



# A LOWCOUNTRY *treasure*



## PORT ROYAL PLANTATION HOME BUILT TO BE JUST AS MAGNIFICENT AS ITS LOCATION

BY DEAN ROWLAND  
PHOTOS BY ROB KAUFMAN

Port Royal Sound has lost none of its natural lure and deep watery magnetism since it first attracted seafarers into its wide mouth in the early 1500s. Rick and Louise Tranquilli know the seascape magic of that ever-changing tide and alluring salt air breeze quite well. They live beside it in Port Royal Plantation.

"Primarily, they were looking for a home that took the most advantage of the amazing water views they have and be able to maintain the live oaks in the front of the property," said William Court, a partner at Court Atkins Architects in Bluffton. "So we kind of had to nestle everything in while capturing those views to create some really wonderful outdoor living spaces."

Those views – 121 feet of private property facing northeast – lay just beyond the seagrass. For a closer look, a 150-foot boardwalk transports you to the water's edge.

"It was strategically designed, so even the carriage suite over the garage has a little balcony that faces the water," he said.

"The house fits like a glove (on the 0.8-acre lot)," said the builder, Nathan Cameron, owner of Cameron & Cameron Custom Homes in Bluffton. "Trees and nothing but panoramic ocean views."

Two of the Tranquillis' favorite perches for viewing the seascape are on their brick, oyster travertine and flagstone terrace overlooking the lap pool, a stepping bridge and spa, and inside in their screened porch with an outdoor working kitchen and a visually striking fireplace.





"Louise had a wonderful concept for the exterior fireplace," said Christina Scharf, interior designer and owner of CS Interior Home in Savannah. "She had collected several hundred shells she wanted to incorporate into a large paisley design. It was so exciting to work together...It really was a special moment to create her vision."

The exterior, fittingly, is New England inspired or as Court describes it, "Lowcountry meets coastal shingle-style home."

Cameron's challenge as the builder was to make the exterior weather-resistant to the harsh Lowcountry exposure.

"They wanted a low-maintenance exterior for the ocean, which is almost impossible, and not an oversized home but an architecturally-correct pleasing Nantucket-like over-the-top home," said Cameron, who founded his boutique building company five years ago.

He and his team installed custom-painted masonry shingles, and used either cementitious or PVC for the shutters and detailed trim — no wood. The roof is standing seam metal, which is highly durable and resilient to nature's destructive forces.

Of course the exterior and water views are the gateway to the interior of this three bedroom, four-and-a-half bathroom home. The two-story main residence covers about 3,300 square feet, and a breezeway connects to a 500-square-foot guest suite above the garage.

"They wanted a home that wasn't overly large," Court said. "They wanted a home that felt like it belonged on the site, kind of timeless that didn't overbuild the lot, comfortable and enjoyable for them."

The Tranquilli were very hands-on during the design and 13-month construction process, working closely with Court, Cameron and Scharf. The couple moved in last June.

"They had a wonderful vision for their dream home...a comfortable beach house that expressed their creative style," Scharf said.

"The amount of detail given to each room, the design focusing on the ocean views, making a not-large space feel larger and integrating many, many fine details," Cameron said.



By all accounts, this home is a "jewel box" showcasing custom details and exquisite craftsmanship.

"The Tranquilli really wanted to emphasize the quality of finishes and materials and design over quantity of spaces," Court said. "When we talk about a 'jewel box' architecturally, we're talking about something that is much more the quality of craftsmanship and quality of detail and not the size."

The open floor plan downstairs stretches from the kitchen to the adjacent informal dining room and great room with a fireplace and concealed imbedded large-screen television underneath a coffered ceiling. A homey study is tucked away on the south end of the home. White oak with gray ebony stain flooring spreads throughout the entire home.

Upon walking through the three-panel mahogany front door, a vintage area rug and a striking commissioned piece of artwork welcome visitors, who then admire a grand winding stairway with wainscoting paneling off to the right.

"On paper it was a square staircase, but we chose to customize that whole feeling

and curvature," Cameron said.

"After the overall concept and layout was decided, we moved full force into the selection process, from interior cabinetry design (by Palmetto Cabinet Studio in Bluffton), stone selections to custom stair details," Scharf said. All of the millwork was done on site, Cameron noted.

Scharf describes the furnishings color palette as "linen hues, oyster tones, blues and Mandarin." It is soft, coastal and definitely warm. Indeed, Scharf calls the overall interior design scheme an "artful Lowcountry beach retreat."

A handmade Hickory Chair Furniture Co. sofa and an exquisite original chandelier by Louise Gaskill in the great room create elegant images, accented by the copper ceiling with wood paneling and buttboard.

"Louise appreciates mixing different shapes, and we were lucky enough to find several coordinating upholstered pieces to finish the look," Scharf said.

Upstairs in the master suite, wood beams and treatments on the cathedral ceiling carve a warm and expansive feeling. The adjoining balcony destined to be enjoyed any time of day.

"This house is all about living," Cameron said. Blessings by clergy with family and friends in attendance before and after construction have ensured that it is. **M**

## VENDOR LIST

**Builder:** Cameron & Cameron Custom Homes

**Architect:** Court Atkins Architects

**Interior Design:** CS Interior Home

**Windows/Doors:** Grayco

**Granite:** Distinctive Granite

**Cabinetry:** Palmetto Cabinet Studio

**Flooring:** Francois & Co

**Audio/Video:** Elite Audio Video

**Hood & Mantle:** Francois & Co