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house & garden

PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIA LYNN

Easy Breezy /// SOON-TO-BE

EMPTY NESTERS who have enjoyed decades of Cape Cod summers crafted their ideal Southern haven on Daniel Island, including this light-filled gallery that blurs the transition from outside to in. See page 79

THE CHARLESTON HOME

Lowcountry Cape

Mary and Chris Cormier's Captain's Island retreat blends New England heritage with Charleston charm

—written by JENNIFER PATTISON TUOHY /// photographs by JULIA LYNN

After raising their two daughters in New Jersey and spending summers in Cape Cod for 20 years, Chris and Mary Cormier were facing the prospect of becoming empty nesters, and the idea of a different life started to take hold. "In 2020, our older daughter was heading to college, and our younger daughter was starting her junior year of high school," Chris recalls. "We thought, okay, two more years in New Jersey, and then what's next?"

The South Carolina Lowcountry came to mind via friends who had recently moved to Daniel Island and were posting enviable photos of golf outings and water views. Having



CURB APPEAL: New Englanders Chris and Mary Cormier sought a slower pace of life in the South, securing a coveted lot on Captain's Island, a newer development on Daniel Island. Here, JacksonBuilt Custom Homes and architect Sabrina Vogel blended Cape Cod and Lowcountry styles to create a cozy yet spacious home for the empty nesters. (Left) The entry sets the tone for the interior design, a mix of contemporary and classic.

visited briefly many years ago, the Cormiers decided to explore a move. "We wanted to escape the Northeast winters," says Mary.

House hunting during the pandemic meant doing everything remotely. They spent hours

scouring websites and watching video tours, initially focusing on downtown Charleston but quickly pivoting to Daniel Island. "The club appealed to us," says Mary of the Daniel Island Club tucked into the town's golf courses.

"The lot and the trees dictated the design. It's long, so the house is long. We didn't want to go up, as we wanted mostly one-floor living."

—Mary Cormier, homeowner





VINTAGE STYLE: A striking mahogany and glass wine room dominates the open-plan living space that is filled with comfortable seating, including a custom Greek tufted-edge sofa covered in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric and two vintage bobbin stools upholstered in Belgian linen. At the center is a leather and cerused-oak ottoman/coffee table. Sleek Urban Electric table lamps and a Jean Royère-inspired chandelier in deep evergreen add pops of color. "The green anchors the room and highlights the decorative ceiling woodwork," says designer Charlie Collins.




"We both play, and it seemed like a great way to meet people." Proximity to the airport was another plus, with Chris, an investment banker, still spending weekdays in New York.

When a lot on the secluded Captain's Island came up, they bought it sight unseen. "This is incredible," I remember thinking when we drove over the bridge to the island for the first time," Mary recalls. "I thought, 'This can't be real.'"

The Cormiers knew they wanted to build. They'd been involved with the construction of their New Jersey home and remodeled their summer home in Cape Cod and liked the idea of a project. "We thought it would be smaller," Mary says, "but the lot and the trees dictated the design. It's long, so the house is long. We didn't want to go up, as we wanted mostly one-floor living."

Located on a corner parcel, the 5,000-square-foot, four-bedroom home captures views of the



BRING TO LIGHT: In the kitchen, a Scandinavian-inspired, cerused-oak pedestal table with a brass base, made by Doorman Designs, pairs with Serena & Lily rush and walnut chairs in the breakfast nook. Benjamin Moore "White Dove"-painted, shaker-style cabinets and white soapstone countertops accentuate the brass hardware. A custom china cabinet by JCH Cabinets in a cerused oak finish holds the Cormiers' collection of Juliska, Vietri, and antique French pottery. A large scullery with cabinets painted in Benjamin Moore "Hamilton Blue" and an oversized island provides plenty of workspace.



marsh and the Wando River beyond. A wide front porch feels welcoming and cozy, and inside there's ample room to spread out; everyone has their own space, even French bulldogs, Winnie and Evie. "I call it Lowcountry Cape," Mary says, "a little New England, a little Charleston—timeless."

The team they assembled to bring their vision to life included architect Sabrina

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PRIVATE DINING: Set apart by two Harmon-hinge pocket doors painted in Benjamin Moore "Beach Glass," the secluded dining room offers a mid-century modern moment. Cowtan & Tout grasscloth-covered walls add texture, while a vintage French Art Deco credenza topped by a concave jade mirror from Soyun K. provides a focal point. The oak dining table, designed by Benjamin Paul Studio atop antique brass pedestals, pairs with vintage Danish chairs upholstered in a Studio Four Belgian linen and provides plenty of seating for large gatherings. Spanish sculptor Jacinto Moros created the curvilinear sculpture for the Venetian plaster fireplace surround, finished by local artist Emily Pope Harris.



Vogel, builder JacksonBuilt Custom Homes, landscape architect Ink & Moss, and interior designer Charlie Collins of Melrose Design. Crucially, Mary involved Collins from the beginning. "I didn't want to bring a designer in at the end," Mary says. "I wanted someone from the start, so the light fixtures, the faucets, the furniture—all of it—told one cohesive story."

Collins describes that story as "calm, curated, creative, and classic." Her goal was to make the home "beautiful, livable, and unique to Mary and Chris." That translated into a subtle palette accentuated by pops of color, as well as carefully selected lighting and custom furnishings.

The home incorporates all the Cormiers' essentials, including a primary bedroom suite on the first floor, two rooms upstairs for their daughters, a den for Chris, and a flex space above the garage for guests.



SOOTHING BLUES: The Cormiers' primary bedroom suite is a calming space that embraces the marsh views. A custom upholstered bed and oversized, high-pile wool-and-silk rug provide a cozy feel, while two vintage mid-century modern Paul Frankl nightstands lend sophistication. A Restoration Hardware globe chandelier highlights the vaulted-beam ceiling, and pale blue curtains tie together the room's colorful accents. In the bathroom, a seamless, double-access shower clad in warm-toned travertine is tucked behind a his-and-hers vanity with Restoration Hardware mirrors and Visual Comfort sconces.



Big on entertaining, the couple also wanted open-plan indoor/outdoor living, with a fully screened back porch, a separate dining room, and most importantly, wine storage. "And we wanted to be able to see it," says Mary. Set in the middle of the home's living and kitchen area, the wine room is a focal point. Its custom mahogany and glass doors set the tone for the home's traditional-yet-modern style, while celebrating the couple's impressive collection. Just back from

a trip to Ezé and Bordeaux in France, the couple's already wondering if they should have gone for a bigger space. "Every slot is filled, and there are several boxes piling up along the floor—and we have more coming," says Mary, with a laugh.

The wood theme continues into the kitchen where white cabinets are complemented by oak beams, wicker chairs, and a cerused oak china cabinet. With white pigment lightening the tone while revealing the wood grain, this

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PAJAMA PARTY: The bunk room above the garage was designed to house their daughters' friends when they come to visit, and perhaps future grandchildren. A custom double bunk provides storage, and a delightful en-suite bath continues the color story with Ghiaccio glossy tile in brilliant blue and white. The vintage-style Kohler sink is painted in Benjamin Moore "Van Deusen Blue" and topped with a Restoration Hardware mirror.



PERSONAL SPACE: The den is Chris's favorite room, a quiet, tucked away spot with its own bourbon bar. Shiplap walls and blue highlights, from the handwoven Indian rug and Benjamin Moore "Stillwater"-painted shelves, lend a nautical feel. The stained oak and leather ottoman and a vintage Halabala chair add a touch of style.



striking piece was custom designed to add a vintage farmhouse feel without the precarity of placing precious china inside an antique. White soapstone counters lend softness, and a large Wolf range allows Mary to indulge in her love of cooking.

The adjacent butler's pantry painted in a light blue hides the kitchen's dirty work and provides plenty of space for an extensive glassware collection. Just beyond, a spacious scullery does triple duty as mudroom, laundry room, and dog den, complete with beds for Winnie and Evie.

The kitchen opens to the main living room, a clean-lined, comfortable space dominated by a large, plaster fireplace. A wall of glass doors opens to the outdoor living room, incorporating a kitchen, dining, and lounging area arranged above a small pool. "It's very well-situated for entertaining," Chris says.

Inside, the highlight of the communal space is the dining room. Rather than opt to sandwich a table between the kitchen and the living



SIT A SPELL: The property's long, narrow lot meant a smaller garden area, yet still large enough to incorporate a small pool and a grassy area for the couple's two pups to enjoy. The screened porch, complete with a fireplace, provides plenty of space for year-round relaxing, as well as alfresco dining.

room, Mary wanted a separate room. Collins worked with architect Vogel to place it at the end, divided by a dual-sided, plaster-finished fireplace with the option to close the space off via two Harmon-hinged pocket doors.

Collins leaned into the concept, designing the room as a moment apart from the rest of the home. Vintage Danish chairs upholstered in textured linen surround a handcrafted table with a mid-century modern vibe. A vintage French Art Deco credenza continues the home's cerused oak motif with a modern twist. Grasscloth walls, a white plaster chandelier, and a custom-designed Jacinto Moros sculpture above the fireplace layer in richness. "Dining rooms and powder rooms are spaces

that lend themselves to a little more fun," notes Collins, "not only for guests, but to give the homeowners an opportunity to take risks they might not have in other rooms."

While the Cormiers were leaning toward a clean, white aesthetic, much like their Cape Cod house, Collins convinced them to embrace color. "Subtle hues throughout the home add depth," she says. "We focused on saturated blues and greens to enhance the tones already throughout the home."

A bunk room over the garage also pops with a bold, deep blue incorporated into a tile pattern and vintage sink in the bathroom. With the garage set apart from the main home, Vogel designed a glass-encased gallery that provides a light-filled transition from outside to in.

A wall of glass doors opens to the outdoor living room, incorporating a kitchen, dining, and lounging area arranged above a small pool. "It's very well-situated for entertaining."

—Chris Cormier, homeowner

The Cormiers moved in last spring and immediately felt right at home. The pace, they both say, is different here. "Daniel Island is very relaxing and very social," Mary says. "The people are so nice, and so many of us are from somewhere else, so we're all kind of in the same boat."

As they hoped, the club has become their social hub. "It's like a built-in network," Mary says. "If you move somewhere new at our age, without kids in school, meeting people can be hard. This made it easy." With the marshes and the creeks reminding them of their beloved Cape Cod with a Lowcountry twist, the Cormiers are thrilled with their move. "This is home now," says Mary. ©

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