

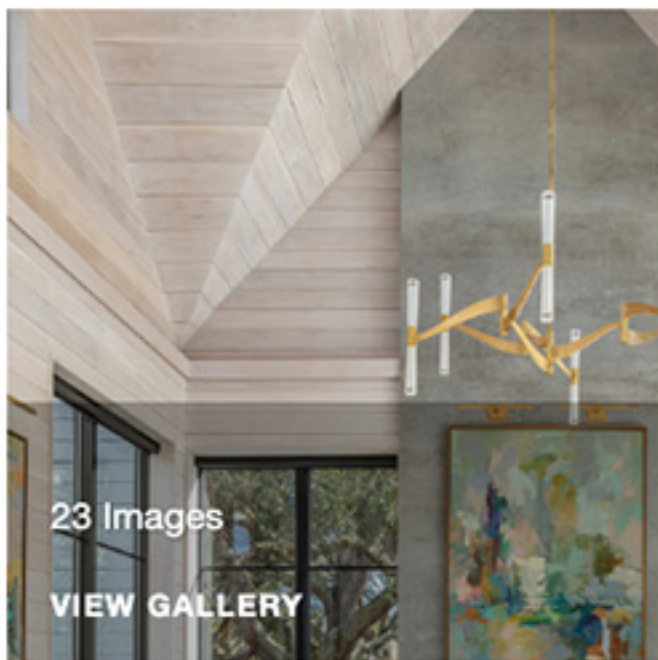
Beauty On The Bluff: A Modern Farmhouse Meshes The Lowcountry's Past And Present

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The home maintains its historical charm while embracing modern sensibilities



"My love affair with this property is with its magnificent views, bucolic sunsets, and stately live oak trees," says Greg Zerkel of his 12-acre estate on Bohicket Creek that's commonly known as Andell Bluff. Located on John's Island, the last residential property before the sea islands of Kiawah and Seabrook, his home pays homage to the historical farmhouse that once occupied the site. Built in a contemporary farmhouse style, the 3,500-square-foot residence and its two outbuildings—a pool house and a garage—sit nestled alongside centuries-old

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oaks, bridging the Lowcountry's past and present.

Zerkel, the retired president of Mason Dixon Energy, moved to Kiawah from West Virginia 15 years ago following the sale of his company. An avid golfer, he had visited the island many times over the years and decided to build a large home on the River Course in hopes he might one day get remarried and his adult children would bring future grandchildren here. Fast-forward a decade, and he found himself still single in a massive house and planned to downsize. While scouring Kiawah for the ideal place, he spied a "for sale" sign on Betsy Kerrison Parkway. "It read, "Twelve acres, historic home," recalls Zerkel. "I pulled in and saw these oak trees, that sunset, and the water and fell in love on the spot." Being so close to Kiawah meant he could still feel like a part of that community but also spread out and enjoy nature.



Andell Bluff encompasses 12 acres and includes a three-bedroom, 3,500-square-foot home, a pool house, and a garage.

The property was under a conservation easement, limiting the size of the home that could be built and how it could be used. So Zerkel put some of the land to work for its original purpose, incorporating a large vegetable and flower garden, orchard, and chicken coop. He also restored the pine forest planted post-Hurricane Hugo and adorned the landscape with idyllic seating areas.

Zerkel then hired architect Chad McDonald of McDonald Architects, who had designed his first home on Kiawah, to create this new one. The plan was to incorporate the existing, circa-1838 farmhouse that had belonged to generations of the Andell family, who once owned a sizable chunk of John's Island. However, the house had been moved at some point in the 1960s and renovated several times, so only some of the original framing remained. After extensive research and consultation with general contractor Phillip Smith, it was determined that the entire foundation would need to be replaced and the home

reframed—efforts that didn't add up for the project. Instead, McDonald and Phillip Smith builder Bill Payzant channeled their energies into “paying homage to the old farmhouse and other regional, rural vernacular structures,” says McDonald.

The result is a contemporary, three-bedroom house with a strong sense of place. “It’s anchored in the cultural memory of the Lowcountry,” notes the architect. With white siding, a painted metal roof, and a gabled roof line reminiscent of the old farmhouse, the home fits in with its neighbors along the creek while holding its own—courtesy of its modern twist. Spans of glass and angular architectural details give it a modular feel, accentuated by a design that cascades in size and scale from the large public spaces to the more intimate, private ones.

McDonald broke up the home’s mass by distributing structures such as the garage and pool house (each with an additional bedroom suite to accommodate Zerkel’s adult children) around the property. The outbuildings are connected with pathways that wind gracefully through the oaks. Here, landscape architect Cindy Cline of Wertimer + Cline used stone pathways with circular intersections to create a strong connection to the land.



Neutral tones allow the home’s modern artwork, such as this Amy Dixon piece from Hagan Fine Art in the entryway, to pop from the whitewashed oak walls. Bold bronze pendant lamps provide a focal point on the stairwell.

In the same vein, along the long expanse of the home’s waterfront footprint, Cline established a continuum of inviting outdoor rooms, from a lawn outside the primary bedroom (perfect for croquet or badminton) to the large pool deck off the living area that leads to an outdoor living room and kitchen. These alfresco spaces connect the main home to the adjacent pool house. Nearby, a long path under a canopy of oaks leads to a waterfront fire pit, affording close-up views of dolphins swimming in the creek.

Inside, the contemporary aesthetic allows for large glass walls in every room, maximizing the views, while whitewashed, white oak shiplap paneling paired with a stunning 28-foot, wood-paneled ceiling combines the traditional with the modern. Interior designer Anne Robinson of GDC Home juxtaposed the classic shiplap backdrop with modern artwork and clean, masculine furnishings to create a simple yet sophisticated environment. High-quality materials, from the primary bath’s porcelain walls and ceiling to the living room’s

Dekton stone fireplace, infuse the home with luxury. "It's transitional but with some rules broken along the way," Robinson explains. "I wanted to balance more modern elements with traditional ones to create an interesting, unexpected interior."



Outdoor furniture from Restoration Hardware features a bold orange color, inspired by Lowcountry sunsets.

The art was the driving force behind the overall palette, she notes. "For the most part, the main areas of the house have neutral tones, but in the den, for example, the painting by artist Rick Reinert dictated the sueded blue walls." The natural beauty of the setting influenced her as well. Inspired by the vibrant sunsets over the marsh, Robinson added orange as an accent color. Starting with the Restoration Hardware outdoor furniture and appearing inside in more muted tones, the surprising pop of color is peppered throughout the property, tying the spaces together.

The overall design perfectly captures Zerkel's desire for a home that can live well alone and comfortably with guests and visiting family. He loves to entertain, hosting a barbecue for 50 people over the Fourth of July weekend and planning a wedding to his fiancée, Patti Webb, there this October. "It's truly an oasis," he says, acknowledging that his plans from over a decade ago have finally come to fruition.