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BUILT FOR LIFE

A unique Mount Pleasant home is perfectly designed to suit the family who lives there | *by* ROBIN HOWARD
photography by HOLGER OBENAU





previous:

Situated on Rathall Creek in Mount Pleasant, this coastal vernacular home provides flexible living space and plenty of entertaining options for empty nesters.

Exposed steel stringers and 4-inch-thick white oak treads bring a contemporary, youthful vibe to the entire house.

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WHEN A MOUNT PLEASANT COUPLE FOUND THEMSELVES FACING an imminent empty nest, they decided to downsize. However, they didn't just want less space; they wanted better space and a home that would work for how they live now and in the future.

This modern coastal vernacular home in Mount Pleasant has 2,800 square feet of living space in the main house and a 500-square-foot room over the garage that can be used as an office or an in-law suite. Designed by Phil Clarke of Clarke Design Group and built by Curt Wegner of Curtis Daniel Homes, this four-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath dwelling was tailor-made to fit the family's lifestyle.

The clients are a busy couple with two college-age kids. Part of their vision was a cool house that would serve as a tempting hangout for their sons and their sons' friends. "The homeowners would rather have everyone hanging out at their house instead of god knows where," Wegner says, a sentiment that aged well this past year.

The homeowners like to have informal gatherings, so comfortable conversation and game-watching areas were important. It was also crucial that the home feel cozy when it was just the two of them and allow them to age in place, should this be their forever home.

Taking cues from former houses, the couple began with a list of what they didn't want: a formal dining room, a cavernous master bedroom, lots of stairs or bathtubs. The list of what they did want included space to entertain, a large outdoor grilling area, an open steel staircase, an indoor-outdoor bar and all essential rooms on the ground floor.

The home is visually minimal with a simple, soothing color palette. Wegner added interest and texture through beautiful tile work and carpentry and bold, contemporary light fixtures.

Since the home is on the marsh, to avoid having it elevated, Wegner had to build up the land, which was no small feat. The work paid off, though; the home has



The homeowners didn't want a formal dining room or an overengineered kitchen, so the space is designed to be one of several functional areas in the larger entertaining space.

A pub room takes the place of a dining room. With a bar and multiple TVs, this is the prime hangout space on game day.

just seven stairs leading to the ground floor. As we enter, there is no formal foyer—or anything else—to interrupt the jaw-dropping view of Rathall Creek and the marsh.

Most of the home's back wall is glass and opens up, thanks to an innovative 31-foot folding door by Atlantic Architectural Windows & Doors. White oak floors run throughout the home, lending a warm contrast to white walls and cabinets.

The open living room features a linear gas fireplace with cleverly disguised vents. To the right of the fireplace, the main bedroom door is designed to sit flush with the wall, so it doesn't interrupt the horizontal lines of the shiplap wall.

In the kitchen, several different elements come together to make it feel like one sizeable functional space.

The star of the show is the staircase, with exposed steel stringers and 4-inch-thick white oak treads. Brian Fitzgerald of SC Rustic Design fabricated the railings, and Kim Wray of Kim Wray Designs suggested the unique blue-black accent color, a Benjamin Moore hue called "Raccoon Fur." Upstairs is a loft area and two bedrooms, each with a full bath.

The main bedroom is brilliantly designed. "They had a huge master bedroom in their former home, and they didn't want any wasted space in this house," Wegner says. The solution was a bedroom with just enough room for a king bed and two nightstands, and a walk-in closet that's the same size as the bedroom. With built-in drawers, the closet eliminates the need for dressers and serves as a dressing room. The arrangement keeps the bedroom visually clean and allows the expansive marsh views to take center stage.

A sliding barn door leads to a unique bathroom, also designed for how the homeowners live. One long double shower takes the place of the usual bathtub/shower combo, allowing the couple to get ready for work at the same time. The double vanity with storage tower has specialized storage to keep everything in its place.



The main bedroom is just big enough to accommodate a bed and two nightstands. The adjoining walk-in closet is the same size as the bedroom.

left:
A long double shower takes the place of the usual bathtub/shower combo.

In the kitchen, several different elements come together to make it feel like one sizeable functional space. The indoor kitchen has top-of-the-line appliances and a walnut-topped island that seats six. Ceramic tiles on the cabinet-to-ceiling backsplash are laid vertically to add visual interest without adding color. Down the hall from the kitchen, custom sliding barn doors lead to the powder room, laundry room and mudroom. The mudroom has a custom-built organizer to catch daily detritus.

There's no formal dining room in this home; instead, there is a pub room that keeps everybody connected to the action. The bar has a wine cooler, beverage cooler and ice maker, and three TVs mean there's no chance of missing a game. An innovative indoor-outdoor bar with a folding window blurs the line between the indoor kitchen and the outdoor kitchen.

Outside, a large South Carolina-made Tec grill takes center stage. A custom hood over the grill keeps air fresh in the house while the bar windows are open. Infrared heaters keep the porch toasty on chilly evenings, and fans provide additional breeze on warm days. "No matter the weather, this is where everyone gravitates," Wegner says. The patio has several comfortable seating areas and a large saltwater pool with a spa. When the 30-foot doors are open, there is no delineation between indoor and outdoor entertaining space.

Wegner draws attention to the lack of handrails that would otherwise obscure the view. Planter boxes keep the pool deck to code, but Wegner installed surface-mounted lights that shine straight up around the perimeter for added safety.

The room above the two-and-a-half-car garage is used as a home office, though Wegner added everything required should the homeowners want to use it as an in-law suite. A small hospitality kitchenette allows the homeowner to have meetings, and the suite is plumbed for a stackable washer and dryer.

Taking design risks paid off for this innovative couple. By understanding and embracing how they live and the little things that bring them joy, they created an adaptable home that expands and contracts with ease. *

Robin Howard is a freelance writer in Charleston. See more of her work at robinhowardwrites.com.

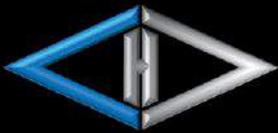
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