captain’s quarters

With broad porches and generous windows, our 2007 Idea House demonstrates the timeless beauty of traditional design.
One look at our 10th Anniversary Idea House in Oriental, North Carolina, and you might think it’s a treasured historic home. But behind those clapboard walls, you’ll find extraordinary surprises. A team of architects and designers utilized cutting-edge building products and filled each room with innovative design solutions. Leaf through this section to see what piques your curiosity. We’ve provided a list of sponsored products on each page and additional resources on page 104. Enjoy your tour!

a room for living
Casual and inviting, yet refined—that’s how interior designer Tammy Connor describes the living area she created at our Idea House. Like readers’ favorite getaways, “it’s a space where you immediately feel comfortable kicking off your shoes,” she says. Taking a cue from the coastal setting, Tammy chose a muted palette of ocean blues and greens, then washed the cypress walls with a soft khaki. “We drew inspiration from the area’s natural beauty—the water and the wetlands,” says the Alabama-based designer. Cheryl Hackett-Galvin constructed the Roman shades and draperies here from recycled sailcloth. The hand-sewn material adds history and visual interest. “Every sail has a story to tell, and no two are alike,” says the Rhode Island designer.


costal cool
Energy-efficient and nearly silent, the technologically advanced HVAC system regulates heat and humidity. Instead of roaring on and off like traditional systems, it automatically adjusts fan speed to refresh the air.
Informal meets formal in the dining area, where a pair of casual settees provides contrast to the more-traditional upholstered slipper chairs. The settees’ generous dimensions balance the visual weight of the 7-foot table, custom-made for the space from salvaged red oak. Above the table, a wrought-iron lantern makes a dramatic statement. “Introducing a hanging element brings a third dimension into a room,” Tammy says. “It completes the space.”


“Introducing a hanging element brings a third dimension into a room,” Tammy says. “It completes the space.”

Tammy suggests using large-scale accents for instant impact. Here, she boldly chose an oversize hanging lantern to illuminate the intimate space. Its size and proportion create a simple yet graphic look.
Anyone who loves to cook—or eat—will fall for this state-of-the-art kitchen. With a stainless steel sink and honed-marble countertop, the generous island offers plenty of space for food preparation or a buffet-style setup. Open shelving and colorful cookware recall the kitchens found in historic coastal homes. The design team even customized the space with a punched-tin overlay concealing the fridge (see page 63). “People always congregate in the kitchen,” Tammy says. “That’s why we made it one of the most inviting rooms in the house.”


kitchen confidential

Dual dishwashers (talk about luxury!) simplify cleanup after a night of waterfront entertaining. A built-in warming drawer and versatile pot filler provide restaurant efficiency. Pendants deliver valuable task lighting for island food prep.
best seat
What do you hope for in a breakfast room? Sunshine! That’s why the architects designed a space with three exposures and harbor views. Below the coffered ceiling, they added a shallow display ledge for sea-color bottles. Every element in the room—from the chandelier to the door hardware—adds subtle elegance.


transparent choice

Durable aluminum-clad, double-hung windows stand up to harsh coastal weather, including 150-mph winds. These windows are suitable for use anywhere, but ideal for regions vulnerable to brutal storms. The wood core is specially treated to resist water and pests.
To add height and maximize harbor views in the master suite, Tammy hung sheer fabric panels on drapery rods attached just below the ceiling molding. Then she repeated the celery-and-celadon-stripe material on the four-post, iron bed. The cotton rug, linen bedding, and ultrasoft fabric on two slipper chairs enhance the bedroom’s luxurious feel.


restful retreat

“In the master suite, transoms above all of the doors accentuate a sense of abundant light and space.” —Joshua Roland, project manager
The theme of the master bath is luxury, pure and simple. A trio of surface-mounted sconces provide ideal lighting conditions, and polished chrome faucets coordinate with the fixtures. Enhancing the room’s spa-like feel, a highly veined marble appears on floors and countertops as well as in the shower. Custom elements—such as the simply detailed sink base and the carved interior doors with oil-rubbed bronze hardware—highlight this home’s fine craftsmanship.


Royal treatment

There’s nothing mundane about this shower. The marble unit features a built-in bench, a rain-style fixture, multiple body sprays, and a handheld nozzle for easy rinsing. A high-tech humidity-sensing fan automatically switches on and off to control moisture, reducing the risk of mold and mildew both behind the walls and on their surface.
In the sitting room, Tammy painted walls off-white and emphasized individual architectural elements (window muntins, stair treads, doors, and trim) with vibrant navy blue. She reversed this scheme in the adjacent bunk room by painting walls blue and accenting details with the neutral shade.

An all-American palette fills the third-floor sitting room and bunk room (page 90). The painted wood floors put a playful spin on traditional boat decking, while the compass rose provides a dramatic anchor for the spiral staircase ascending to the crow’s nest. Tammy chose a woven area rug for the sitting room because “it has a rope-like weave with nautical appeal.”

A cleat big enough to secure a Boston Whaler serves as the handle on the sliding barn door to the bunk room. Custom-made beds, inspired by those found on classic yachts, sit atop built-in storage drawers. They’re practical, accessible, and—thanks to the pewter rope drawer pulls—nautical, too.

Tammy salvaged nautical finds and painted them to suit the space. “It’s an easy and inexpensive way to add character,” she says.


instant art

On painted walls, a life ring and boat oars become eye-catching works of art. Tammy salvaged nautical finds and painted them to suit the space. “It’s an easy and inexpensive way to add character,” she says.

stylish stateroom

“It’s a colorful, youthful room that’s not meant to be taken too seriously.” —Tammy Connor
A year-round gathering place, the side porch captures broad views of River Dunes’ carefully protected landscape.

Sealed to last
An ultra-durable deck stain protects exterior porch floors from the severe seaside climate. Tammy chose an attractive opaque finish that adds rich color while allowing some texture to show through.

Sheer draperies, a jute area rug, and plush seating lend this outdoor space the elements of an interior room. Tammy selected a lively green fabric to complement the woven-wicker furniture. The hand-tumbled, all-masonry brick fireplace furnishes a sense of warmth as well as extra seating on the hearth. Overhead, an oil-rubbed gas lantern guarantees ambience after sundown, while a reversible ceiling fan in a rusted-iron finish helps keep temperatures comfortable in all four seasons.

It’s a community designed for both pleasure and convenience, a place to share coastal memories for generations to come,” says River Dunes developer Ed Mitchell. “Out your front door, you’ve got the harbor, and out back you have endless views and opportunities for recreation on the big water of Pamlico Sound. You can slip out after dinner, go fishing, and return home in time for a nightcap.”

Anchored by the largest protected inland marina between Florida and the Chesapeake Bay, River Dunes has preserved the area’s bountiful natural resources. “We have maintained existing vegetation and landscaped with indigenous plants,” says landscape architect and community planner Bill Lincicome. “There’s an absolute commitment to the native species. Everything reflects the environment of coastal North Carolina.”

Though the community is still under construction, Ed envisions exciting programs for residents. There will be sailing, fly-fishing, and angling workshops for owners and guests, and facilities for painting classes. Canoe and kayak clubs will welcome both novices and experts. Hikers will enjoy miles of nature trails.

When completed, River Dunes will contain more than 600 single-family homes, plus additional living accommodations. Bikes and carts will be the primary means of transport. The town center will include a post office, coffee shop, bakery, and an ice cream parlor. A spa, two outdoor pools, an indoor pool, tennis courts,
and a harbor club will provide land-based entertainment. A fitness and wellness center, two chapels, and nine honeymoon cottages will follow.

With all these amenities, it’s still primarily a boating community, “a place to learn about life on the water,” says Ed. (The charming village of Oriental, just minutes away, has long been called “the sailing capital of North Carolina.”) Fifty years from now, residents’ grandchildren will swap stories about time spent at River Dunes, “and they’ll remember it with a smile,” says Ed. For more on coastal North Carolina, log onto visitnc.com. For directions to the Idea House, visit coastalliving.com.

by design

A design team from Historical Concepts, the award-winning Georgia-based architecture firm, designed the 10th Anniversary Idea House in classic coastal style. “The house doesn’t feel overly formal, but at the same time it has a certain dressiness,” says founder Jim Strickland.

Sited to take advantage of Grace Harbor views, the home features an open plan, high ceilings, and large windows. “The simple square columns and lantern crowning the roof reference 19th-century designs found from North Carolina to New England,” says project manager Joshua Roland.