

Easy Breezy

An outdoor dining area drinks in the natural daylight. The dining table is custom through Forsyth Metal Works and dining chairs through Gloster.

EVOKING *the* EXHALE

A design dream team fashions a luxurious, low-key Lowcountry retreat



Lowcountry Appeal

Designed by architect Pearce Scott, builder Richard Best and interior designer Shelley Wilkins, this six-bedroom Bluffton, South Carolina, home maintains a sense of ease and proportion. "Overall, we were going for the sense of balanced asymmetry," notes Scott. "We embraced traditional forms, materials and details, and tried to use them in interesting ways so that the final composition—while pushing the limits of a traditional Lowcountry aesthetic—is still very appropriate for the neighborhood."

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Relax & Unwind

For a comfortable and relaxing great room—where the homeowners’ two dogs love to lounge on the sofa—Wilkins incorporated tons of texture, which not only adds interest, but is also forgiving to any stains or spills. The sofa and armchair are through Hickory Chair and the rug is from Keivan Woven Arts.



FOR THEIR VACATION PROPERTY in Bluffton, South Carolina, a pair of homeowners—permanent residents of Texas—were clear on one thing: Entering this coastal retreat should feel like an exhale.

“It was a feeling we wanted to evoke when you walked in the house—that everyone’s welcome and comfortable, and you can take a deep breath,” says interior designer Shelley Wilkins, who worked closely alongside longtime colleagues architect Pearce Scott and builder Richard Best to create a luxurious yet laid-back escape.

While the six-bedroom home needed to lend itself to entertaining the clients’ family—children, grandchildren and two dogs—and friends, creating a relaxing sense of escape was also important. “We wanted the house to accommodate their family but not be too ostentatious,” says Wilkins. “I wanted it to feel like when they’re here, they’re in a totally different place than Texas.”

Blue Bayou

The wife “had always wanted a blue kitchen,” says Wilkins, who centered her design scheme around a blue Walker Zanger tile backsplash, painting the cabinetry a complementary deep cyan (Sherwin-Williams Anchors Aweigh). The light fixtures are through Hudson Valley Lighting and the barstools are through Century Furniture.

To achieve this, the design team embraced the home’s Lowcountry setting, namely the Palmetto Bluff neighborhood’s stunning marsh views. “Location was key,” says Best. “The clients selected a beautiful home overlooking the marshes and the river beyond. Part of the design challenge was to capture those views in as many different areas as possible.”

Indeed, the scenery is “embraced from the moment you enter the home, where you see it framed through the foyer and great room,” says Scott. In lieu of a formal dining room, the team built out a kitchen window niche, where a breakfast table offers front-row views of the surrounding land.

The crown jewel, though—and one of the clients’ favorite spaces—is the screened-in back porch, where the wife loves to watch the sunrise with her morning coffee. Sprawling the entire back of the house, the outdoor spaces include a dining area and seating area, both featuring performance-lined cane seating that achieves both durability and dimension. “We wanted it to be more clean and fresh, with a Lowcountry aesthetic,” says Wilkins.





Dine by Design

top left Stained cabinetry and a rustic pendant from Currey & Company create a handsome wet bar area that's perfect for entertaining. *top right* In lieu of a formal dining room, the client requested a spacious dining nook, where breakfast can be enjoyed alongside views of the sprawling scenery. The built-in bench cushion is upholstered in a red-wine-friendly performance fabric.

She took a similar approach to the master bedroom, which opens up to the back porch and serves as a peaceful retreat for the homeowners — plus their two dogs. Wilkins outfitted the room in a soft color scheme and comfortable details including custom bedding from Legacy Home and cozy Charles Stewart Company armchairs by the fireplace, where “the clients read or just sit and catch up after a long day,” she says.

The designer anchored the rest of the home in touches of texture and shades of blue, most notably in the kitchen, where the cabinetry is painted a deep cyan. A blue tile backsplash from Walker Zanger creates a graphic note while a mixed-metal hood adds patina.

The designer also incorporated performance fabrics throughout the home: on the kitchen barstools and dining bench (“so no one would feel bad if they spilled red wine,” says Wilkins) as well as in the grandchildren’s bunk room, a playful space with over-full-size bunk beds that can accommodate plenty of sleepovers.

“Everything in the house has some type of texture to it,” Wilkins says. “It’s warm, it’s inviting and welcoming, and it’s not too precious.” *See Resources, Back of Book.*

Hidden Workhorse

The home’s butler’s pantry functions as a back kitchen, providing extra storage and also a solution for keeping the main kitchen clean, says Wilkins.

Calm & Quiet

The primary bedroom opens up onto the back porch; Wilkins created a sense of refuge through calming hues. The drapery fabric is Cowtan & Tout and the bedding is custom through Legacy Home. The armchair is Charles Stewart, the bedside lamp is Visual Comfort and the nightstand is Hickory White.



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Golden Hour

right The clients didn’t want a visible tub skirt, so the main bathroom’s tub—built by Ralph Chapman of Creative Stone—was undermounted with the entire side made from Calacatta gold marble. In the center of the room, a marble herringbone pattern anchors the space.



Sunny Outlook

The back porch—which overlooks the marsh and is the perfect vantage point for sunrise views—features cane seating from Gloster, upholstered in performance fabric by Perennials (on the sofa) and Kravet (on the armchairs). The zinc coffee table is Mr. Brown London.





Color-Infused

When designing this guest bedroom, Wilkins used blue-and-white-drapery fabric from Raoul Textiles as her starting point, tying in its color scheme with a rug from Keivan Woven Arts, bedding from Home Treasures with a custom upholstered headboard.



Play Time

right Right outside the bunk room is a TV lounge where the homeowners' grandchildren can gather. "You can pile a bunch of grandchildren and all their friends in there and they can just have a great time," says Wilkins. The armchair is through Hickory Chair and the sofa is Lee Industries.



Room for All

above Taking advantage of the guest room's vaulted ceilings, Wilkins placed a pendant light from Lowcountry Originals in the center of the room to add a sense of coziness. *left* Featuring fun twin-size bunk beds, the bunk room was designed for the homeowners' grandchildren and their friends. Wilkins carried in the home's blue color scheme via bedding from Legacy Home and a rug from Keivan Woven Arts.