



This South Carolina vacation home blends in with its beautiful setting.

# Coastal Cottage

Spring Island, South Carolina, abounds with Lowcountry sights and sounds. The ebb and flow of tidewaters nourish the rich marshes that surround the area. On land, clumps of Spanish moss adorn ancient live oaks like fine-spun silk. Among the palmetto bushes and saw palms, tiny crabs scamper about.

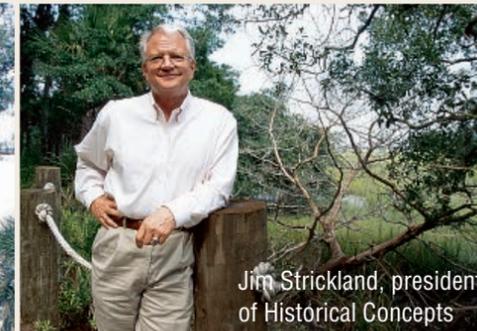
## One With the Land

In this verdant setting, Judy and Merritt Marcus chose to build their retreat. Residing in Louisville most of the year, the Marcuses needed a place where family and friends could congregate. "Because this would be our second home, we didn't want a formal house. Instead, Judy and I strove for a more casual place," Merritt says.

Because they wanted to take full advantage of the site's scenic views, the couple turned to Historical Concepts, a multidiscipline architectural firm. In response to the Marcuses' requests, the team created a home sensitive to both the family's needs and the history of the area. Taking cues from traditional Lowcountry cottages, the designers raised up the single-story struc-



Sheltered by deep overhangs and wrapped with a porch, this house fits seamlessly into the surrounding marshlands.



Jim Strickland, president of Historical Concepts



Windows define the dining room. A delicate light fixture hovers above the table.

## FEATURES OF THE LOWCOUNTRY STYLE

Roughly defined as South Carolina's outer Coastal Plain, the Lowcountry has a look circumscribed by history and climate. Here are some features of that style.

- **Great emphasis upon natural ventilation and breezes.** Ample porch space, along with raising a structure off the ground, encourages good airflow. Windows and doors on opposite exterior walls are usually aligned. High interior ceilings enable heat to rise above living zones. Operable shutters are employed as screening devices.
- **A need for sun control.** Broad roof overhangs help shade a house while allowing air to circulate.
- **Durable materials.** Stucco on brick or concrete is a viable exterior finish. For roofs, metals such as tin or copper, as well as other long-lasting materials, are top choices.

Here along with a marshland panorama, the porch offers protection from insects.

## In Quest of Sunlight

Maximizing natural light played a key role in this residence's design. The master bedroom and living room access the adjacent porches by French doors. Topped with transoms, these doors allow sunlight to enter the interior spaces. Also, a pair of triangular-shaped dormers, located on the front and rear, help illuminate the vaulted living room.

## From Kitchen to Dining Room

Though centrally located within the house, the kitchen doesn't break up the open floor plan. Instead, an ingenious built-in frame at the sink enables the upper cabinets with their glass doors to be suspended. This provides unobstructed views into the living room.

Adjacent to the kitchen, the dining room is defined by windows and matching transoms. "This is my favorite space in the house because there are no solid walls," Jim Strickland, president of Historical Concepts, says.

## Working in Harmony

This residence is a testament to the homeowners and the designers. Jim summarizes this best: "It was very satisfying that every participant contributed to a home that exceeded what any of us could have done alone."

ROBERT MARTIN

ture on stuccoed piers, separated by lattice. Broad eave overhangs with exposed rafters help shade and shelter the home. Even the crimped metal roof adds an established sense of bygone charm.

## Outdoor Living

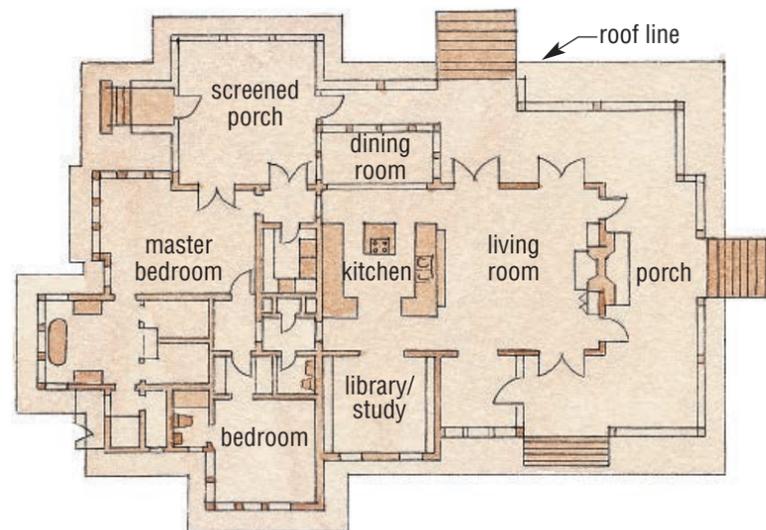
While the house comprises about 2,400 square feet, it lives much larger, thanks to its porches. They frame views of the marsh and capture refreshing breezes in the summer. There is also a screened porch tucked between the dining room and master bedroom.

## WHY IT WON

Here's what our judges had to say about this award-winning design.

- "This wonderfully vernacular house goes hand in hand with the character of the site." Eric Watson, AIA
- "The design fits comfortably into its natural setting with an added-on appeal."

Philip Morris, former Southern Living Editor-at-Large



Designed as an open floor plan, the living room flows freely into the foyer, kitchen, and dining room.

"This is truly a house that can be enjoyed while sitting in any number of locations. Each view has its own special feeling and physical attributes."

Jim Strickland, residential designer

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOHN O'HAGAN