

ER014



Bay Front Residence

Destin, Florida, is the site of this very special home that has been in the same family for three generations, overlooking where the crystal clear blue green tides of the Gulf of Mexico meet the waters of the Choctawhatchee Bay. The current owner wanted to preserve the nostalgia of the home his father built in the 1970's, but also wanted a more modern, light-filled and open plan interior. The beautiful old oak trees on the property had become overgrown and neglected through the years, and blocked the vistas from the house to the water.

The renovation project essentially entailed a total site intervention. What would be seen looking through each window looking out, and what would be seen from the outside looking inside was all taken into consideration in meticulous detail. Every element of the renovation was considered as part of the overall composition of the site, from the boathouse on the water to the gates on the street, and all were conceived to honor and celebrate the family's local heritage and the beauty of the environment.

The owner and architect walked the property hundreds of times, carefully considering the composition of the whole, and how any changes would affect the result. Trees were thinned out and a private park-like atmosphere was sculpted. The previously hidden house became visible from the street through a gated entrance and brick paved drive.

The house interior was dated with shag carpet, small compartmentalized rooms, low windows, narrow passages and dark tile throughout. Every design change was undertaken to improve the light and openness of the rooms, and to maximize the views to the spectacular waterfront and landscaped grounds. The roof was raised to allow window heights to be increased, and glazing carried up into the gables to flood the interior rooms with light and open views to the tree canopy. Additions for a new master suite, dining pavilion, and pool guest house were constructed to appear like they had always been part of the whole. The old, screened in pool was replaced with an open, infinity-edged pool that unites the house with unimpeded views across the bay.

Despite the myriad number of small and large changes to both the house and the property, the entire composition looks organic and timeless, a tribute to the owner and architect's many discussions and careful deliberations over every detail of the project.