



On two contiguous oceanfront lots, Cothran Harris created a main house and guest wings that are cozy enough for two that also sleeps 20 or more by reinterpreting the style of the 19th century lifesaving stations that lined the East Coast. He references the style of Bald Head Island's famed historic landmarks, Captain Charlie's Station — an enclave of three cottages located on South Beach — and Old Baldy, the island's wizened light tower.

*By Marimar McNaughton
Photography by Joshua Curry
Assisted by Julia Wall*



seacoast plantation

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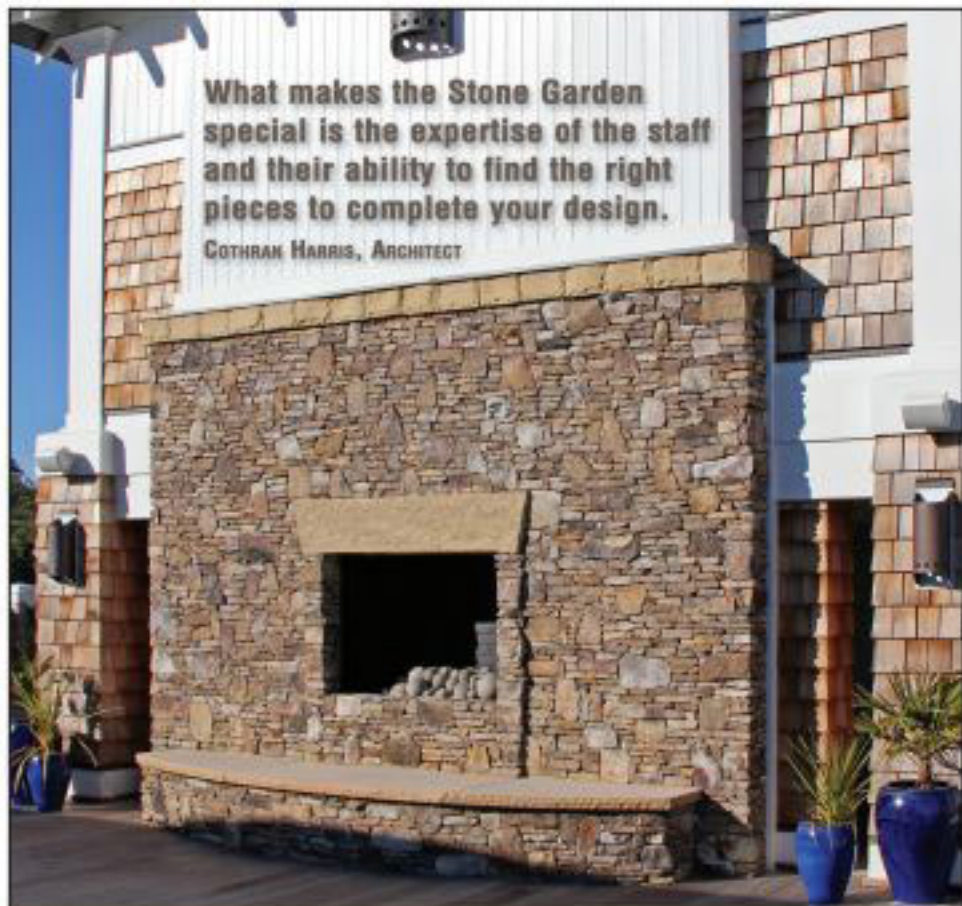
His linear designs begin at the top and work their way down to the ground level.

"Our idea is for it ... to look like three cottages that are connected together," Harris says.

The crofters — small outbuildings that typically house a garage and an upper-level apartment — take their name from Old World tenants who farmed a small plot of land, known as a croft. The architectural idiom is popular on Bald Head Island as an intimate space for accommodating overflow guests.

Anchoring the home campus is a circular driveway and two crofters. One is attached to the parent house by an open arcade. The other, by way of a loggia, links the crofter to a tiled hot tub





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GOTHRAH HARRIS, ARCHITECT



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pavilion. The pavilion is flanked by white louvered screens that when stretched across the opening provide privacy and when folded into the open position hang like white drapes. The pavilion provides a subtle edge to an open, epic wood court on which upholstered outdoor wicker sofas and chairs are arranged around a colossal outdoor fireplace fabricated from stacked stone and accented with a generous lip of Tennessee crab orchard granite. It is where the homeowners hosted an Independence Day fête and where friends and family can gather for toasts around the warmth of the hearth on the island that cheers its four seasons.

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The desire for sameness and equanimity inside gives way to a balance of indoor and outdoor spaces — both private and public — and symmetry of design that never fails to stop golf cart traffic, brazen red fox making their daily rounds or deer in their tracks that frequent the garden to feast on the roses. ✨



★ 🌀 ✨

The two by fours that frame this house —and those of the 1,120 homes built on Bald Head Island — arrived there by the barge, *The Brandon Randall*. Loaded at Deep Point Marina in Southport and pushed across the Cape Fear River by the tug, *The Capt. Alex*, the building materials are delivered by both vessels, named after the developer's sons, to this East Beach address by truck.

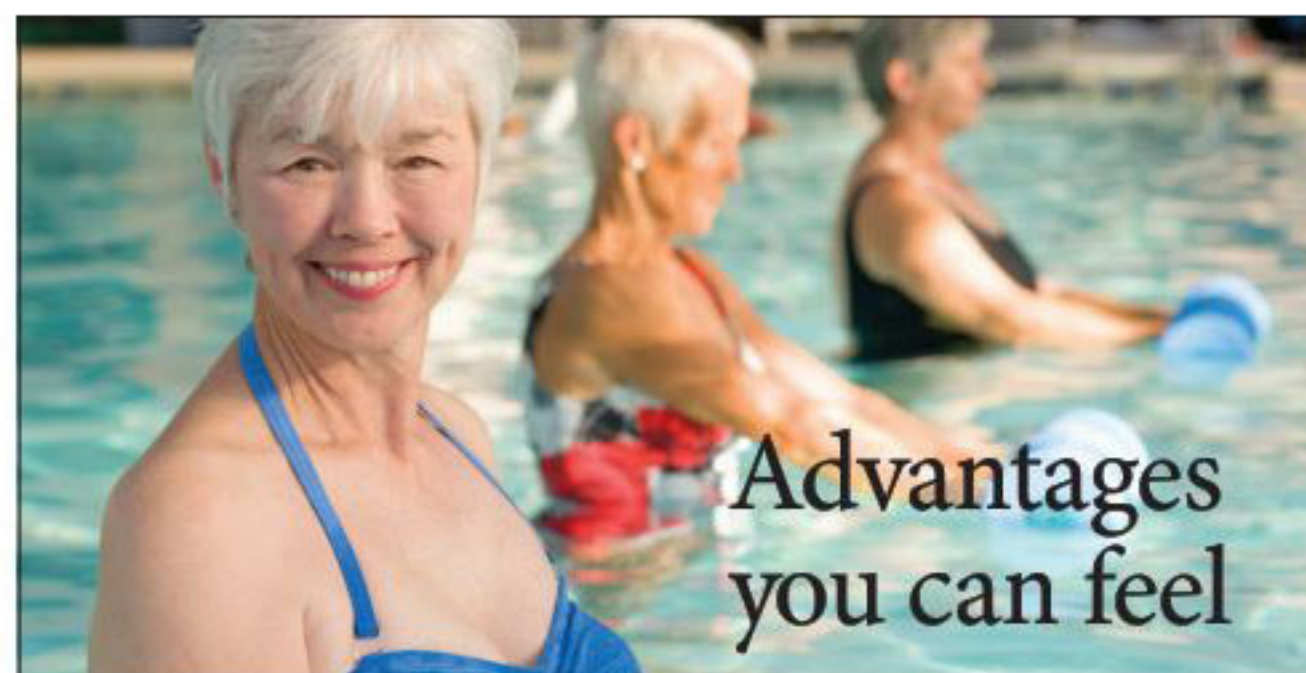
Retracing the route of the two by fours ferried across the river, the island's residents preferred mode of transportation once on land is by the ubiquitous golf cart.



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The goal is for every room to have a view



With a preference for an Anglicized Caribbean interior rendered in dark stained wood, this family of husband and wife, their newlywed daughter and son-in-law, their recent college graduate and his peers, and a son, a daughter-in-law and their two little girls, retreat in this sprawling ark of a home.

Steeped in architectural details, the shingled exterior will weather balmy breezes as well as the full brunt of gale-force winds. Vertically laid board and batten siding beneath deep, overhanging eaves and stylized kingposts lend elements of authenticity to this style popularized more than 100 years ago.

The salon unfurls beneath an elevated barrel ceiling. Harris created an interior landscape in the living room with built-in bookshelves and an upholstered window seat bay.

The family members are puzzle people and almost always have a challenge laid out on the window seat table. Underneath, the dark floors are covered with an heirloom Oriental carpet on which groupings of furniture are arranged for one-on-one conversations or boisterous gatherings.



*we wanted there to be
different places to be*

With the master suite at the north end and the dining area and kitchen on the south end, all rooms in between are arranged in gallery fashion. Lining the walls are framed maps that represent places where the family has traveled together, a pair of Alfred Birdsey's Bermuda modernist watercolors and beach portraits.

"The goal is for every room to have a view," Harris says.

Having a dining room table large enough to seat everyone in the family was a must have for the family matriarch. The man of the house is the primary cook and specified his wants in the kitchen, asking for an island with a utility sink and a wooden butcher-block countertop for chopping. The pot rack is handy overhead for transferring ingredients into a pan. A simple pivot on one foot places the cook in front of a Wolf range and oven. Glazed, seeded-glass cabinets reveal their contents for easy-to-find items, and the lower cabinets are designed to resemble individual pieces of furniture with cut-glass knobs used throughout to remind the lady of the house of her childhood kitchen in Greensboro, North Carolina.



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Blue Bahia granite countertops in the kitchen are polished to a high luster, but where they reappear in the outdoor kitchen the same stone is honed to weather the pervasive salt air. Here, hickory smoke flavors seafood and land food prepped al fresco and cooked on one of two outdoor grills. One is a Viking stainless steel egg.

A primary design element, Harris says, was the owners' wish for a place for each of their children to stay when they come to visit on Bald Head.

"All of these rooms needed to be the same," he explains. Each wing includes an upper level master suite with shared baths, bunkrooms and walk-in closets. As time goes on and the family's needs change, the bunkrooms could be repurposed as a nursery or a study.

"Anytime you build a house and you think about what your needs are right then, two years or five years or ten years is an eye blink in the life of the house. You want to have the home set up so you have these spaces that can be redone and reimaged," he says.



PHOTOS BY JOE CHESHIRE

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It's the island's strict architectural guidelines that limit the height of the homes to 35 feet that pushed Harris to some creative solutions that add detail to the interior in unexpected ways. By lifting the horizontal cap on the room height into what would conventionally be regarded as attic space, Harris has revived a 19th century seacoast style in wood paneled ceilings painted white.

With the addition of full-length glass doors that lead to outdoor decks nestled into the eaves, he opens up unobstructed views of the Atlantic Ocean's Frying Pan Shoals.

"No matter how wide the lot is, the reason you're here is for the view," Harris says. "We want to stretch the house out, side yard to side yard, so that as many rooms in the house ... can get the view."

Table large enough to seat everyone in the family

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