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Carolina

Designer Jack Phillips creates outdoor spaces in keeping with this new old house's Southern roots.

TEXT BY ANN SAMPLE

PHOTOS BY DEBORAH WHITLAW LLEWELLYN

The current trend in residential design is to create outside spaces that are on a par with interior rooms," says interior designer Jack Phillips of Palm Beach, Florida-based Jack Phillips Design. "When designing a new home in a classic way, the outdoor spaces need to reflect the antique-inspired design of the home to give the residence a sense of continuity."

In step with this trend, Phillips and architect Michael Ross Kersting of Wilmington, North Carolina-based Michael Ross Kersting Architecture recently designed a new vacation house for Frank and Carol Stout. Located on an island off of North Carolina, Wrightsville Beach, the home replaced a 70-year-old cottage nearly demolished in 1996 by Hurricane Fran. To guide the new dwelling's design, the Stouts had three major directives: It needed to withstand the area's sometimes unforgiving weather. It needed lots of outdoor space for entertaining, and its design needed to reflect the charm of the original vintage home while being suitable for living today. The design team delivered on all counts.

"The home was built to code with engineer-tested materials," says Kersting. "It is set on wooden pilings at about 8 feet above the water level to allow, when necessary, floodwaters to pass underneath the main floors." Its interior design is a combination of Anglo-Caribbean and English Georgian. "What we wanted to achieve is the West Indies look mixed with old Southern vernacular, which was inspired by Georgian design," says Phillips. "We wanted the home to be open, crisp, and clean."

In addition to its about 6,000 square feet of interior space, the Stout's home also has over 4,000 square feet of outdoor space largely comprising porches, stairs, and a 600-square-foot loggia. "It was essential that the interior and exterior spaces appeared to flow together, so the architectural details, furnishings, fabrics, and accessories had to work in harmony."

The largest single outdoor area is the loggia, created beneath the home. "Given the flood zone codes, the house had to be built on pilings," says Phillips. "Part of that space was made into a garage and storage area, and the rest was used to create an open-ended loggia." The loggia is centered on a double-sided fireplace. Louvered doors on the water side of the home can be closed when southeast winds are strong. The opposite side of the loggia opens into an intimate garden that is buffered from the street with a wall. "Sitting in the loggia feels like sitting in a living room, but given that it is open, it allows its visitors to enjoy both the water and the landscaping." In addition to the loggia, there are three porches that face the Intracoastal Waterway and a large back porch that overlooks the garden.

Vintage Elements

The feminine and lacy hammock was custom-made in North Carolina. Its style is popular in the South. Waterproofed white wicker furniture was used throughout the exterior spaces. "White wicker and the South are synonyms," says Phillips. Cushions and pillows were added for comfort and to soften the spaces. They are made from waterproofed and vintage fabrics in blues, whites, and beiges, and they have the same faded, "old-fashioned" quality that the interior textiles possess. "The variety of weatherproof fabrics available today is just incredible," says Phillips. "Designers were so limited with what they could use in the past. The variety of patterns makes it much easier to create newly old outdoor spaces that are as interesting as interiors."

Cross Breeze





Indoor Living Outside

The loggia was designed to look more like a living room than a porch. The design team used weather-proof stucco called drivet as a surface material on the walls as well as the pilings to create unity on the ground level. The ceiling is beamed. A combination of local brick and cement was used to create the flooring and the brick was also used to make a double-sided fireplace. A wooden mantel completes the fireplace. "The mantel gave me an additional space to add an architectural artifact and vintage accessories," says Phillips. "I included items I would place inside: lanterns, an antique window frame, potted plants." Louvered doors add to the Anglo-Caribbean feeling.

Shore Footing

The design team decided to make the 8-inch by 8-inch wood pilings appear larger (20 inches by 20 inches) and sheathed them in stucco. "Taking our inspiration from the older homes commonly seen in Vero Beach, Florida, we wanted the Stout's home to have a massive base and its additional floors to appear lighter," says Kersting. "This type of construction gives homes a solid, grounded appearance." Phillips adds that square columns were chosen because they are less formal than round columns and are more in keeping with typical West Indies structures. Phillips added ceiling treatments throughout the interior and exterior parts of the house to modulate the scale of the home's interior ceiling heights (12 feet and higher) and to give the home a sense of age. The decks' ceilings were outfitted with bead board and beams.



Antique Inspirations

The home's exterior is fashioned after Anglo-Caribbean dwellings that date back to the fifteenth century. The home was built on pilings to avoid flood damage. A large loggia between the pilings offers plenty of outdoor entertaining space. The home is sided with Hardieplank, a fiber-cement plank that was chosen for its durability and aesthetics. The planks resemble wood and can be painted, lending the new hurricane-proof home an antique feel. The decks are made from oil-finished ipé lumber, a medium-toned dense hardwood that Phillips says is easier to maintain than teak. The interior floors are made from oak and are stained in nearly the same tone as the decks' flooring to minimize the transition between the indoor and outdoor spaces.



*Ann Sample is a writer and editor in Wilton, Connecticut. She is the author of *New Spaces, Old World Charm: The Art of Elegant Interiors* published by McGraw-Hill (2004).*

For Resources, see page 92.

“She can travel at 29 knots and turn on a dime,” Kathryn Vecellio says. “She has great lines and wonderful spaces, both exterior and interior.”

