountry-style home they had been envisioning for many years. "I just had this dream of building one last house. It was going to be my



Architectural details continue in the living room, with a cast stone fireplace, custom built-ins and coffered ceiling beams painted Sherwin-Williams "Pure White" to offset a pecky cypress ceiling. Walls in Benjamin Moore "Seapearl" support the color palette of blues and aquas that flows throughout all the rooms.



labor of love after retirement," the homeowner adds.

"Our team approach and attention to customizing details was a wonderful fit with these homeowners," says Steve Kendrick, owner of Structures | Alair. "The best projects are those where we're working in tandem with the architect, owner and all the other professionals throughout the entire design process. We love working with a client like this who values our process. Pairing this thoughtful and knowledgeable homeowner with a detail-oriented Structures | Alair project manager, such as R.P. Newton, is a match made in heaven."

"This lot is the most beautiful one on Daniel Island, with 270-degree views of marshland and the Wando River," says Newton, who oversaw construction of a new 6,000-square-foot home for the couple. "The lot sits on a peninsula point with great topography. It is the largest lot in Captains Island at just over 1.5 acres."

Architect Bill Huey walked the lot with the couple to identify the best area to site the home. "There were so many opportunities due to the large lot's size," Huey says. "Sometimes it's difficult to site a home with so many views to consider. We ended up choosing an orientation facing the river. This orientation enables every room in the house and all of the outside living spaces to have either marsh or river views."

The pie-shaped lot has a narrow street presence and a much larger footprint on the waterfront side of the property, which ultimately became the backyard. "It's like we're living on a peninsula out in the marsh. We can only see homes at the front of the lot, so it is very private," the homeowner says.

Because the homeowner wanted to avoid a house built on exposed pilings but needed an elevated structure due to the land's flood-zone rating, Huey had the opportunity to exercise his creativity. He designed a gradual rise from the street level to the house, giving the impression that the home is built into a hill. Landscape architect Glen Gardner framed the home with mature trees. "The approach offers visitors the chance to take in the house as they drive up the driveway, with a rounded porch with a conical roof as the entry feature. In this case, the topography and landscaping provided a chance to add emphasis to the architecture," Huey says.

While the exterior views are captivating, the interiors are equally masterful. The homeowners made a few requests of the design and construction team: a large Southern-style porch, an eye-catching stair tower, an elevator and lots of outdoor living space, including a pool, in a traditional coastal-style home. Since both homeowners had experience in careers related to design and construction—the wife has a background in design and the husband in industrial contracting—they were very involved in choosing colors and suggesting architectural details to the team.

Part of Structures | Alair's process involves assigning an in-house interior designer to work with homeowners to help narrow down the finishing choices and color palette and bring their clients' ideas to life. Designer Millie Eggert immediately began working with the wife to define a



For the dining room, designer Millie Eggert chose a gilded Talia Grande chandelier with swirled glass globes to hang from a floating ceiling over the oval table designed by a local woodworker.

**right:**  
The butler's pantry features an entire wall of glass-fronted custom cabinetry that holds the homeowners' collection of heirloom family dinnerware. "It's my dream pantry," says the wife.





The primary bedroom's ceiling took many hours to design and construct and was a collaboration by architect Bill Huey and the Structures | Alair building team. A four-poster bed covered in woven lampakanai rope nods to the marsh grasses and watery environs outside.





A Lloyd Flanders sectional from the Mesa Collection anchors the covered outdoor porch overlooking marshland. Neutral "Fife Sahara" fabric keeps the focus on the landscape.



coastal palette of blues and aquas that would complement and not distract from the sweeping natural views outside of the windows. The color palette moves through every room, with shades of blue on cabinetry, tile backsplashes and in showers, walls and ceilings. Areas of shiplap applied to walls and ceilings add to the coastal feel, while elegant lighting fixtures in brass and glass throughout the home add a touch of formality in the mostly casual home.

"The homeowners really wanted their spaces to be livable and functional," says Eggert, "so I was always asking questions like, 'How do you see yourself using this space on a daily basis?' We added a butler's pantry that is very functional for entertaining, with a second dishwasher, beverage drawer coolers and a full wall of glass-fronted cabinetry to hold several sets of family china that have been passed down over the years." Quartz counters there and in the main kitchen are maintenance-free.

Functionality continues into the private spaces of the home. The primary suite can be shut off from the rest of the home, leaving guests to relax in their own private spaces in the three en suite upstairs bedrooms and a fourth guest suite in the nearby standalone guesthouse. The setup is particularly helpful for extended stays by family members.

Every room on the main level features bespoke architectural detailing that makes this a truly custom home. Ceilings, in particular, got a lot of love. Huey designed the primary bedroom ceiling as an octagonal domed tray ceiling to mimic the sky. The Structures | Alair team took extra steps to black out the two long walls of windows in the room during the daytime so they could laser-cut the ceilings. Eggert finished the wooden ceiling in Benjamin Moore's "Woodlawn Blue" and added a magnificent white beaded Visual Comfort chandelier.

While Eggert worked with the homeowners to specify all of the home's fixed finishes, such as walls, ceilings, floors, countertops and lighting fixtures, designer Rebekah Carter of Red Element Design Studio was handed the job of coordinating furnishings. "The color palette was already set, and the homeowner brought in some fabrics she loved as well as inspiration photos," Carter says. "It was my job to thread everything together and add a few new pieces in keeping with the Lowcountry aesthetic. I did not want to block the views anywhere, especially in special rooms like the primary bedroom. The view from the windows is stunning." Carter found special furniture, such as a pop-up TV cabinet, to ensure the design did not infringe on the water views. "It really is a dream bedroom," she adds.

The grand stair tower requested by the homeowners is designed with an equally impressive pecky cypress ceiling and custom serpentine wrought-iron handrails. "We chose a French-feeling light, airy and large chandelier to hang from the stair tower's ceiling," says Eggert. "We needed something big because the space is massive but did not want the lighting fixture to dominate the space and take away from the beauty of the custom ceiling and railing. The stair tower is particularly beautiful when lit up at night."

Huey was excited to find retro tongue-and-groove pickwick wood paneling at local millwork supplier Southern





The back of the home contains plentiful opportunities for outdoor living and recreation, answering one of the homeowners' requests for ample alfresco relaxation space. On the pool deck, Milano wicker chaise lounges provide a sunny spot to hang out, while several covered decks and porches provide shade for hotter weather.

Lumber and Millwork, which has been in business for more than 80 years. A staple in family rooms in the 1950s and '60s, pickwick's characteristic ridges and scoops provide a unique profile when applied behind built-in bookcases and cabinetry in the husband's study. The detail continues on the ceiling with the addition of wooden beams.

Additional built-ins surrounding the cast stone fireplace in the living room feature textural woven rattan insets in cabinetry doors. The theme of extraordinary ceilings continues in the living room and kitchen with coffered ceilings and in the dining room with a floating ceiling. "There are so many awesome details everywhere. My hardest job was finding balance and determining a single focal point for each room," Eggert says.

"There was much more detailing than in a typical project," agrees Newton. "It's nice to have a client who makes an investment in the architectural intricacies. It makes for a rewarding job."

The architectural detailing extends to the home's exterior, where the team used low-maintenance materials that require minimal annual care to withstand the harsh elements and salt air. "PVC trim, shingles and siding along with TimberTech decking and composite shutters, brick, stucco, zinc gutters and a hand-crimped Freedom Gray copper roof ensure very little time is needed by the homeowners to maintain this home in pristine condition," says Newton.

With less time focused on exterior maintenance, the homeowners can enjoy the expansive outdoor living areas they requested from the very beginning when the residence was on the drawing board. With 13,000 square feet of space under roof (and only 6,000 of that heated interior space), there are porches, decks, a pool, and patios galore. "We have almost as much outdoor space as indoor space," says the homeowner. "There are so many places for us to sit and take in the view, read a book or play Ping-Pong on the lower patio. We are full of awe and wonder at how the house turned out. We love it so much." \*

**Dana W. Todd** is a professional writer specializing in interior design, real estate, luxury homebuilding, landscape design, architecture and fine art.

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