





Coastal Elegance

A NEW HOME IN COLLETON RIVER
SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS


BY CAROL WEIR | PHOTOS BY J. SAVAGE GIBSON

When a couple who has moved 22 times decides to relocate to Bluffton, they don't rush in uninformed. From an apartment in Paris to a house in South Africa and many residences in the U.S., Betsy and Jim Utterback are familiar with the process of building a custom home or remodeling an existing structure.

When the couple chose Element Construction, formerly Cameron & Cameron Custom Homes, to build their dream house in Colleton River, team members at the award-winning custom builder knew they would work hand-in-hand with the Utterbacks. Collaboration throughout the design and construction process resulted in the stunning, 4,465-square-foot home on the marsh where the couple has lived for the past year.

"The property was a bit of a challenge to fit the size home that they wanted, due to the setbacks on the lot," said Andrea Eldred, Partner at Element Construction.

The two-story Lowcountry-style house has four bedrooms, four and a half bathrooms and transitional elements. Many »



of the homebuilder's signature features, including wainscoting and extensive crown molding, are present.

Visitors can't miss the dramatic views of the marsh and a grand live oak. As they come in the front door and step into the great room, they're greeted with a full wall of transparent double doors, flanked by large picture windows.

"The full back of the great room is all glass," Eldred said.

On the second floor, above the great room, Jim's office overlooks the marsh and is flooded with light. Because he works from home, the office was a focal point of the design by the Court Atkins Group. The homebuilder's master carpenters outfitted it with built-in cabinets, filing drawers, a TV cabinet and a gun rack.

Betsy is an interior designer and decorated the house after working closely with the architect and builder. From the beginning, she envisioned a home that reflected the Lowcountry setting but had some "edgier elements," she said.

To outfit the interior spaces, she drew



Vendor list

General Contractor
Element Construction

Architect
Court Atkins Group

Appliances
Billy Wood Appliance

Blinds
Budget Blinds

Countertops
Stone works

Lighting
Circa Lighting (Savannah)

Interior Design
**Nob Hill Interiors-
Betsy Utterback**

on her academic background as an art historian and her many cultural and professional experiences, cultivated as she accompanied her husband to job postings around the world as he built his career in the pharmaceutical industry. She also included family antiques and original works by the couple's favorite artists. Her home is refined but comfortable and she's proud of its eclectic style.

"I tell my clients, 'Your house is your home. If you love something, I'll make it work,'" she said.

Construction on the Colleton River home started in January 2017. When the company's beloved founder, Nathan Cameron, passed away unexpectedly that June, Betsy said the company "didn't miss a beat."

"I can't say enough about their professionalism," she said.

Fourteen months later and on budget, the house was ready for the Utterbacks to move in. The finishing touch was a front porch swing — a surprise gift from Jim to Betsy that Element Construction »





helped plan for by reinforcing the porch beams to bear the extra weight.

There is a lot to love about this house: a loft area outside Jim's office is a light-filled art studio for Betsy, with remote-controlled shades for when the afternoon soon gets to be too much. And instead of the typical large bonus room above the garage, there's a fully functional guest suite that includes a small living area, a tea kitchen, a bathroom and two small bedrooms for when the Utterbacks grandchildren visit.

Some of the couple's favorite features of the house are the generous wet bar and the back kitchen.

"This is where you hide dirty dishes in an open floor plan," Betsy said.

Ease is king in this home. From the open great room, people flow easily to the kitchen and out to the huge screened porch with its wood-burning fireplace. Outside in the yard, there's a grilling area and brick fire pit. **M**



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