



A touch of history

TOUR A PALMETTO BLUFF STUNNER THAT TIPS ITS CAP TO THE RICH ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION THAT MADE THE LOWCOUNTRY FAMOUS.

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PHOTOS BY ELLIS CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY



With its distinctive red rooflines grazing the tops of the trees, the Palmetto Bluff home of Sebrina and Chris Leigh-Jones cuts a distinctively modern profile. Apart from all the crisp white newness of it, there is an intriguing freshness to the way its various slopes and dormers play with the traditional Lowcountry design.

But those with a trained eye may spot something familiar in the double-height porches of its front façade, something that harkens back to Bluffton's pre-development era. That familiarity is very much by design.

"When we first came down here to build, I spotted a place on Calhoun Street called Seven Oaks," said Chris Leigh-Jones. "That's a very typical Lowcountry-style modest farmhouse, and I said, 'That's it.' And we went for that."

Working with architects Pearce Scott and Allison Bonner, Leigh-Jones took the basic A-frame construction of the iconic Seven Oaks house and put a modern spin on it.

"We started with Seven Oaks as a general inspiration," said Scott. "One of the hallmarks of Lowcountry architecture is that it's generational. You'll have a house that was



MODERN CLASSIC A study in Lowcountry architecture, the home's façade blends the double porches of a classic Bluffton manor home, with tabby accents and a split-level design to mimic additions made over time.

FARM CHARM

Inside, this modern love letter to classic design blends old and new through shiplap accent walls and modern farmhouse flair.



LIGHT TOUCH Lighting helps keep the vintage motif from becoming overbearing, adding pops of modern style to the overall aesthetic.



built 150 years ago, then 50 years later was added onto by another generation.”

By following that thread, Scott sought to recreate generations of improvements and renovations through his design. Tabby was used in the foundation to add old Bluffton flavor, while the owner’s bedroom was elevated and set off from the main design to emulate an addition that may have been added on at some point.

Evoking that sense of history was nothing new for Leigh-Jones, who has built his career on historic restoration in the Charleston area. In fact, much of the material for the home came from his work. Flooring from Star Gospel Mission, beadboard from a Spartanburg chapel and beams from a home on Charlotte Street all share space.

“I recycled a lot of materials, like the flooring in the house that



GREAT OUTDOORS Naturally, it wouldn’t be a Lowcountry home without ample outdoor space. This massive lanai soaks up the rustic surrounds.



was cut in the 1960s and sat in the back of a jail in Charleston,” said Leigh-Jones. “It’s like a middle-aged man’s face. A few marks make it look better.”

And while the antique materials and architecture inspired by an ante-bellum manor may add historic flair, at its heart this home is thoroughly modern. You’ll find contemporary sightlines in the open living space, a distinctive plunge pool just off the porch, and behind the walls you’ll find some cutting-edge materials.

Using structural insulated panels (SIPs), Leigh-Jones was able to insulate and build in a fraction of the time. “They’re very good for working in downtown Charleston in a tight urban space, because you can take all the labor offsite,” said Leigh-Jones.

Everything old is new again, and within this eye-catching Southern manor you’ll find that history has never looked more beautiful. *LL*



THE HOME TEAM

Architect: Pearce Scott Architects
Landscape design: Mike Small
General contractor: Simplified Construction
Interior Design: Luxury Simplified
SIPS system: EcoPanels
Roof: May River Roofing
Building supplies: Grayco

Five ideas for your home

MINOR ENHANCEMENTS & UPGRADES THAT MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE.

1. SPEND WITH YOUR EYES

Whether you're building a family home or a grand estate, the budget is never far from your mind. Leigh-Jones has an idea for spending smartly. "You spend where your eye falls. Don't spend a lot on bedrooms where you never spend any time."

2. GET OUT IN FRONT OF COSTS

Speaking of the budget, Leigh-Jones says most of your money is spent before the first hammer ever falls. "The biggest place to save on costs is the design itself. On a piece of paper it's easy to get costs down. They tend to sneak up there once the design is finished."

3. MIND YOUR MATERIALS

Even something as simple as plaster can help achieve a historic look, as it has here. "The use of plaster between historic beams gives it character," said Scott. "Plaster has more texture, and if you're going for that (historic) feel, it adds a lot, especially next to antique beams."

4. BUCK THE TRENDS

Everyone knows an exquisite home needs a sprawling master closet and a stunning formal dining room, right? Well, are you everyone? "You don't have to think like everyone else. You don't need a walk-in wardrobe," said Leigh Jones. As for the kitchen, "Get a big island and let the kids eat there."

5. BUILT-IN EFFICIENCY

Heating and cooling a home in the Lowcountry can be painless if you plan right. The SIPs used in the construction of this home contain triple the amount of insulation needed for Code, and the combination of taller ceilings and shaded windows helps keep heat from the sun to a minimum.

