



A new HEIRLOOM

Authentic architecture inspired by Old Nags Head and consistent design has made homeowners Stewart and Tami Buss's Bald Eagle Lane residence, a dream for more than 25 years, a new heirloom.

By Danielle Boisse
Photography by Andrew Sherman

King post trusses, cedar shingles and trim detail on the dormers are traditional features represented on the exterior of the Buss family's Bald Eagle Lane home, designed to reflect Old Nags Head style and authentic coastal architecture.



The backyard features an unobstructed view to the Intracoastal Waterway. The Buss family enjoys a serene and natural landscape with a hammock that hangs between the trees and a newly built pier and dock.

Visitors are instantly drawn to the view of the Intracoastal Waterway through every window and comforted by the soothing scent of cypress. Optimum window placement to maximize water views and the cypress ceilings that follow the flow of the roofline are inherent design features repeated throughout the home.

Stewart says the design features, along with a bedroom for each of the three sons to come home to and a man cave where they can spend time as a family, fulfill the vision of creating a heritage home.

"The main reason we built was to have spaces we are hoping to be generational," Stewart says.

Stewart and Tami vacationed on the North Carolina coast for years and looked for home sites during every trip. They immediately saw potential in the property.

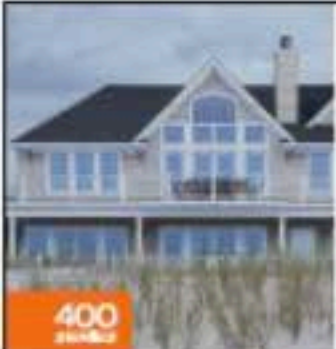
"This lot is special," Stewart says. "Many of the lots on Bald Eagle are lined with high bushes. Here, it is park-like with 180-degree views of the water all the way down."

Almost four years after buying the lot, they were ready to build. Tearing down the existing house was the first step, and they threw an unusual party to kick off the process.

"We had a demolition party with spray paint, hammers and golf clubs," Tami says.

The team of architect Kevin Pfirman and Jeremy Bishop of Sterling Custom Construction brought the Buses' dreams to fruition.

"We worked together and stood in the spaces during construction in order to brainstorm ideas," Bishop says. "We did a lot of things on the fly and always looked for opportunities to make a bigger vision and add more details."



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Warm and clean wood tones unite the main living spaces. Cypress hangs above on the ceilings, reclaimed wood sits below on the floors, and additional wood accents on the kitchen island and fireplace mantel tie in more natural and organic textures. A wood-burning fireplace in the living area contains a chimney chase made of stucco and hand-placed shell aggregates. The mantel, attached with wrought iron brackets, is reclaimed walnut that resembles a piece of driftwood.

Stewart and Tami wanted the bulk of the usable square footage concentrated in the main living spaces where the dining area, living area and kitchen are unified and focused on views out the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Clear-coated cypress hangs above in the living area's coffered ceiling and seamlessly transitions into a planked ceiling in the kitchen. A double-layered, yet simple, trim wraps every space, displaying the authenticity and consistency of design. The purity and open grain of the cypress complements the character in the 150-year-old reclaimed hardwood floors throughout the house.

"We wanted wood — it's warm, beachy and coastal," Stewart says.

The open kitchen, with a large accent island and a walnut butcher-block countertop, is both dynamic and calm. Different shades of blue in the tile backsplash become a continuance of the water view. A stainless steel range hood juxtaposes the warm wood tones, adding more interest to the space.

"We wanted one big room where you could socialize," Stewart says. "That island creates a conversation."



The waterway views continue from the main living spaces to the master bedroom. The master bathroom opens up with height from a single vaulted ceiling. A standalone tub sits centrally located in front of a window and the simple pale walls are complemented by the texture in the custom built vanities and limestone countertops — the limestone is several hundred years old and is from the Dead Sea.



Long lines allow for increased airflow and ventilation through the home. The transitions to the master bedroom and the stairs feature open, glass-free transoms above doorways — an unfinished and unexpected element Pfirman likes to incorporate. The strictly functional stairway is hidden off to the side so it doesn't rob square footage from the main living space.

The upstairs exudes a cottage feel, opening into a gathering room where a cypress sunburst ceiling follows the roofline, producing unusual angles that shoot down from a central peak. The chimney chase, which is an extension of the fireplace in the living area, adds sophisticated coastal textures to the room.

Pfirman, Bishop and the homeowners brainstormed different ways to handle the ceiling and decided to stay true to the roofline.

"They didn't compromise and went above and beyond what we originally programmed in," Bishop says. "We love the continuity in a house. We didn't want it to feel like a start and stop, we wanted it to flow through."





Gathering spaces continue to inhabit the roofline. A balcony off the upstairs gathering room is referred to as the throne porch, where the family can feel protected by the overhanging king truss and enjoy the view.



A man cave, separated from the main living spaces, contains concrete floors and cypress walls. Its casual lodge feel is enhanced with a pool table, lounge seating and counter height seating.

Sheltered with a protective overhang and signature king truss above, the balcony off the gathering room features spectacular eastern views of the waterway. The homeowners placed two tall chairs here and refer to it as their throne porch. The balcony sits between two sections of the roof where the authentic architecture is revealed in exposed joints, fasteners and material transitions.

"You can touch the roofs. You can touch the details," Pfirman says.

Symmetrical guest rooms that anchor the halves of the upstairs show more angled cypress ceilings. Outside the bedroom windows are rafters that are pitched to provide protection from the wind, showing the roof elements to be multifunctional.

"When you are in these rooms you inhabit the roofline. When you see these angles you know that on the other side there is the sky," Pfirman says.

Connected to the house by a covered walkway with a roofline symmetrical on the exterior, the detached outbuilding includes the garage and the man cave where Stewart and his sons can spend time playing pool and watching sports. Concrete floors and raw yellow pine framing lumber used as beams on the ceiling are more unrefined elements and add character to the room. Cypress is present in the ceiling and shiplap on the walls.



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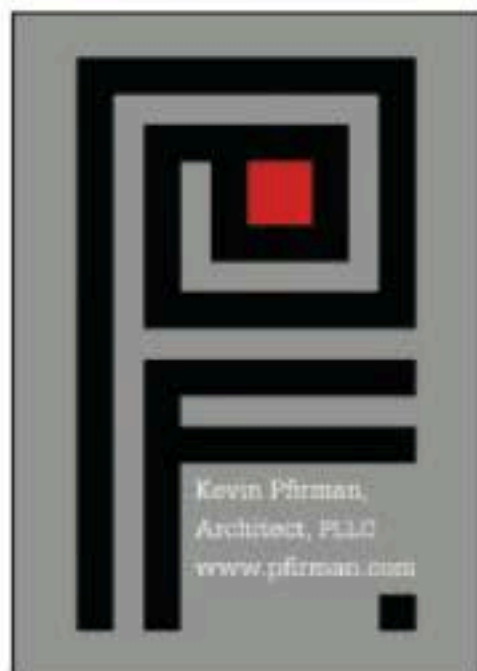
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All of the outdoor living spaces were designed to be covered, yet remain purposeful with a focus on the view of the Intracoastal.

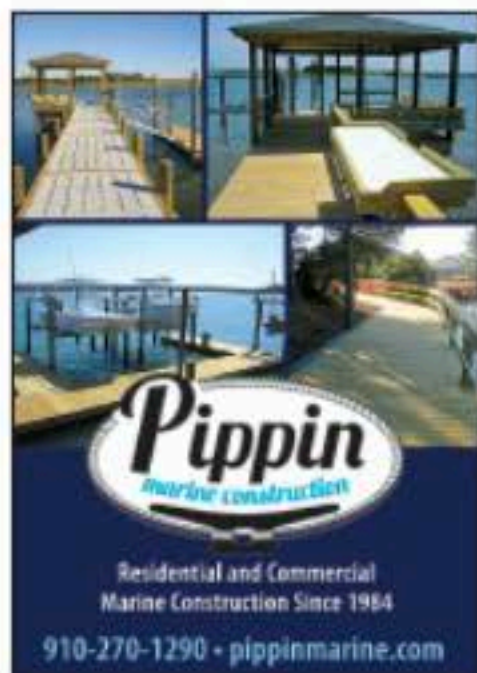
The result is a unique home that reflects Stewart and Tami's ideas. The couple envisioned a substantial Old Nags Head house with a Hatteras feel that had year-round outdoor porches and courtyard.

"We commission prototypes," Pfirman says. "This is the first one of its kind and that's it."

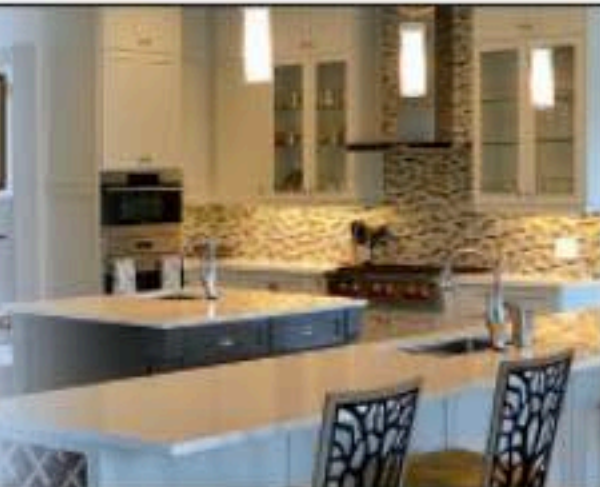
Pfirman designed the home to be an authentic representation of a classic beach house with an aerodynamic roofline that inhabited the interior spaces. The exterior roofline is smooth and repeated on the garage and connecting breezeway.

"Once you come from the car to the house, you are always under a covered roof," Bishop says.

Traditional touches were added, including king post trusses, cedar shingles and a ramp leading into the shed — a feature added to coastal homes to assist in bringing boats inside.



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A deep and linear porch hangs off the backside with comfortable seating and plenty of room to entertain. The porch on this new heirloom home was also designed to provide additional seating — the height of the ledge acts as a bench and can be used by future grandchildren.

"They really followed through on the level of finish that they expected," Pfirman says.

The expansive waterfront porch is a space where Stewart and Tami can enjoy the view of the ever-changing waterway and Figure Eight Island beyond.

"My favorite thing to do is make my coffee and go on the back deck and look for dolphins and watch the boats," Tami says.

The contrasting materials — Brazilian hardwood floors, cypress ceiling, gray cedar shingles and white trim that is a replication of the style used inside — create architectural harmony.

"This is a dream house for us," Stewart says. "We have always lived in colonial homes. For us this is a really special house."

It is a home that can last from generation to generation.

"We want something they can pass down to their kids and grandkids," Bishop says.



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BUILDING CONTRACTOR
Sterling Custom Construction

LANDSCAPING
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ENGINEER
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The outdoor shower is wrapped in wood from the pier of the original house on the lot. "We try to find a way to incorporate all old elements in the new project. We don't like to throw anything away," says Jeremy Bishop of Sterling Construction.

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