

ARCHITECTURE / H. PEARCE SCOTT,  
PEARCE SCOTT ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN / CORTNEY BISHOP,  
CORTNEY BISHOP DESIGN  
HOME BUILDERS / SCOTT, CRAIG  
AND MATT THOMAS,  
CS THOMAS CONSTRUCTION



# SECOND NATURE

A DESIGNER DISTILLS AN EARTHY VISION FOR A  
FAMILY'S COASTAL SOUTH CAROLINA RETREAT.

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In the living room of this light-splashed Palmetto Bluff home, designer Cortney Bishop complemented architect H. Pearce Scott's fireplace design with a scagliola mantel by François & Co. A pair of Verellen's Clarence sofas, perched atop a hand-knotted rug from Amadi Carpets in West Hollywood, joins Kelly Wearstler's Sonara Swivel chairs for EJ Victor—whose fluid movements increase the feeling of openness to the adjoining kitchen. The drapery panels feature Zak+Fox's cross-hatched Bamako linen.

Cradled by a lush subtropical landscape and the May River hugging its perimeter, Palmetto Bluff epitomizes the South Carolina Lowcountry—a place where a slower pace of life is not only romanticized but embraced. For a pair of clients who call New York home for most of the year, the serene destination has become an ideal escape from the chaotic concrete jungle. Since the couple both grew up in the Carolinas with many happy memories of life on the coast, they hoped to introduce their two young children to their Southern roots, conceiving of a compound where they could spend long weekends and host big groups of family and friends.

Designer Cortney Bishop felt a kinship with the clients from their very first meeting. "The wife is very elegant and sophisticated. She and her husband both work in high-powered careers and have such a presence, but they have a warm, hospitable, Southern flair, too," notes the South Carolina native. "I immediately got a grasp of their innate style." During an early design presentation, in fact, when Bishop presented a light fixture the clients already had on a private wish list, "That's when I knew that we were cosmically, completely aligned," the wife enthuses.

Bishop's appreciation for Palmetto Bluff's scenery stems from a childhood spent on a similar barrier island up the coast. "It's a beautiful location, very natural and uninhibited, with vast swaths of sea grass, marsh and live oak trees," Bishop expresses. "I wanted to give the clients a kind of *laissez-faire*, relaxed Southern vibe for a casual entertaining home here, versus their fast-paced life in New York."





Bishop extended the Exquisite Surfaces marble floors into the breakfast area, where a walnut-finish table by Jacob May Design holds court with Laura Kirar's Maketto side chairs for McGuire and a built-in banquette. Peter Fasano's Crewelwork linen in acorn appears on accent pillows before a panorama of custom steel windows proffering lush views of Lowcountry landscape.



A careful balance of classic and contemporary was core to the project even before Bishop came on board. A year earlier, the homeowners had tapped architect H. Pearce Scott to design a carriage house on the same piece of land—with plans to eventually build a larger, four-bedroom main residence to complement it. The carriage house and, by extension, main residence, “took inspiration from a traditional Southern tobacco barn form,” explains Scott, who worked with project architect Allison Bonner and project manager Amanda Denmark to craft both structures, striking a balance between old and new. The “new” is evident in an open-concept floor plan that caters to the family’s plans to entertain; the “old” comes in the

form of materials. Walls of shiplap—scaled to eight inches for a contemporary effect—put a spin on local vernacular, while the home’s chimney is molded from old-fashioned Tabby, a sturdy concoction of sand, lime and crushed oyster shells known colloquially as “Lowcountry concrete.” Also instrumental in the project were general contractors and brothers Scott, Craig and Matt Thomas, who the architect commends for translating the traditional material into a modern use. “They had five or six different mockups done in the field to ensure we had the right mix and size of oyster shells,” Scott says of the brothers, who also sourced the steel window systems that lend the bright and airy effect the clients requested throughout.

The kitchen’s Shaker-style cabinetry dons Sherwin-Williams’ Urbane Bronze, complementing dark marble countertops from Kelca Counters. The Calacatta Arabescato Vagli marble backsplash from AGM Imports offsets olive shades on The Urban Electric Co.’s Chiltern Double pendant. McGuire’s Bercut swivel counter stools add subtle masculinity.





**Above:** In the master bathroom, a custom vanity topped with Calacatta Arabescato Vagli marble from AGM Imports wears the same shade used for the kitchen cabinetry. Breaking up the lines of the poplar shiplap paneling Bishop chose to enhance Scott's architecture, a pair of Made Goods' Gage mirrors reflects French brass-toned Graceline faucets by Michael Berman for Rohl.

**Opposite:** A walnut spindle bed by The Beautiful Bed Company pops against a guest bedroom's walls, which Bishop graced with Phillip Jeffries' Arboretum wallcovering in taupe. Its muted earth tones reappear on Pampa's hand-loomed wool Mariana rug, Arteriors' Odessa lamp, a Moroccan coverlet and draperies fashioned from Susan Connor New York's Lacuna linen.





Walls painted with Farrow & Ball's Mouse's Back bring moodiness to the master bedroom, where light filters through Holland & Sherry draperies. Niguel dressers by Lawson-Fenning flank a Kelly Wearstler bed for EJ Victor. The midcentury Paolo Buffa chairs and a 1940s burl wood table are both from Art & Antiques Hunter in Dallas. The Bright Side 4 chandelier is by Allied Maker.

As a full-service design-build firm, Bishop's team actively specified interior finishes to enhance Scott's architecture: cerused white oak for millwork and ceiling beams, reclaimed marble checkerboard floors that strike both classic and graphically modern notes, and kitchen cabinetry in a "grounding" deep gray-green that prompted the palette for the entire home. Taking cues from the surrounding landscape, these enigmatic shades include moss green and mahogany, moody gray and taupe, and dollops of muted petrol.

"My whole philosophy on design is not to distract from the outdoors," says Bishop, who kept the design harmonious with its natural surroundings. In the breakfast room, for example, a custom walnut-finish table and bespoke banquette serve as supporting characters to the verdant foliage visible through a panorama of knee-height steel windows. Giving similar nods to nature, a palm-print wallcovering graces a guest bedroom, while a gleaming brass sconce of a single frond presides over the living room.

Artworks sourced both stateside and abroad—such as an expressive abstract by Atlanta artist Sally King Benedict in a front hallway and a mixed-media work by Belgian artist Sabine Maes in the entry—reveal a restrained elegance that meshes perfectly with the homeowners' personalities. "This piece shows their sophistication and offers a sense of landing," Bishop explains. And what could be more appropriate for an arrival from the big city to Palmetto Bluff, which always signals it's time to unwind? **L**