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A Fresh Start

Allison Hersh explores a bright, Beaufort-style waterfront retreat on Spring Island, where one couple has discovered the true meaning of “home.” » Photography by **Richard Leo Johnson**

When Linc Kinnicutt retired from a successful asset management career in 2001, he and his wife, Sally, moved to an elegant estate at a gated community in Savannah, but they never quite felt at home.

Although Linc and Sally adored their house—and the exquisite custom interiors by Carolyn Hultman—they craved a tightly knit community where they could forge close friendships and develop their growing interest in environmental conservation.

“One day we looked at each other and realized ... it just wasn’t the right fit for us,” Sally confesses.

The couple decided to build a stylish new home on the bluff on Spring Island, S.C., where they purchased land as well as a small golf cottage. They retained Historical Concepts, an Atlanta-based design firm specializing in Southern vernacular architecture, to create a comfortable year-round residence that would accommodate visiting children and grandchildren and showcase the stunning views of the serene tidal marshes of Chechessee Creek.

The Kinnicutt Stats »

Owners: Linc and Sally Kinnicutt
Year built: 2007-2009
Year purchased: Land purchased in 2007
Square footage: 4,297 heated and cooled, plus 852 in porches
Accommodations: 4 bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms

High Style, Low Country

Linc and Sally, who hail from Hartford, Conn., didn’t want their home to be too casual

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or too formal. They dreamed of bringing their personal blend of elegance and comfort to their new surroundings.

“Both of us grew up in New England and had a lot of antiques,” Sally explains. “We seemed to drift toward a traditional feel.”

But “traditional” didn’t mean stodgy or old-fashioned. Thanks to strategic design choices such as maximizing natural light, incorporating neutral wall colors and expanding the overall floor plan, the finished space is fresh and inviting.

This contrast between formal and vernacular styles is a knowing nod to Lowcountry architecture, where the blend of Federal, Greek Revival and indigenous designs tells a tale of evolving tastes and changing fortunes over the centuries.



In many ways, the land on the bluff inspired the overall concept for this elegant residence, where authentic local influences meet grand Federal details. Because of the home site’s narrow orientation, strict setback requirements and high flood-plain elevation, a Lowcountry-style structure fit the surroundings perfectly.

“We were able to base the home on a style and form found in historic homes of nearby Beaufort, S.C.” says Terry Pylant, a partner at Historical Concepts who designed the Kinnicutt home. “The Beaufort examples evolved to address issues of weather and climate and, of course, views of the water. We had a lot of fun creating spaces for today within a form that emerged long ago.”

Past and Present

This contrast between formal and vernacular styles is a knowing nod to Lowcountry architecture, where the blend of Federal, Greek Revival and indigenous designs tells a tale of evolving tastes and changing fortunes over the centuries. Typically built in a T shape to maximize cross-ventilation, 18th- and 19th-century Beaufort-style



homes boast wide, formal façades facing the street, narrow wings extending gracefully toward the water and generous porches where residents can enjoy breezes and river views.

The Kinnicutt’s design borrows from classic Federal details—such as a side-gabled roof and bays of symmetrically-spaced windows—but infuses the structure with Lowcountry warmth throughout. The result is an airy, light-filled environment that encourages guests to feel right at home.

“We maximized space, created an appropriate sense of arrival and took advantage of the views by elevating the home above the site,” Pylant explains. “This also allowed us to tuck a garage below, but we minimized the appearance of the garage doors by using latticework to conceal them. This is in keeping with traditional coastal homes,

where latticework is used between foundation piers to allow coastal breezes to ventilate the home from below.”

A Change of Plans

Although the original design plans called for an oversized screened-in porch on the home’s main level, Sally had major reservations.

“I said, ‘No way,’” she laughs. “It would make the interiors too dark. I suggested we change it and make one big, open room.”

And that’s exactly how the space is today. Natural light floods the grand living space and a small, adjacent screened-in porch with a warm glow. The glassed-in veranda is appointed with distinct sitting areas where Sally can read a book, Linc can watch the sunset or the

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couple can play bridge with friends. They've even hosted soirées for up to 150 guests.

"The space can be very intimate, but it can expand to accommodate a large party," Sally explains. "It's like a wonderful hotel lobby with independent seating areas that are still connected."

At one end of the living room, a pass-through into the

"By enclosing areas that would have been porches in the Beaufort precedent, we were able to create more livable and modern spaces, designing something that works for contemporary lifestyles within the context of the old and historic."

kitchen allows family and friends to interact. At the other end, the open space spills into the veranda, thanks to elegant furnishings and neutral hues that tie the spaces together.

"We maintained the scale and proportion of the waterfront homes in Beaufort but opened up the rooms," Pylant says. "By enclosing areas that would have been porches in the Beaufort precedent, we were able to create more livable and modern spaces, designing something that works for contemporary lifestyles within the context of the old and historic."

Moving In

Best of all, Linc and Sally were able to repurpose furnishings from their previous home in their new environment. Working again with interior designer Carolyn Hultman, the Kinnicutts relocated bedroom suites, newly re-upholstered sofas, silk curtains and interior appointments from their former residence to Spring Island. This cost-effective approach enabled the Kinnicutts to preserve the looks they loved.

"Carolyn was able to make all these things work in our new house," raves Sally, "which is the mark of a really good decorator."

The serene décor enhances the overall design, creating a relaxed sanctuary the Kinnicutts cherish year-round. A soft palette of ethereal blues, creams and whites showcases treasured family heirlooms, including a grandfather clock and fine china.

On the main level, pine walls painted ivory add a touch of antebellum plantation style and offer a casual counterpoint to the more formal Greek Revival columns and



Federal-style mantels. One of Linc and Sally's favorite architectural details is the heart pine stairwell, with its Old World craftsmanship apparent in hand-carved newels and a meticulously rasped railing. Upstairs, the master suite—with its spacious bath, office and sitting area—creates a private retreat for the couple.

"This house really wraps around you," Sally raves. "We felt at home the second we moved in."

Since relocating to Spring Island, Linc and Sally have forged close friendships and immersed themselves in the neighborhood's commitment to environmental stewardship—everything they wanted in a place to call home. ■

The Kinnicutt Referrals »

Design team: Jim Strickland, Terry Pylant, Bhoke Manga and Colleen O'Keeffe, Historical Concepts

Contractor: Pinckney Brothers

Interior designer: Carolyn Hultman, Carolyn Hultman Interior Design

Painting: Fernando Morales, Classic Painting

Paint colors: Sherwin Williams "Aiken Ivory" (exterior siding), "Cainhoy Clay" (trim and windows), "Tea Olive" (shutters), and "Burnt Umber" (front door)

Windows/doors: Marvin Windows

Kitchen and bath design: Historical Concepts

Lighting design: Eloise Pickard, Sandy Springs Gallery

Landscape and hardscape design: Donald Hooten, Landscape Architect

Carpenter: Elias Pinckney Jr.

Stairs: Don Ouimette, Southern Stair Builders

Roof: McElroy Metal



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