

# NEW OLD HOUSE

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WINTER 2022

OLD HOUSE JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE

\$11.99US \$13.99CAN

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## Forty miles west of Charleston,

set along the banks of the Ashepoo River, this 1,800-acre property dates back to 1697 as a land grant from King Charles II. Pond, riverbank, Southern live oak, and loblolly pine mingle with the structural remnants of a plantation past. It's believed that three homes had been built on site—and all succumbed to either fire or natural disaster. The land's natural beauty persists.

"When our clients purchased the parcel, the existing house had been rebuilt over the years, and was small and insignificant compared to the scale of the property," explains Terry Pylant, senior principal at Historical Concepts, an award-winning architectural firm based in Atlanta. In its place, they wanted a home that expressed their passions for history, art, land conservation, hunting, and exotic collectibles.

"The clients envisioned a house that would draw from the setting's historic elements, evoking a sense of age but also

# riverside *renewal*

HISTORICAL CONCEPTS  
DESIGNS A GRACIOUS AND  
CLASSICAL HOME FOR AN OLD  
LOWCOUNTRY ESTATE.

BY JENNIFER SPERRY  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC PIASECKI

The rear façade, visible from the river, is given a formal treatment with oversize columns.



a feeling of welcome and ease," says Pylant, who, along with project manager Ryan Yurcaba, collaborated with builder Terry Hoff and interior designer Barbara Westbrook on the intricate project. Construction lasted nearly two years and required both modern techniques and old-world craftsmanship. "From the interior trim carpentry to the floors to the cabinetry, we had phenomenal artisans working on this project," notes Pylant. Today, much of the land is within a conservation easement, protecting it from development and preserving sensitive river habitat for waterfowl. With the easement capping the main building's

size at 5,000 square feet, Pylant's out-of-the-box idea was to separate sleeping spaces from the living/entertaining areas. Extending symmetrically off the main house and flanking an ornamental boxwood garden are two detached wings, one containing a gracious master suite and the other two private guest rooms. "This solution is drawn from the historic forms of working homesteads where kitchens, drying rooms, and carriage structures would have been separate from the main house," says Pylant. "It's a modern house, but we wanted it to tell a story, as if it had changed and evolved over time."

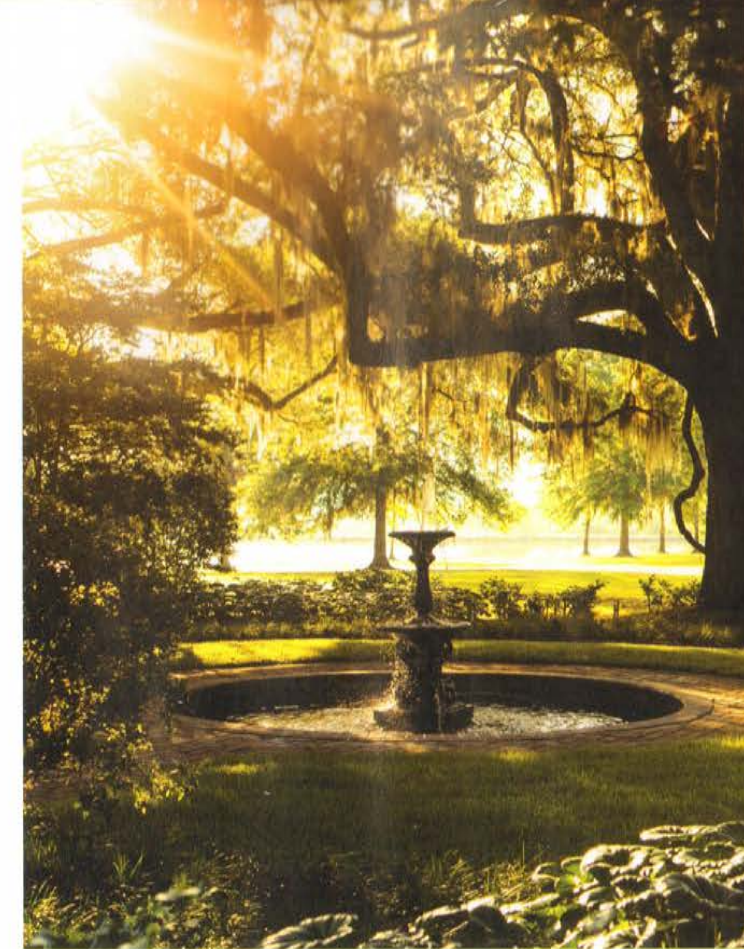
**Above** (top) The husband's East Gallery has a ceiling painted in the manner of Audubon. (below) The ceiling of the wife's West Gallery is painted like the night sky. **Left** Just beyond the entry is the Great Hall, a comfortable space that's "like a domestic natural-history museum," says the architect. **Opposite** In the main house, the entry hall is a 45-foot-long picture gallery.



**Above** Beyond the Great Hall is the Storytelling Room. **Right** This casual, sunlit space is on the river side of the house. **Top** This view of the Great Hall, toward the kitchen, shows its Colonial character. **Opposite** The Storytelling Room is furnished like an indoor porch; it was imagined as a former verandah.



A befitting house was the missing piece:



**Left** The property is awash in intriguing features, including fountains and a restored parterre garden that dates to 1703. **Below** The main house is symmetrically flanked by separate pavilions. **Opposite (top)** Over many years, historic rice-pond dikes were rebuilt, fields replanted, outbuildings revived. A home befitting the property's gravitas had been the missing piece. **(bottom)** An outdoor brick terrace is on the river side of the house.



The owners developed a design narrative rooted in the early 1800s. Pylant contributed by suggesting a stately Greek Revival treatment, as that was a favored style of the antebellum South. The main house, reached via a winding oak allée, features a Greek Doric entry portico and a roof parapet with delicate fretwork. A zinc roof and Savannah Grey brick are purposeful nods to regional Charleston flavor.

Scale was a vital consideration. The whole is a study in Palladian symmetry. "The house itself is small relative to what you see around it, but its details are large. Front columns, two feet in diameter, stand almost 13 feet tall. The front windows are four and a half feet wide and almost 10 feet tall. Every custom detail had to fit stylistically and proportionally into the setting," Pylant adds.

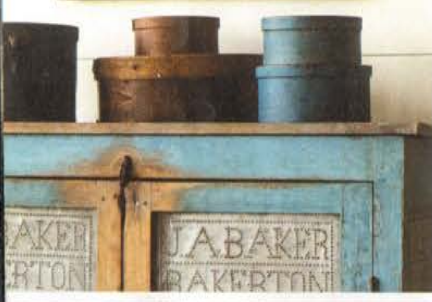
Inside, the main pavilion's unique layout begins with an eight by 45-foot picture gallery, which doubles as an entry vestibule and an art display. Immediately following is the Great Hall, which, at 25 by 45 feet, is a grand, inviting space for relaxing and formal dining. Dotted with hunting trophies and wildlife artwork, "It's like a domestic version of a natural-history museum," Pylant points out.

Reclaimed oak trusses in the vaulted ceiling add character but also contribute to the fictional timeline. According to Pylant, "It's as if at some point in time, the 'existing' plaster ceiling had been removed and the timbers exposed to allow more light into the space."

To the left of the Great Hall is the kitchen, which tells its own tale of time passing. "It's meant to look like a porch that was enclosed around the 1920s,

*"The owners had already proven to be respectful stewards of the land," says the architect. "With this house, they have established a lasting legacy."*





**Above** A breakfast room just off the kitchen is similarly finished in shiplap. **Left** Rustic elements make up the kitchen, which was designed to look like a former porch enclosed ca. 1920s.

**Opposite** The kitchen island is large and rustic, with open shelf storage.

when electricity and indoor plumbing became available,” notes the designer. The exposed ceiling beams shift orientation to represent the extension of the “porch” off the main roofline. The beams were crafted from loblolly pine harvested on site and faux painted by noted decorative artist Bob Christian.

To keep up the '20s appearance, the design team nixed upper cabinets, and opted for a rustic island with open shelving underneath. William C. Pritchard Co. crafted all of the custom cabinetry and cleverly hid the fridge behind paneling shaped like an ice box. Reclaimed heart-pine flooring contributes to the

new-old aesthetic.

A casual, sunlit space off the great hall and as wide, the Storytelling Room is another entertaining hub. Large steel windows frame views of live oaks and the river beyond. “Its design stems from the idea that it was originally a verandah,” Pylant explains. Beyond the windows stand full fluted columns: “Because this elevation is visible from the river, the owners wanted a formal river façade.”

While much of the main pavilion facilitates gatherings, Pylant snuck in private destinations for the owners, the most intriguing of which are his and hers galleries, sited at either end of the long



*To the left of the Great Hall is the kitchen, which was designed to look like a porch, later converted. Flooring of reclaimed heart pine is one rustic element.*



**Above** In the master pavilion, the bathroom is a hyphen connecting the bedroom to a walk-in closet. **Top Right** The bathroom is designed to look as if it were done in the 1920s or 1930s. **Right** Bedroom pavilions appear to be converted outbuildings. **Bottom** The master suite has a Colonial feeling. **Opposite** The traditional bathroom has a marble hex-tile floor.

entry vestibule. The wife's West Gallery is lined with leaded-glass cabinets that display her collections of Japanese art, snow globes, and ceramics. Its ceiling, painted by Bob Christian, represents the night sky as it would have appeared on December 28, 1810 (the clients' anniversary date appended with the fictional circa year of the house). The husband's East Gallery has a decorative ceiling painted in the style of Audubon, after the couple's collection of 1800s prints from *Birds of America*. Another quiet space is the library, pan-

eled in sinker cypress recovered from the property's original rice ponds. Inside their master suite, or the master pavilion, design elements, materials, and furnishings form a Colonial palette, as in much of the main home. The master bath, however, looks as if it had been added in the 1920s or '30s. The bathroom is a hyphen connecting the pavilion's bedroom on one side and walk-in closet on the other. The arrangement suggests that the whole is comprised of converted outbuildings. **FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 116.**



*This Lowcountry home is inspired in equal measure by conversation, creativity, and hospitality.*

FROM HISTORICAL CONCEPTS' BOOK VISIONS OF HOME

In the library of a new house in South Carolina's Lowcountry, Historical Concepts paneled the walls in cypress reclaimed from a nearby pond, creating an elegant backdrop for interior designer Barbara Westbrook's selection of antiques.

**WATER FEATURES**  
Cristina Iglesias  
cristinaiglesias.com

**MURALIST**  
Dominic Hunt with Gorman Studios  
gormanstudios.com

**MARBLE**  
Marmi Natural Stone  
marmistone.com

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**EXTERIOR DOORS AND WINDOWS**  
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artisansdubois.com

**WOOD FLOORS**  
French-Brown  
french-brown.com

**TIMBERS**  
Timberlyne timberlyne.com

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**ARCHITECT**  
BarnesVanze Architects, Inc.  
barnesvanze.com

**CONTRACTOR**  
Carmichael Construction  
carmichaelconstruction.com

**INTERIOR DESIGNER**  
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laurenlliess.com

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**  
Jennifer Horn Landscape Architecture, LLC  
jh-la.com

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**  
1200 Architectural Engineers  
1200ae.com



**SHINGLE STYLE: COASTAL CONNECTION**

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**ARCHITECTURE**  
Peter Zimmerman, Richard Pinkerton at Peter Zimmerman Architects  
pzarchitects.com

**BUILDER**  
Cataldo Custom Builders  
cataldobuilders.com

**INTERIOR DESIGN**  
Mary Hastings Interiors  
maryhastingsinteriors.com

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**  
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andersenwindows.com

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**RETRACTABLE SCREENS**  
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**ARCHITECT**  
Jeffrey Dungan Architects  
jeffreydungan.com

**CONTRACTOR**  
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keecodevelopment.com

**PLASTER WALLS**  
Struttura struttura.us

**WOOD TIMBERS**  
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**HARDWOOD FLOORS**  
Wellborn and Wright  
wellbornwright.com

**LIGHTING CONSULTANT**  
Coolhouse Lighting  
coolhousecollection.com



**LONG ISLAND SOUND: CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS**  
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**ARCHITECTURE**  
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hendrickschurchill.com

**INTERIOR DESIGN**  
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**BUILDER**  
Prutting & Company  
prutting.com

**KITCHEN ISLAND**  
built by Greg St. John  
stjohnsbridge.com

**ISLAND CEILING LIGHT**  
Danish Design Store  
danishdesignstore.com

**RANGE AND HOOD**  
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**DISHWASHER**  
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**WALL AND CEILING PAINT**  
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waterlox.com

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urbanarchaeology.com

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Fourteenth Colony Lighting  
fourteenthcolonylighting.com

**STEP LIGHTS**  
Bruck Lighting Systems  
brucklighting.com



**A NEW CLASSIC: RIVERSIDE RENEWAL**  
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**ARCHITECTURE**  
Historical Concepts  
historicalconcepts.com

**INTERIOR DESIGN**  
Barbara Westbrook, Westbrook Interiors  
westbrookinteriors.com

**BUILDER**  
Terry Hoff Construction  
terryhoffconstruction.com

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**  
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hootenlanddesign.com

**DECORATIVE PAINTING**  
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**CABINETRY**  
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wcpritchard.com

**KITCHEN & BATH STONE**  
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walkerzanger.com

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strattoncreek.com

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**WOOD WINDOWS**  
Marvin marvin.com

**ZINC ROOF**  
RheinZink rheinzink.us

**PLASTER ARTISAN**  
Charleston Plaster Co.  
charlestonplaster.com

**INTERIOR TRIM, BEAM ERECTION**  
Tree Marsh Woodworks, Charleston, SC

**MISC. ANTIQUE DOOR HARDWARE AND FIXTURES**  
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architecturalaccents.com

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**EXTERIOR GAS LANTERNS**  
Carolina Lanterns & Lighting  
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**BRICK FLOORS**  
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**EXTERIOR SHUTTERS**  
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**INTERIOR DOORS**  
Berlin G. Myers Lumber Corp.  
berlinmyerslumber.com

**BELT & PULLEY CEILING FANS**  
Woolen Mill Fan Co.  
architecturalfans.com