ask the pros

Advice on designing the perfect home by the bay

INTERIOR DESIGN

How does designing the interiors of a waterfront home differ from the way you design spaces in other locales?

In my view, there is no real difference in designing a waterfront home versus other locales. I might incorporate more coastal accents, colors of the sea and lighter fabrics, but the same areas of importance always apply. I start by learning how the client will live in the space. Then I design the layout in AutoCAD, taking into account all focal points—including water views. I try to marry function and comfort in every design, regardless of location. Lastly, selections of fabrics, finishes, lighting and artwork are made with an understanding of the client's likes and dislikes.

   Coastal style is popular because of its fresh, calming palette, but achieving that style is possible in any locale. The process is the same in all designs, regardless of a water view. —*Wesley Thompson, Simply Wesley, Annapolis, Maryland*

Paintings by local artist Nancy Hammond inspired the design of a family room in Annapolis, where Wesley Thompson imparted a coastal vibe with neutrals and bright, island accents. Photography: Maureen Porto.

BUILDER

When building near the bay, what factors should homeowners consider to prevent delays or setbacks due to permitting issues?

When building on a waterfront lot, it is critical to consult with the proper professionals to ensure that the permitting process goes as seamlessly as possible. A civil engineer and architect should be engaged to determine allowable building area based on critical-area requirements and waterfront setbacks. Additionally, a soils engineer should be consulted to determine elevation of the water table, as this may have a bearing on the type of foundation required for the structure and the ability to construct a lower level due to potential limitations regarding mechanical and electrical codes.

   With professional help, unwanted surprises can be avoided and homeowners can maximize the allowable size of their house and ensure its optimum location. —*Andrew Lehner, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland*

A spectacular Annapolis home built by Pyramid embraces views of Harness Creek. Architecture: Cathy Purple Cherry, AIA, LEED AP, Purple Cherry Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. Landscape Architecture: Kevin Campion, ASLA, Campion Hruby Landscape Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. Photography: David Burroughs.