



AUSTIN ARCHITECT DIANNE KETT OF DK STUDIO TAKES A TRIP TO CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO DESIGN A LOWCOUNTRY HOME FIT FOR SIPPING ICED TEA ON THE PORCH.

# DESIGN FOR THE CHARLESTON SPIRIT

The exterior provides an inviting and timeless first impression, with influences from the Colonial, Georgian and Federal styles of Charleston's historic architecture. The symmetrical one-story home with a dormered attic space features a large front porch lined with shuttered doors, gray Hardi® Plank siding, gas lanterns and brick accents.

A formal foyer greets guests with dark hardwood floors, rich blue wainscoting and natural grasscloth wallpaper that embodies the elegant coastal feel of Charleston's architecture. Rattan and wicker accessories add a casual element to this refined space.

BY DREW HENRY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARS FRAZER





DIANNE KETT IS THE PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT AND founder of DK Studio in Austin, Texas, a boutique residential architecture firm nearing its 20th anniversary, as well as the co-host of Design Oracles, a podcast explaining the ins and outs of residential design. Her projects range from contemporary renovations in downtown Austin to peaceful Hill Country retreats. So, when presented with a chance to design a relaxed southern coastal home in Charleston, she grabbed a glass of iced tea and got to work on a whole new style.

“At DK Studio, we believe in design for the spirit,” said Dianne. “Which is to say we create designs centered around our clients’ unique tastes and needs. When one of our previous Austin clients reached out to have us build their new house in Charleston, we were excited for the opportunity to create something for their changing lifestyle. We had the chance to design for the Charleston spirit, a style we don’t typically get to explore here in Texas.”

As with all of her projects, Dianne and her team began the process by researching the architectural style and history of the region. Charleston is regarded as one of America’s most beautiful cities, with over 2,500 historic buildings dating as far back as the 16th century. The Charleston style incorporates elements of Colonial, Georgian and Federal



The open-plan kitchen features a massive island with seating for four anchored by two large lantern pendants. White cabinetry is contrasted with black soapstone counters and matching backsplash. Gold hardware provides an elegant final touch.

The Charleston lifestyle is all about entertaining. Off the kitchen lies a closed scullery finished with white marble counters, sage cabinets and gold hardware. Here, messes can be tucked away while the party continues uninterrupted.

The oversized great room is clad in stunning custom white paneling designed by DK Studio. The space accommodates two distinct sitting areas with back-to-back sofas, defined by modern brushed brass chandeliers with white shades. A set of three French doors with clerestory windows open onto the spacious back porch and flood the space with natural light.







design. These styles typically include symmetrical exteriors, light-divided windows, Greek Revival columns and decorative trim work. In Charleston, these formal elements are broken up with relaxed design choices, like front porches and soothing coastal color palettes. Two common floor plans in Charleston are “single houses” and “double houses.” Single houses are long, tall and skinny, optimizing small downtown lots with side entrances and piazzas. Double houses are broad and prominent, typically featuring a large front porch. Since the homeowners purchased a tranquil lot outside the city, Dianne’s team created a double house-inspired design.

“We worked very closely with our clients on this 3,609-square-foot new construction home located in Mount Pleasant just across the river from downtown Charleston,” Dianne explained. “In keeping with the Charleston-look, we incorporated both front and back porches, adding clerestory windows to flood the interior with light. We are exceptionally proud of the great room design, where we planned for incredibly intricate paneling. The builder, Cook Bonner, did a great job carrying out our plans. The homeowners joined in with their interior designer, B. Berry Interiors, to complement some of these formal finishes with more casual pieces for that

coastal feel. We particularly love the pastel-pink dining room color selection, which nods to the colorful homes of Charleston’s Rainbow Row.”

While this new construction home was finished in 2018, it feels as though Charlestonians have been toasting glasses of iced tea on the porch for decades. As Dianne and her team show, knowing your design history yields a timeless home! ♦

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The formal dining room’s dusty pink paneled wall color was selected by the client nodding to the pastel homes of Charleston’s Rainbow Row. An elegant crystal chandelier centers the room, calling attention to a black marble-top dining table flanked with cane-back chairs.

The primary suite offers plenty of natural light and is finished in a soothing green for a relaxing feel. The all-white en suite bath features dual sinks, marble counters, herringbone mosaic flooring and a freestanding tub accented with a crystal chandelier.

