



CUSTOM MADE The addition of a screened-in porch to the classic two-story Southern exterior, and the dramatic gallery space at the heart of the great room, show an inspired level of customization in the home's design.





HOME SHOWCASE

Inside and out

THIS PARK-SIDE PALMETTO BLUFF PALACE'S UNIQUE LOT CREATED A WEALTH OF ARCHITECTURAL POSSIBILITIES.

STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN
PHOTOS BY RICHARD LEO JOHNSON

When creating something truly custom, tradition must be given its due reverence, even as it is ignored completely. After all, traditions merely exist because they worked in the past. Creation is an act of taking those traditions and pointing them toward something greater.

There are signs of this respectful rule-breaking all over this stunning Palmetto Bluff home. Start with the façade, which echoes the stately Southern grandeur of a two-level wraparound porch, while adding to it a dramatically large screened-in outdoor space on the left.

"They're on a corner lot, so they wanted to take advantage of views out to the park and to the side street," said **Allison Bonner, founding partner with Pearce Scott Architects**. "They entertain a lot, so they wanted large outdoor spaces."

Another customized twist on tradition lies in the great room with its towering two-story open-air gallery that serves the owners' artistic sensibilities.

"The owners are avid art collectors and wanted a space to display their collection," Bonner said. "The mezzanine at the second floor of the great room allows you to see the art from both floors as well as create a gallery feel."

Defying tradition has never looked so amazing.



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The carriage house

The entire project was completed in two phases, with the first phase consisting of the carriage house. While the main house and the connector had always been part of the plans, the team found that when it came to driving in nails, their work wasn't finished yet.

"There's always a difference when you design on paper versus in the real world," said architect Pearce Scott. "Something always changes. We had to go out on-site and modify it based on existing conditions once the carriage house was built, playing with the level of the ground to make sure it would still work with the main house."



The office

While the main gallery was kept fairly neutral to allow the artwork to shine, the cozy office eschews the rich dark woods of the traditional office to better showcase the owners' curios.

"It's very cozy, and the casework turned out very interesting," said Scott. "And again, it let us display art and artifacts. It just makes it feel more comfortable."



The kitchen

Another tradition that is gleefully ignored here is the trend toward opening kitchens up to the same soaring height as an attached great room. With this kitchen being located underneath the mezzanine, the lower height on the ceiling ironically created a better sense of openness.

"They wanted it open to the great room, and a lot of times with that structure you'll see a high ceiling," said Scott. "We like to drop the ceiling in the kitchen; not tremendously, but enough to get more task lighting and allow it to be usable."

BRIGHT IDEA Allowing the upper mezzanine to span the kitchen entrance creates a marvelous sense of space. A lower kitchen ceiling also allows for better lighting.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Rules are rules, but sometimes rules can be broken. Pearce Scott and Allison Bonner lay out a few ways you can break the rules and reap the rewards.

Stackable is not a four-letter word. For many, the mental image of a stackable washer and dryer might conjure up visions of single-unit appliances behind cheap aluminum accordion doors in a summer rental somewhere. But today's full-size stackables offer all the utility at half the footprint. "A lot of people are resistant because they think a stackable doesn't work as well, but it can save so much space," said Bonner.

Huddle up. In larger rooms furniture can be arranged to create smaller, more intimate spaces that never feel cut off from the rest of the home. "Do not be afraid to move the furniture out from against the wall," said Scott.

Create smaller areas. Those who entertain often might think that you need to create a single space for mingling, but letting the party breathe is easy with a few breakout spaces. "There are two full-seating areas in the great room, and it's nice to have that separate area," said Scott.

Play with the structure. Much as the screened-in porch breaks up the symmetry of the façade, a noticeable bump-out along one side of the home adds visual interest to the outside while creating a unique space within. "That was a specific request they made in order to accommodate a day bed," said Scott. "It ended up adding a really fun element to the exterior." LL