

BUILT TO PERFECTION

Builder Steve Kendrick adheres to the essentials of an architect's design—and the homeowners' expectations

By M.S. Lawrence | Photography by Holger Obenaus









There are plenty of milestones in this story: The homeowners' first custom-built house. A move from a traditional, 1940s Federal home in often-gray Cincinnati to the southern light and sun of Daniel Island, South Carolina. A thick file of photos, magazine clippings and ideas about how they want their new home to look.

Most certainly the new home will be light, open, with views of greens—and with lots of windows doors and porches that open to the blue Southern sky. And, like a butterfly, this new life, this new home will have unique details—identifying marks that set it apart.

These are the kind of lingered-over plans and expectations homeowners have been bringing to Structures Building Company for years. And it's exactly the kind of plans the owners of 20 Iron Bottom Lane saw come to life: an architectural

beauty designed by Darryl Cobb and executed to perfection by Structures owner Steve Kendrick and his team.

"This home had intricate exterior detailing, including steep roof pitches, lots of rafters and columned porches," says Kendrick. "Protecting the integrity of Darryl's design was key. A lot of builders will do what's easy at the expense of details, but we take care to protect the character of the architectural work."

Cobb closely followed the owners' wishes to create a relaxed and open, yet sophisticated, Southern cottage-style home with iconic shiplap walls, transom windows, wraparound porches and a wide hall with lots of woodwork. It's a style he's known for, yet can't label. "Pieces of cottage, pieces of traditional—exterior brackets, rafters, metal roof, lots of angles and wood details," he says. The group laughingly refers to

Cobb's unique cottage style as "Cobbage."

Kendrick closely followed the plans for the 3,200-square-foot, three-bedroom, three-bathroom home. Key to his approach was plenty of communication every step of the way. This is particularly crucial with long-distance clients, explains Kendrick, who relies on a team that includes estimator R.P. Newton, project manager David Hargis and designer Deborah Way.

"I work hand-in-hand with clients through all decisions, back-and-forth detail, scheduling visits, even driving them to showrooms," says Way. "I'm the eyes and ears on the job, overseeing installations to make sure every detail is going correctly. I keep things on schedule and on budget." The designer also emphasizes that she always let the homeowners know what was coming down the pipeline, so they had time to make decisions.



Only once during the building of 20 Iron Bottom Lane did the owners recall an unexpected, “We need a decision right now!” kind of call. Of course, sometimes a call is a lifesaver: “Structures wouldn’t just do something,” says one of the homeowners. “If it didn’t look right, they’d stop and give us a call.”

“They went out of their way to do it the way it was drawn,” agrees Cobb.

True to the plan, the rooms are open yet intimate, opening to the Lowcountry light and offering views of the golf course from nearly every room. Off the roomy foyer is a clever library-dining room combination, flanked with custom bookshelves, anchored with a sofa and with a dining table off to one side. Double French doors open to a porch. “We’d hardly use a formal dining room, but when we need one, we just gather the chairs, scattered around the house, and move the table to the center,” says

the homeowner, who relied on Indiana-based Scott Fritz of Church Street Ltd. for interior design.

Touches of relaxed, Southern hospitality mingle with luxurious splurges, including black walnut floors and a coffered ceiling. The kitchen’s bracketed cabinets and subway tile are underscored with Calcutta gold marble. The sunroom opens to a large, fireplace-centered porch with vaulted ceiling that juts off the house at just the right angle—a result of one of those phone calls from the Structures crew about something not seeming quite right.

“R.P. called to say the porch appeared as if it was too close to the house next door,” says the owner. An adjustment was made. Now, the placement of the porch maximizes golf course views yet minimizes views of the neighboring house. “There were a lot of opportunities along the way to make changes,” says the owner.

The attention to detail and collaboration between architect and builder are evident throughout the house, including the tower-like stairwell that wraps around the home’s elevator, its shiplap walls and small windows reminiscent of an old lighthouse. The owner wanted a little imperfection, as if it’d been there forever, so Kendrick’s team built it using coins to vary the spacing between the boards. The old island details continue in the upstairs hall, where a vaulted ceiling with rafters seems plucked from an old boardinghouse in the Outer Banks. “They made more than a hallway out of our hallway,” says the owner.

“There’s not a room in the house that’s overlooked—each has personality, yet not one of them is ‘screaming’ louder than the other,” says Way. “Details in each lure you from one to the next.”

Each of two guest bedrooms has a full bath.







Structures owner Steve Kendrick, builder of LEED-certified homes since 2006, incorporates green building practices into every home he builds, including 20 Iron Bottom Lane. He offers these tips for “green” building and remodeling to make your home more durable, energy-efficient and sustainable:

1) Build tight. Gains in energy efficiency come from houses that don't leak. Insulation is important, but so is air sealing. Ask for a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rating and blower door test to check your home for leakage.

2) Don't forget about the “V” in HVAC: Ventilate right. Tight houses still need to breathe. Fresh air ventilation and proper dehumidification is a must.

3) Close that crawlspace. Crawl spaces in the Lowcountry shouldn't be open to the elements. A

damp, moldy crawl space affects the quality of the air you breath in your home. Close it up and condition or dehumidify it.

4) Close that attic. Keep the heat and humidity out by closing your vents and installing spray foam insulation in your roofline. This provides cooler, dryer and more usable storage space.

5) Build a wall that dries. Lowcountry homes are exposed to tremendous levels of moisture, both from rain and humidity. Water will get behind your siding, so help prevent mildew and rot by building your walls to dry. Install a drainage plane with integrated flashings behind your siding to let the water out.

6) Look for a builder who can speak intelligently to you about these green building principles. All houses are not built the same.

The upstairs master suite commands views of the golf course and includes a bathroom with freestanding tub, plus a private porch.

“Everyone worked really well together as a team to bring Darryl’s plans to life,” says the owner. “This was our first house-building project, and we were 600 miles away. Deborah and David followed the process, stayed in touch and provided schedules, confirmations, timetables. We never got nervous.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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