

AT HOME

*A step  
back in time*



**WEXFORD HOME**  
IS SPECIAL IN  
MANY ASPECTS





BY DEAN ROWLAND | PHOTOS BY JOSH GIBSON

**Promises of interior splendor tantalize** when approaching the grand British West Indies-designed home on Knightsbridge Lane in Wexford Plantation.

**T**he volute-shaped steps are made of stucco and Old Savannah brick, leading up to the custom-made oversized mahogany front door with seeded glass are reminiscent of another time, another place.

Inside the 23-foot-high foyer, one's eyes lock westward along the stained hickory flooring into the great room, beyond the patio and swimming pool, and into the boat masts in Wexford harbor beyond. The view is breathtaking.

Yes, this is a home in the Lowcountry, but this is not a Lowcountry-style home, except for its comfort, simple elegance, abundant windows drawing in the light and warmth of the sun and harbor views from most of the rooms on both floor levels. It is splendid in all of its 5,500 square feet, and the attention to every detail, from the rugs to the tile to the colors to the ambiance and to the open floor plan, tells its design story.

"This house is special," said Gunther Hammer, a retired manufacturer of specialized heating and cooling systems from Solina, Ontario, near Toronto. He and his wife, Sheila, owned a vacation home in Long Cove for four years before building in Wexford. "My family fell in love with this house" when they first visited it last July.

"One of their homes in Toronto is extremely contemporary, but their main home in Toronto is not so they have a lot of different styles that they like," said Debbie Kelley, president of Kelley Designs Inc. on Hilton Head Island, who blended those two design styles into her client's Wexford home by using most of the couple's furnishings from their former home, which she also designed. She also purchased additional pieces to complement the carryovers.

"One of the challenges for me was taking the existing (furniture) and making it look different in a totally different environment," said

Kelley, who moved to the island in 1980 and formed her company in 1985. That required considerable relocations of major pieces, artwork, rugs, a bookcase ... nearly everything.

"One of the challenges is getting the scale correct for the space," the West Virginia native said.

The challenge for Court Atkins Architects in Bluffton and Cameron & Cameron Custom Homes was how to accommodate the homeowners' initial list of "wants" and subsequent changes they required throughout the planning and construction on the tight 1/3-acre waterfront lot in Wexford. The original plan was to design and build a 4,500-square-foot home. That didn't – and couldn't – happen on the irregularly-shaped small lot that the owners purchased in 2012.

"Their list of requirements was larger than the (initial) square footage would allow," said boutique builder Nathan Cameron, an upstate New York native who formed his





own company in Bluffton four years ago. "Everything they wanted on this required quite a few go-rounds. When we started out, they wanted to drive under the house, but because of the lot size and how high the house would have to be, that required more steps," he said. Those "steps" repositioned the garage to the front of the home, for instance.

"I think what makes this house special is seeing their personality in this house, the little touches of things," Kelley said. "They like things very clean and simple and calming."

She and Cameron, who have partnered their considerable talent in about 10 other homes, succeeded ever since Gunther's wife "fell in love with Hilton Head in 1989" while on vacation here.

Let's start in the kitchen. A large 5-by-10-foot seamless black galaxy granite island anchors the 12-foot-high space and doubles as a sit-down bar. There is a supremely textured leathered granite countertop that separates the kitchen from the great room, with mosaic tile shells in the stove-area backsplash.

A hidden pantry, a hidden double refrigerator/freezer with drawers and a wine cooler are conveniently tucked away behind cabinetry custom-built by Palmetto Cabinet Studio. Adjacent to the kitchen is a "service kitchen" that houses all of the typical countertop appliances, as well as a dishwasher and another refrigerator.

The kitchen abuts the formal dining room, which features a buffet/server and outside views through the enclosed porch. The delightfully warm and comfortable living room has an exquisitely carved wooden bird cage from North Carolina and a three-piece table that invites private conservation. The grand great room has a fireplace, area rug, secretary, sofas and fine appointments.

"I wanted to use dark wood just to make it richer," Kelley said of the furniture in the living room. "Most of



The grandeur and splendor of the Hammer's home here fits in to the overall architectural scheme of Wexford. The lighting fixtures are contemporary in the kitchen and living room with a blend of traditional and contemporary elsewhere. Notice the contrast of dark wood and honey-colored floor.



my furniture is white, and I used a lot of textures and neutral colors" throughout the home.

The lighting fixtures are contemporary in the kitchen and living room with a blend of traditional and contemporary elsewhere. Kelley likes the "contrast of dark wood and honey-colored floor."

His and her sinks and marble mosaic decorative tiles are used "as a piece of art" in the master bathroom featuring a double-entrance doorless shower.

There's also a powder room with textured wallpaper and a floating vanity; lighting fixtures affixed to frameless large mirrors in the upstairs "suite" bathroom, one of 5.5 baths in the home; an elevator; a cozy sitting alcove overlooking the harbor in one upstairs bedroom; and custom-made swivel bookshelves that access the attic.

An upstairs sitting room is between two guest bedrooms and features a wet bar, refrigerator, a backgammon table and fireplace. A runner carpet is illuminated by soft, subdued positioned lighting and leads upstairs to the seagrass-carpeted bedrooms.

There is travertine stone on the patio and terraces in the 1,700 square feet of outdoor living space.

The composite look and feel of this home is rich in detail, lush in furnishings and accessories, spatially open, functional, grand in scale, and welcoming for the Hammer's family of three children and four grandchildren. The owners plan on spending upward of four months here throughout the year, despite owning three other properties in Canada with plans for building a fourth home there in a few months.

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"Wexford is very period-correct in new architecture," Cameron said. "They're very diverse but they insist you

pick one (architectural period design) and stick to it," Cameron said. "If you're going to do a British West Indies home, you're going to do it right ... which I think is wonderful ... the scale and mapping of the windows and the roof and all that has to do with the style of the West Indies."

Ah, the late afternoon Lowcountry breeze and casual Lowcountry living will certainly make the Hammers feel right at home. **M**

## VENDOR LIST

**Architect:** Court Atkins Architects

**Builder:** Cameron & Cameron Custom Homes

**Interior Design:** Kelley Designs Inc.

**Cabinetry:** Palmetto Cabinet Studio

**Garage Doors:** Building Specialties

**Plumbing Fixtures:** Cregger Company

**Cast Stone Mantels:** Urban Geology LLC

**Granite:** Distinctive Granite & Marble

**Wood:** Floors To Go LLC

**Carpet:** Floors To Go LLC

**Appliances:** Billy Wood Appliance

**Fireplace:** Megastructure

**Landscaping:** Horticultural Services

**Elevator:** Advanced Lift Solutions LLC

**Screened Porch:** Low Country Stucco & Stone LLC

**Pool/Spa /Boardwalks:** Quality Pools



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