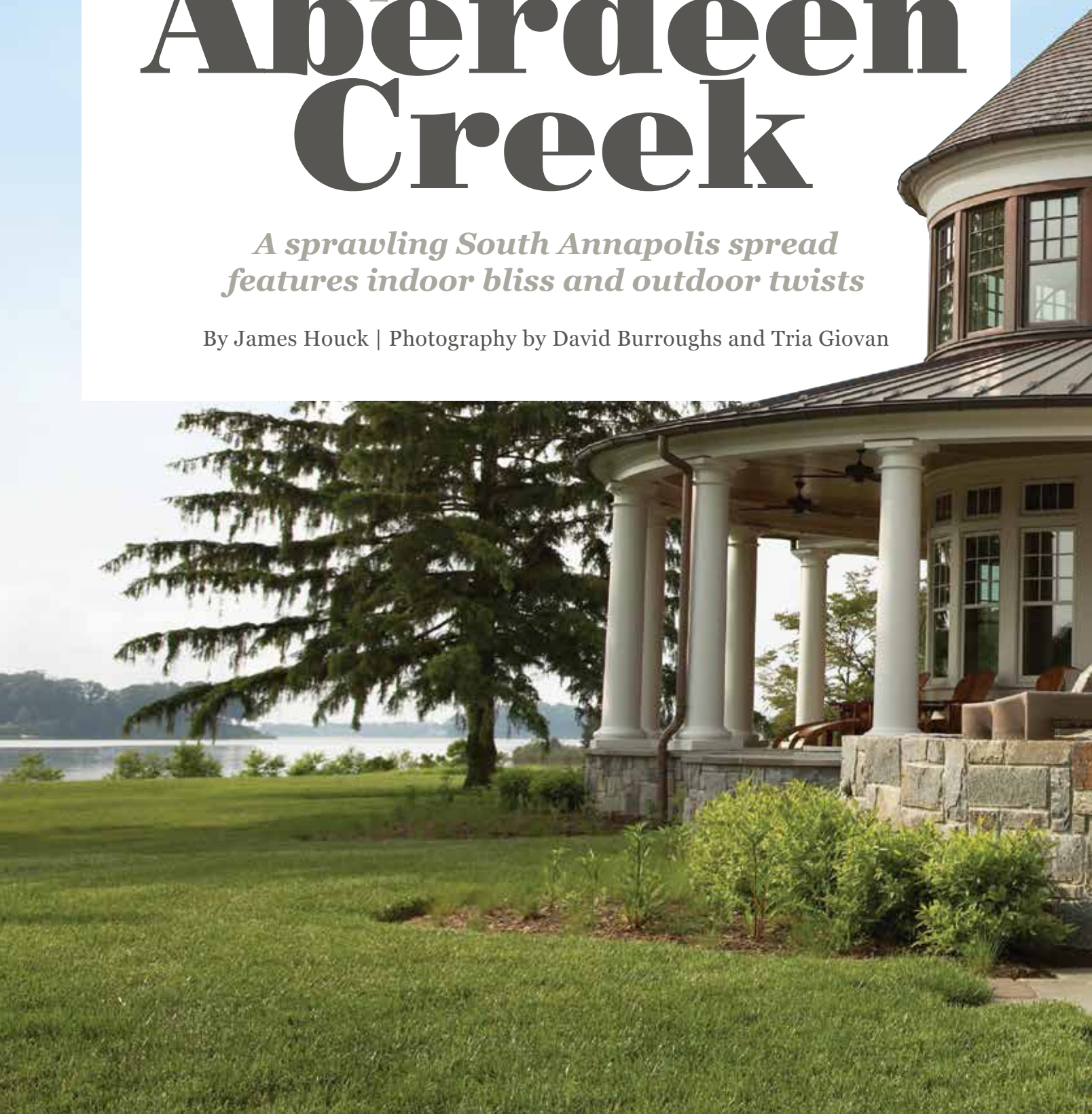


all on Amenities Aberdeen Creek

*A sprawling South Annapolis spread
features indoor bliss and outdoor twists*

By James Houck | Photography by David Burroughs and Tria Giovan







Like many of the towns that dot the Chesapeake Bay, Annapolis is riddled with points of land—peninsulas—jutting into the rivers and creeks that surround the denser urbanization. Many of these peninsulas are coveted property for their privacy, as much as their water access and gorgeous views. Melvin Point, located just a couple miles south of bustling downtown, seems a world away—

protected by a short scenic drive to its outer reach, that feels much longer than it really is. There, it boasts waterfront homes with ample acreage and shoreline footage that one would think might only exist on the Eastern Shore. Nestled between Aberdeen Creek and Little Aberdeen Creek (both of which flow to the larger South River), Melvin Point combines Chesapeake history and culture with its former farm tracts-turned-top tier properties. Not the least of which is our example this

month—a Maryland tidewater home with elements of Nantucket shingle-style design. And is it ever top-tier.

Our homeowners—who wish to remain anonymous—discovered the property in 2002. At the time, this five-acre parcel had a half-century-old rambler in disrepair, was overgrown with brambles and invasive vines, 600 feet of actively eroding shoreline, marsh overtaken by fragmites, and a questionable septic system. In short, it



had enough negatives to scare off most buyers, but not our couple. “Still, we loved the location and could see that it had potential,” they say. “Even with the substantial risks and restrictions involved with a property in the ‘Critical Area’ within 1,000 feet of the Chesapeake Bay or one of its tributaries. So, we bought it and immediately began looking for an architect who could help up navigate through the many substantive challenges and regulatory restrictions applicable to the property

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and help either with a substantial addition to and total remodeling of the existing house, or, if things went very well, with the design of a larger, new house.”

Enter architect Catherine Purple Cherry, who would serve as the lead for this growing project. “The project began in 2006 and was an incredibly energizing and fun process with these clients,” Purple Cherry says. “They were completely engaged in all elements of design. The homeowners always had a true love for architecture and the inspiration for the home came from beautiful imagery of Maryland’s Eastern Shore and classical homes built in New England. Further, the home was influenced by the magnificent site and the views of the Chesapeake Bay.”

But the homeowners’ vision would be put to the test early. “To tell the truth, when we began this project,” they say, “We had no idea what we could or might decide to build and we knew that we needed someone who would be comfortable working with us and guiding us through the regulatory maze, being flexible all the while to changes of direction that might be necessary because of zoning issues or our own changing preferences.”

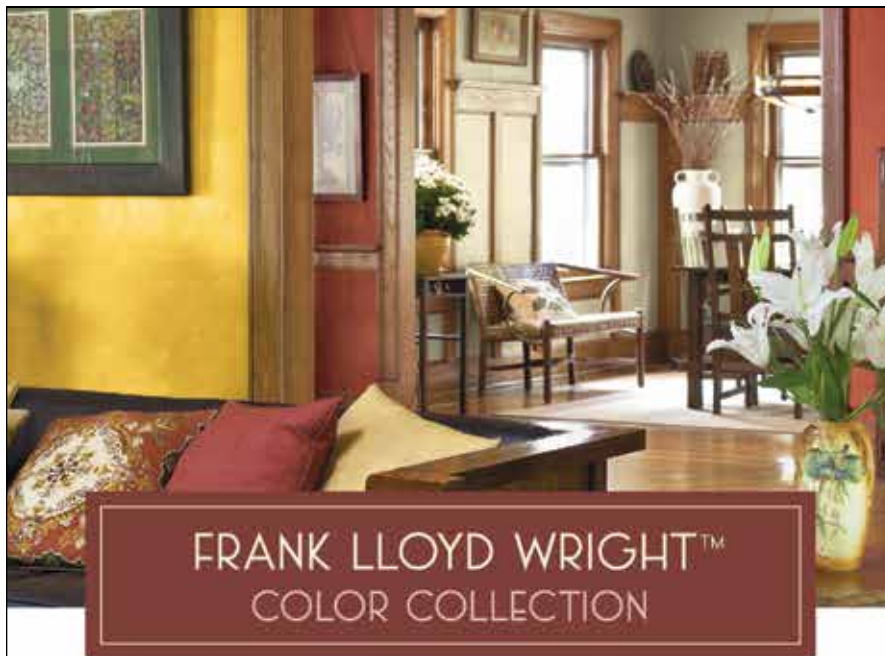
Purple Cherry adds, “The site posed significant problems at the beginning of site development due to previous unsuccessful percolation tests for a septic system. After approximately 36 months of efforts to re-test the property and work with the local health department, an innovation mound system was approved, allowing the project to progress forward.”

Three years of testing and red tape could turn off even the most hopeful of property owners and yet, our couple pressed on with work commencing on what would become a 14,000-square-foot forever home.

“The ultimate plan for this home was to blend styles creating a distinctive Maryland design,” Purple Cherry says. “The goal of the interior design was to maximize views to the water







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and wetlands with large, open rooms and connect them visually to the landscape and exterior spaces including screened porches and patios."

The result is spectacular. Among the home's many wow-factor features are: a timber-framed stone pool house with kitchen and full bath, which provides year-round activity and entertainment, features a six-foot masonry fireplace, and visually connects to a timber-framed barn accessory structure; a three-story floating stair stone tower that connects the floors, is fully-paneled from the first floor to the tower ceiling, and provides incredible opportunities for viewing the setting sun on the Chesapeake Bay; a spiral room on the curved copper roof end of house with vaulted radial beams; the second floor contains a unique hallway and library space finished to invoke the sense of a sailboat interior; and extensive millwork and paneling throughout the house.

"The house has incredibly rich detail in its millwork, strong yet simple and economical details around the doors and windows, and a great variety of texture for the ceilings in the more public rooms," the owners say. "It has a soaring peaked space in the sun-room ceiling and an open stair tower with a ceiling over 40 feet above the first-floor landing. It is full of visual surprises around every corner!"



Purple Cherry agrees: “The intricate detailing of millwork and built-ins throughout the home...next to the staircase, which when experienced in person, is really breath-taking.”

When asked about their favorite details and amenities, the homeowners gush about...all of it. “There is always incredible attention to detail and surprising, delightful, and usual spaces at every turn. We love the little reading nook on the second floor for the grandchildren. There are also lots of built-in cabinets and bookshelves and four wonderful fireplaces, including a huge fireplace with a 25-foot stone chimney at the end of the pool,” they say.

There is also a movie room. “An idea developed late in the planning process when extra space showed up above the garage,” the owners explain. “[It] has great wooded views on both sides and is bright and cheery for sitting around listening to music during the day, but transforms with a push of a button to a perfectly dark theater for movie watching anytime day or night.

“We could go on and on about the many features of the house that we love—it exceeded our expectations in every way. It is a house we love, and we can honestly say that there is not a single thing that we would change. We hope to spend the rest of our days in this house.”

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