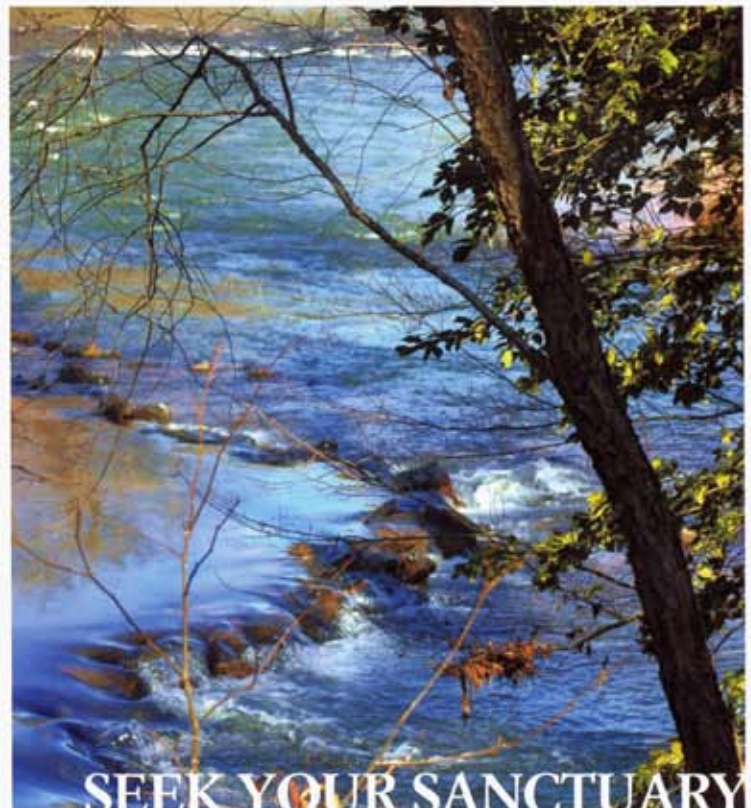
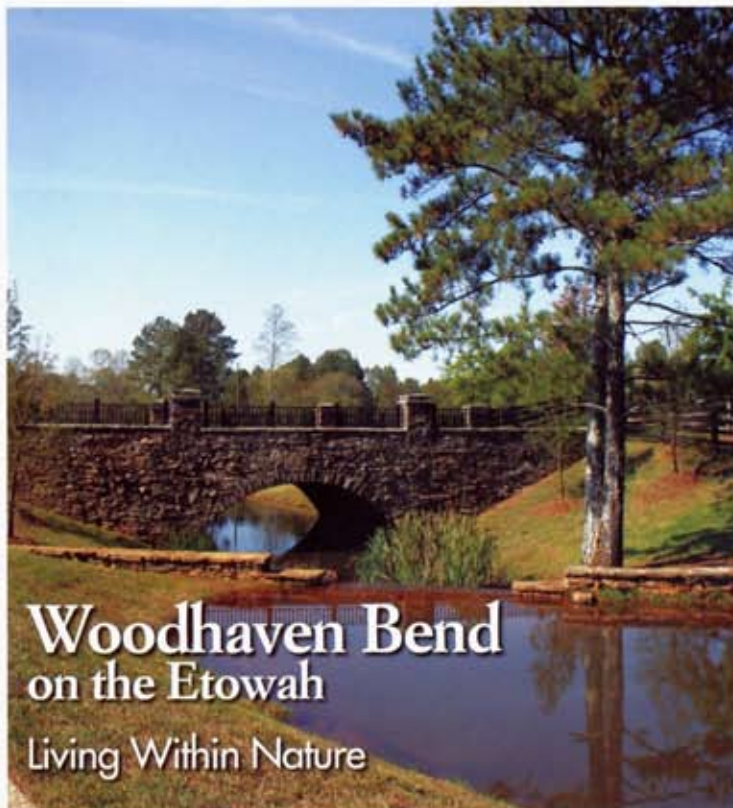


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Inside Out Design Focuses on Lifestyle

By William (Bill) Harrison, AIA, and Chad Goehring, Assoc. AIA
Photography courtesy of William Waldron, Jim Bartsch and John Umberger

There are few moments in life as relaxing and rejuvenating as those spent listening to the roar of the surf at the beach, the song of the marsh birds in coastal inlets, or the swoosh of a golf ball as it lands on a perfectly manicured green. To take full advantage of all that the coastal south has to offer, many Atlantans are opting for second homes at the beach. In our St. Simons Island office, we specialize in creating beautiful and enduring designs for varied needs and lifestyles.

Second homes tend to be less formal than primary residences, because they are places where people retreat from their busy lives. Everyone has a different definition of informality, and we are sensitive to individual interpretations. For some homeowners, casual may be as simple as changing the interior colors to reflect the natural views around them, such as green and brown hues if the home overlooks the marsh or pastel shades if it's on the beach. Some want true beach cottages, with bead board detailing, bright white trim that reflects sunlight, and simpler spaces. Architectural styles also vary per client's desires and the home's location, with everything from Addison Mizner-influenced Mediterraneans and Palladian villas to simple Low Country beach houses. Some of the planned communities along the Florida Panhandle, such as WaterColor, boast truly American vernacular styles, with boxed wood columns, exposed rafters and metal roofs. The size of homesites also varies dramatically, ranging from smaller oceanfront lots to interior or marsh sites with substantial acreage. ▶

Although architectural styles change to accommodate these variances, it's basically the same thought process - when designing a beach house, amenities are by far the driving factor. Whether the site offers beach, marsh, lake or golf course views, we want to provide opportunities to experience them fully while respecting the natural elements. In many cases, the home is almost designed from the exterior in to best accomplish that.

Most beach homes have a large screened porch that functions as an outdoor room. They typically have a fireplace, dining area and informal seating. Outdoor living areas frequently include full kitchens with fireplaces, fire pits, wet bars and additional seating configurations, often centered around a pool. Another necessity is an outdoor shower. Anytime you are near the beach, you need one of these to wash off excess sand. They can be as simple as a shower head attached to the side of the

house or more elaborate outdoor spas, which we'll soften with lattice work, trellises and landscaping, so homeowners can experience nature yet retain privacy.

Lifestyle and family configurations are the impetus for the interior design. Many homeowners have extended families and large social circles, so their primary design objective is to create a home that feels cozy and intimate when it's just them, yet is able to comfortably accommodate a large crowd when everyone is there. We accomplish that by providing flexible, open areas, such as an open family room, living room and dining room combination. Within a room, we may plan for multiple seating groups, such as two chairs and a table in front of a fireplace and a dramatic view for the couple, a large seating area with some couches and chairs for guests, and a dining table that doubles as additional seating to handle a large crowd. ▶

Well-designed beach homes provide multiple opportunities for residents to enjoy the natural environment and take full advantage of any beach, golf course or marsh views.





Access to pool areas and other outdoor amenities are particularly important in beach homes, since recreation and relaxation are their primary purposes.

Flexibility is also required in the overall design of the home, since almost every project has to be raised to some extent per FEMA guidelines, either on an elevated foundation or on pilings. Ideally, you don't want the home to look like it's just floating there, which can be a challenge if your front door is 10' in the air. To soften that look, we'll break up the steps with design elements. You may walk up two stairs to an elevated sitting area, then up several more to a water feature on a landing before you reach the front door.

This elevated design also encourages a reversal of traditional living spaces. For a beach home, it only makes sense to reserve the best views for areas where homeowners spend the most time. For that reason, we place the bedrooms on the main level, while the kitchen and living areas enjoy the views and breezes afforded by a higher level. If the home is a few blocks from the ocean, you can sometimes use this configuration to create an ocean view. Another way to get that view is by building a tower with an ocean room at the top. Some homeowners opt to reserve these coveted spaces for idyllic master suites, light-filled artist's studios or inspirational offices, since they capture such wonderful views.

The natural environment is ultimately why people are buying a beach home. We strive to preserve that while adapting the space to their use, often with slightly elevated yards ringed with low walls and terraces and striking elements like zero-edge pools, that when properly positioned, catch the horizon and make swimmers feel as if they are in the ocean or among the marsh grasses from the heated comfort of their own backyards. **T**

Visit www.TodaysCustomHome.com to see more designs inspired by the Coastal South. Chad Goehring Assoc. AIA, received his B.A. in Architecture from Southern Polytechnic State University in 2002 and began his career in Harrison Design Associates' Atlanta office. In 2006, this Project Architect was asked to run the firm's St. Simons Island office, where he and his team specialize in translating clients' visions into homes of enduring beauty appropriate to the Coastal South. Harrison Design Associates includes a team of more than 85 architects and designers who believe the handcrafted custom home is an individual work of art. The award-winning firm offers site planning, design, interior design, landscape architecture and construction administration and management. Call (404) 365-7760 for more information.