



# WATER'S EDGE

A design team collaborates  
on a timeless Annapolis  
property that marries  
elegance and a resort vibe

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ANNE GUMMERSON



A balcony off the master bedroom (opposite, bottom) overlooks the pool terrace (opposite, top), paved in limestone from India. A four-season oasis, the pool house (above) boasts a shiplap ceiling and a NanaWall that blurs the lines between indoors and out. The bar stools are from David Edward and the sofa is from Janus et Cie.



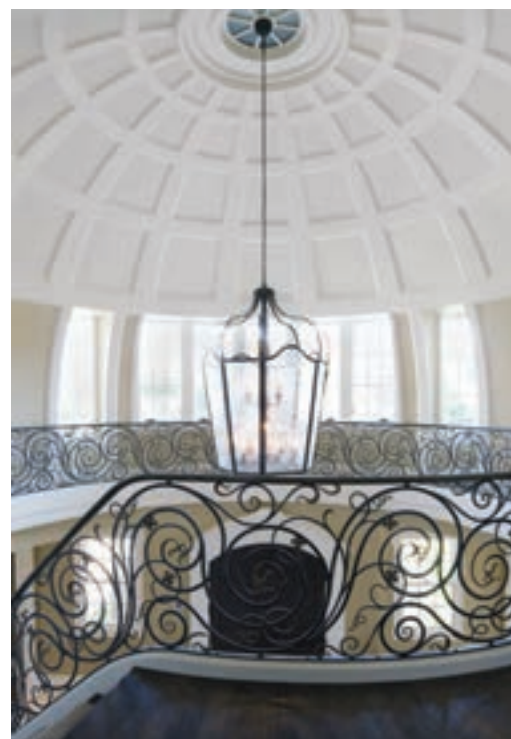


Natural stone, authentic stucco and a slate roof impart a built-to-last quality to the home's exterior (above). Architect Jeffrey Halpern angled the main volumes to make the most of water and marshland views. The foyer, with its 28-foot domed ceiling (below and opposite), boasts a spiral stair with an intricate custom rail by Iron Masters. A ring of mosaic tile was inlaid by hand in the marble floor.

Lounging by the pool and watching sailboats skim by, it's easy to imagine you've landed at an island resort rather than a family getaway near Annapolis. There are drinks at the poolhouse bar, plenty of kayaks and stand-up paddleboards to go around and an elegant main residence at your disposal. Like a five-star getaway, this property revolves around rest, relaxation and a refined sense of style.

That's just what the owners envisioned when they bought the pristine, two-and-a-half-acre parcel on the South River near the Chesapeake Bay. The husband, an entrepreneur, and his wife have a soft spot for Annapolis, where they started dating when he was a Naval Academy cadet. Its proximity to their main DC-area residence meant the couple with a son and daughter, then teenagers, could make spur-of-the-moment visits without crossing the Bay Bridge. "We wanted a weekend retreat with room for our friends and their families," says the wife. "Eventually, we plan to retire here."

The owners assembled a team of professionals—architect Jeffrey Halpern, Bret Anderson of Pyramid Builders and interior designer Susan Gulick—who would collaborate to make their future home a reality. The design process unfolded organically as they met biweekly to discuss details large and small.



ARCHITECTURE: **Jeffrey H. Halpern**, AIA, Halpern Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. INTERIOR DESIGN: **Susan Gulick**, ASID, Susan Gulick Interiors, Reston, Virginia. KITCHEN DESIGN: **J. Paul Lobkovich**, Lobkovich Kitchens, Tysons Corner, Virginia. BUILDER: **Bret Anderson**, principal; **Bill Harder**, project superintendent, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland. LANDSCAPE DESIGN: **Michael Prokopchak**, ASLA, Walnut Hill Landscape Company, Annapolis, Maryland.



The husband's request for a dramatic entry led to the concept of a round, two-story foyer with a classical domed ceiling. The wife, in turn, envisioned a spiral stairway framed by an intricate, curving metal rail like one she'd seen in a photograph. And to bring the home's large volumes down to a welcoming scale, Halpern proposed creating a unique ceiling treatment in every room. "If it all feels large and grand, you don't feel protected or nurtured," the architect reasons. Factoring in geothermal heating and systems required to fortify the waterfront home against hurricane-force elements, it soon became clear that this would be no ordinary beach bungalow.

Executing the plans required a complex choreography among Pyramid's in-house teams, structural engineers and other specialists working to get the job done. "It was a very complicated structure with a lot of hidden steel. We brought our craftsmen on-site to deal with complex forms such as barrel vaults, compounded curves and domed ceilings—all of which were built from scratch," says Anderson. "Every aspect of the dome was built and engineered with our carpentry team."

Artisans from Iron Masters designed and fabricated the hand-forged stair rail in their Frederick, Maryland, studio. Its curving, interlacing elements not only created what the wife calls the "jewelry of the house," but also had to meet building codes and sustain lateral load forces. Says Halpern, "It all came down to a careful balancing act."

The architect did some balancing of his own, marrying the home's formal façade and entry to the more casual spaces that ensue. "From the foyer, there's a sense of connection to axes moving through the house toward the water," he explains. Archways in the foyer lead to the music, dining and family rooms. Beyond the music room lies the husband's home office and an adjoining library where a Murphy bed can accommodate guests. The dining room segues to a butler's pantry and the kitchen, which is open to the family room. As windows and





A Murano glass chandelier and floral rug by Niba Designs set an elegant tone in the dining room (opposite), with its oval, coffered-dome ceiling and built-in cabinets. Echoing the soft blue palette, the music room (above) features a Tufenkian rug and a coffee table by Salvations Architectural Furnishings.



The family room's triple-hung windows can be raised into the ceiling above, opening the room seamlessly to the covered verandah. Susan Gulick designed the cast-stone fireplace and emphasized natural textures and comfort in the furnishings. The blue chairs and sofas are by Edward Ferrell and the poufs are by Stewart Furniture.







JAY STEARNS

Designed by Walnut Hill, the rear garden (above) frames the pool terrace with beds of drift roses and witch hazel.

J. Paul Lobkovich designed the kitchen (far right), which opens to the family room.

The glass-tile backsplash and C.S. Sterling Rock Crystal pendants add a dose of glamour to the space. The sunroom (right), with its tile floor, is a hangout for kids in wet swimsuits coming in off the terrace.



doors in the family room spill onto the verandah and the pool, pool house and dock, a casual marine vibe takes over. “The back of the home opens up to the waterfront,” says Halpern. “The house and the pool deck are intimately connected.” The owners hired Walnut Hill to soften the hardscape with containers of seasonal flowers and perennial beds and to screen the property from its neighbors with mature trees.

For the most part, Gulick’s interior plan embraces the home’s relaxed side. The dining room’s silk-and-hemp rug by Niba inspired the color scheme of tranquil blues and neutrals. “The owners wanted easy living and comfort, but they also wanted the home to be nice and not ‘beachy,’” she says. “People feel they can put their feet up and be at ease. It’s a house to be lived in.”

At her clients’ request, Gulick pushed some of the furniture and lighting in a contemporary direction. “I love high-end, fine furniture,” says the wife, who sold contract furnishings before staying home to raise her kids full-time. “I also like mixing elements such as stone, wood and metals.” A case in point is the master suite, where Gulick’s team designed a dramatic walnut fireplace mantel with stainless-steel accents, and where marble tops the cabinetry in the airy dressing room.



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It’s a house to be lived in.”* —SUSAN GULICK



The master bedroom (opposite) enjoys intoxicating views of the South River, especially when doors leading to the terrace are open. The sofa is from Holly Hunt and the ottoman is from Century. Susan Gulick Interiors designed the curving fireplace (below) in walnut and stainless steel. The dressing room (right) features plenty of built-in storage, including a center island that makes packing a breeze.



These spaces enjoy dazzling views of the river and nearby marshland, thanks to Halpern, who during the design phase climbed a ladder mounted on a pickup truck to survey the site and its surroundings. “We were very much aware of the connection to the water and wanted to make it feel pretty seamless,” he explains.

The second floor also includes the son and daughter’s bedrooms and two guest rooms—all with en suite baths. Since a basement wasn’t practical given the property’s high water table, a game room was built above the garage. Complete with a pool table, a kitchenette and a large TV, it boasts all of the spoils of a rec room but with plenty of windows and natural light.

Now complete, the home has exceeded the owners’ expectations. Whether they’re alone or hosting friends and their families for a long weekend, days are spent playing soccer or volleyball on the lawn, taking out the ski boat or watching a game in the pool house—or pool.

In any season, it’s truly an escape. “It’s where I go to recharge my battery,” says the wife. “The second I see the water, something washes over me. It is so calm and relaxing. To see the reeds in the marsh and the herons flying over the water—the views are magnificent.” ■

#### SOURCES OF NOTE

Music Room & Pool House Coffee Tables and Bedroom Side Table: [salvationsaf.com](http://salvationsaf.com). Family Room Curtains: [galbraithandpaul.com](http://galbraithandpaul.com) through [interiors.hollandandsherry.com](http://interiors.hollandandsherry.com). Kitchen & Dressing Room Countertops: [marblesystems.com](http://marblesystems.com). Dining Room Table: [keithfritz.com](http://keithfritz.com) through [michaelcleary/lc.com](http://michaelcleary/lc.com). Master Bedroom Sofa: [hollyhunt.com](http://hollyhunt.com). For a complete list of sources, see [homeanddesign.com](http://homeanddesign.com).



