



# BAY BEAUTY

*Purple Cherry Architects transforms a mundane abode to suit its stunning Edgewater locale*

Text by JULIE SANDERS | Photography by DAVID BURROUGHS

It was the view that sealed the deal. On the market for a waterfront home, David and Maria Welch walked into a run-of-the-mill, circa-1970s house in Edgewater, Maryland, took in its magical perch above the scenic intersection of the South River and the Chesapeake Bay, and decided to make it their own. “You don’t even see the backyard until you get close to the windows,” marvels Maria. “It’s like being on a boat; all you see is water.”

However, the dated and poorly laid-out house left much to be desired. The Welches—David is a mechanical contractor and Maria is a home-maker—felt an addition was necessary, but the house was sited so close to the water that the critical-area buffer prohibited rear expansion. To ensure they’d be able to make the changes they wanted, they consulted architect Cathy Purple Cherry and eventually hired her to tackle the job.

Renovation Architecture: **Cathy Purple Cherry**, AIA, LEED AP, CAS; **Doug Kuchta**, Associate AIA, project manager, Purple Cherry Architects, Annapolis, Maryland. Interior Design: **Gina Fitzsimmons**, ASID, Fitzsimmons Design Associates Inc., Annapolis, Maryland. Renovation Contracting: C.A. Desimone Inc., Edgewater, Maryland.



Purple Cherry enhanced the façade (opposite) with paneled bay windows, sloped rooflines, gables and a cupola. The kitchen (these pages) combines custom Lyndon Heath cabinetry with Esmeralda granite countertops and a backsplash from Oceanside Glass & Tile.





Ultimately, the Welches' wish list centered on improving sight lines to the landscape and waterfront; redesigning and enlarging the interiors to create an open-plan kitchen/dining/family room; and reimagining the nondescript front façade. "They very much wanted a classic Shingle-style home," notes Purple Cherry. "But they had no preconceived notions of how to get to the end they wanted."

She and her team devised a program that answered all their requirements—and more. Enlarging the windows along the back of the house maximized the views, while adding onto the front instead of the back allowed them to revamp the façade in the style the Welches desired.

"We used a siding product called NuCedar that gives the effect of a newly constructed Shingle-style house," Purple Cherry explains. "It's synthetic and stays the color of new cedar shingles." She also enlarged the driveway and designed a commanding new entry beneath a sloping, Shingle-style roof. The eye-catching result is high on curb appeal. "The sweeping



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roofs and bands of white trim allowed this great contrast against the brown shingles," Purple Cherry points out.

With its center-hall floor plan, the interior presented its own issues. On entering the house, "the stairs down to the basement were the first thing you saw," relates Maria. And their central location split the house in half, making it a challenge to create the open-plan living space the owners envisioned.

Purple Cherry reversed the direction of the staircase, so the upstairs flight now faces the front door. On one side, the original combination galley kitchen/family room became a spacious family room that flows into a massive kitchen, housed in the 2,110-square-foot addition. At the kitchen's center, a banquette is integrated into the island and paired with a dining table.

Off the kitchen, a smaller addition holds a laundry, mudroom and bathroom; it leads out to the back deck and swimming pool. On the other side of the staircase, the former living/dining room is now a rec room with a full bar, a seating area around

**The architect transformed the home's drab exterior (left) and maximized water views via enlarged windows, balconies and an additional patio that spills down to the pool (above). The deck (opposite, bottom), rebuilt out of ipe, is accessible via the family room (opposite, top), which boasts built-ins designed by Purple Cherry and fabricated by Lyndon Heath.**

a gas fireplace and space for games (the couple has three children, the youngest of whom is in college).

An en-suite bedroom occupies the space above the kitchen addition, while the Welches' bedroom, at the back of the house, overlooks the water. Purple Cherry redid the bathrooms, added a two-sided fireplace to the master suite and finished the third floor, outfitted with a home theater and bar.

Embracing a traditional aesthetic, the owners specified extensive millwork throughout the house as well as built-in shelving in the family room. "Maria expressed a desire for a more coastal, relaxed interior," says designer Gina Fitzsimmons, hired to outfit the interiors.





## drawing board

### How do you help clients prioritize their wish lists?

CPC: If the project has a specific budget, then costs determine which phase(s) can be completed first. If budget is not in the picture, then whatever elements will most significantly excite the client as well as support their needs take priority. I walk them through the mental process of prioritizing their needs.

### What features add curb appeal to a house?

Most significantly, a beautiful front entry. Further, details and trim that create interest and add shadow and depth to the elevation. And don't forget incredible landscaping.

### What are the challenges of remodeling a waterfront home?

The only challenge in waterfront remodels is making sure you comply with the critical area code. You have to know the limits of development. Otherwise, there are no particular challenges.

### Do you prefer custom building or remodeling?

I love both! I find new homes and massive transformations to be equally exciting and rewarding.



Clockwise from above: Gina Fitzsimmons furnished the living room with Bernhardt club chairs. The closed-off staircase was replaced by an airy, open one bordered by millwork. Lexington stools and a Ralph Lauren pendant enhance the granite-topped bar. A banquette is integrated with the kitchen island.



She selected colors and finishes that evoke the waterfront setting: deep blue for the rec room walls and on the oak floors throughout, a fumed finish that conjures the look of driftwood. Michele Yeatman of Ethan Allen in Annapolis worked with the owners to pick out additional furniture and accessories.

The backyard was transformed to complement the renovated house. Rotted railroad ties that terraced the property were replaced with stone retaining walls. The existing swimming pool was enhanced with a Western Maryland stone

surround, built-in outdoor kitchen and fire pit. An ipe deck and pergola-covered patio beside the house provide seating and space for al fresco meals. New storm-water regulations required that the owners incorporate a retention pond planted with native grasses.

The Welches couldn't be happier with their refurbished abode—and its waterfront location. "We love it here," says Maria. "It's amazing—even when the front yard is super-hot, in back it's so much cooler. There's always a breeze blowing off the water." ■