



PORTFOLIO

# A BEACON OF LIGHT

**P**erched on a peninsula jutting into the South River is an intriguing house with spectacular water views and a distinctive cupola centered high up on its roof. Six miles away lies the home's remarkable inspiration: the historic Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse, built in 1875 just south of Annapolis in the Chesapeake Bay—the only screw-pile lighthouse in the U.S. still in its original location.

Not surprisingly, the owners of this riverside manse were taken with its unusual nautical connection. However, when they bought the house in 1997 they were less enthused by its contemporary style and inefficient use of space. "I didn't care for the finishes," the wife explains. "The house just didn't feel substantial enough." After living there for a while, the couple tapped Hammond Wilson Architects to realize their

Hammond Wilson Architects brings form and function to a nautically inspired Annapolis home

vision, which included an addition and a reconfiguration of the main living space into a larger, more open environment.

"The house told us what it wanted because the form was already there," says architect Leo Wilson. "Its cruciform [cross-shaped] plan provided panoramic views but it also resulted in small, poorly organized spaces." He adds, "The new design exemplifies how to use space efficiently." At ground level, the house now boasts a light-filled front entry, mudroom, full bath, billiard room and home theater. It opens onto a backyard with pool, spa



BY JULIE SANDERS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE BENNETT

RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE: Leo Wilson, AIA, LEED AP, Hammond Wilson Architects, P.C., Annapolis, Maryland. CONTRACTOR: R. Bret Anderson, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland. INTERIOR DESIGN: Jane-Page Crump, Jane Page Design Group, Inc., Houston, Texas. LANDSCAPE DESIGN: McHale Landscape Design, Inc., Annapolis, Maryland.



The historic Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse (opposite bottom) inspired the design of the house (opposite top), its cupola imparting the sense of a bygone era. An elegant curved stairway (this page) has replaced the original contemporary one.

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and outdoor fireplace and kitchen.

A curved, floating staircase ascends from the entryway to the second level, which now has an open plan encompassing a dining room, living room, conservatory, library and bar. "The original space was very geometric," Wilson says. "We took out the angular walls and staircases and replaced them with curves, creating softer lines." The open area leads to a separate family room and kitchen with a newly added breakfast space and built-in desk for the wife.

A staircase at the back of the house leads to the third floor—a wide, circular balcony with an open central well overlooking the dining room area. Four bedroom suites branch off from the balcony. With three boys, the couple needed plenty of space, so dormers were added to the bedrooms to increase their size and to accommodate separate bathrooms for each. From the third floor balcony, a spiral staircase leads to the cupola, now a loft retreat with a dramatic 360-degree view of the South River and the Chesapeake Bay. This is the husband's home office, complete with a giant hanging lantern—a nod to the lighthouse, where a similar beacon would have shone for sailors at night. ▶



The dining area (top) occupies a central spot in the open-plan, second-floor living area. A far cry from its original look (above), the expansive kitchen (left) now features pecan-stained and black-glazed alder wood cabinetry, extra-thick granite countertops and a spacious new breakfast area.

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According to Wilson, they tried "to keep the lighthouse connection but bring up the level of richness of the home." For instance, in the foyer the floor is embellished with an eye-catching medallion in the shape of a compass rose made from water-jet carved limestone. And in the entryway, a wall of steel-plated windows and broad, steel-plated glass front doors brings in light while echoing the screw-pile construction at the base of the lighthouse.

The couple turned to Texas interior designer Jane-Page Crump to help them with décor. Crump imbued the home with a luxurious sensibility, using sumptuous, high-quality finishes. Upstairs, walnut floors create warmth and the dark-cherry-paneled bar adds an extra touch of opulence. The kitchen combines pecan-stained and black-glazed alder wood cabinetry with three-inch-thick countertops of swirled granite—also from Texas. Coffered ceilings, crown moldings, walnut and wrought-



In the family room (pictured here), a carved limestone fireplace replaced the modern original (inset).

iron banisters, a carved limestone fireplace and ornate chandeliers all add to the lavishness of the space. The furnishings mirror the home: formal yet comfortable. "I love it," says the wife. "It's exactly the way we live." ♦

*Bruce Bennett is a photographer based in Houston, Texas.*



BEFORE

A photograph of a balcony with ornate wrought-iron railings. In the background, there are two arched windows with decorative frames. The scene is lit with warm, yellow light.

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