

Born of Necessity... Now a Resurgence

Southern vernacular architecture evolved from hot, humid southern climates, but today homeowners in the South return to its basics capturing the romantic past with a new blend of features.



ABOVE A true southern home is the epitome of hospitality. Having a place to relax with family or entertain guests makes everyone feel welcome.

OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP A welcoming entry flanked by plenty of porch is a southern style home trademark. In days past people took the time to congregate in this breezy spot with neighbors.

Porches still symbolize a laid back atmosphere that makes one want to linger. **BOTTOM LEFT** Every southern home used to have a brick fireplace for cooking. Today fireplaces – usually found in the family room – still represent a place to “gather ‘round.” Bricks that resemble their old, hand fired predecessors are used for personality.

BOTTOM RIGHT French doors that open to porches allow air to circulate. It’s a logical principal with beautiful results.

Historically, southern vernacular architecture was born out of necessity prior to the days of air conditioning and electricity. Today, this style of home building is in high demand and in our region, one of its most popular forms is the “lowcountry cottage.” The design palette for this style includes high ceilings, old brick, the warmth of hard woods and elevated foundations. The desire is to blend the simplicity and beauty from old southern homes with new functions and comforts for today’s dream house.

200 years ago, homes were built in southern South Carolina to maximize comfort in the long, hot and humid months indigenous to the

region. Capturing a cooling breeze was the theme and accomplished best by an elevated house with high ceilings, wrap around porches and transom windows. Local building materials were the only choice. They included southern yellow pine for framing and foundations of solid bricks fired in Charleston and Savannah. Hog fencing was a building detail to keep the hogs and other critters from running under the house. That detail is now used in lowcountry cottages as a decorative wood accent to the elevation. Porches were wide and deep to diffuse the harsh sunlight and create shade. One might consider them the first element of today’s term known as indoor/outdoor living. Often, porches were utilized for entertainment and for cooler sleeping.

NEW IDEAS THAT ARE OLD

Today’s home owners are looking for the intimacy of smaller floor plans, but loaded with details from the past like high ceilings with simple, but elegant moldings, stacked glass to allow light into rooms,

the details

Lowcountry homes tend to be detail oriented with small touches making big statements.



ABOVE Clean lines and a no fuss attitude are typical lowcountry style. **BOTTOM** To keep in character with traditional lowcountry homes, many of today's versions use reclaimed woods like heart pine, oak and cherry for floors and paneling.

reclaimed woods like heart pine, oak and cherry for flooring and paneling, huge 150 year old structural timbers, metal roofing, and wide wrap around porches. Other details often used for the "lowcountry cottage" include operable shutters lending both storm protection and privacy. Wrought iron decorative accents and manufactured brick reproduced like the old handmade fired bricks of the past are also used. Lighting is often simple and more rustic, like chandeliers with oil rubbed bronze and burnished colors.

Homeowners are now more interested in connecting their dream house, not with the region they just came from, but with the lowcountry where they intend to live and play in a different way. The lowcountry cottage has emerged as a charming connection to the past, yet now constructed for warmth, comfort, beauty and energy efficiency. ■■■

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