

Heritage Building & Design

Inspiring Your Vision – Building Your Dream



by Susan Roush



A custom home in Cypress River Plantation.

The word ‘custom’ is freely tossed around in home building today. In actuality, a few modifications to existing plans and predetermined allowances for finishes and fixtures rarely translate to a true custom home. Bruce Atkins, Owner of Heritage Building & Design, said, “I find if you try to modify a home plan, it just doesn’t have the same appeal, or it may not fit your needs, or take advantage of your property’s features as well as a custom design. I always try to encourage my clients to focus a little less on how quick we can start the project and focus more on how important the design process is.”



The master bathroom in the McCabe residence in Cypress River Plantation.

Although Bruce’s degree is in Mechanical Design, it was through an internship with Donald Gardner Architects in Greenville, SC that he realized his passion for Residential Design. After completing his education, Bruce was asked to return to Donald Gardner where he worked as a designer for 7 years. His experience with Donald Gardner eventually led him to employment with a custom home builder in Myrtle Beach (Sterling Homes) where he worked for 7 years and became Vice President. In 2012 he founded Heritage Building & Design with a vision to create a unique “Boutique” Design - Build company where he



The Robinson residence in Plantation Point.



Bruce Atkins (far left), Kristy Atkins (2nd from left), Jodie Hughes (very back) & Jessica Hughes (far right) enjoy spending some time together @ the Hughes’ residence on Ocean Blvd. in Myrtle Beach. “Quite honestly once we met with Bruce, we didn’t even meet with anybody else,” said Jodie. “We just connected with the philosophy of how he designed and built houses, and the attention to detail he put into his work resonated with us,” said Jessica.

would place an emphasis on quality construction and customer service.

Bruce is happy to show customers houses that he has built, but if they want to build an exact replica, he will begin to ask questions. “We can end up with something totally different than what they originally thought. Part of the process is making sure that each customer has a unique home that’s just theirs, one of a kind, and they know there’s not going to be another one built right down the street,” he said. “I personally design the homes myself.” Bruce believes that the benefits of dealing with a Design - Build company is getting a home that will meet your lifestyle and budget; and, having the person who designed your home on site to see that your vision carries through to the construction of your home. Bruce added, “I’m there from start to finish to ensure it meets all the customer’s design ideas and criteria.”

Bruce is one of the few builders who actually accompanies every one of his clients to vendors’ showrooms to help them work through the selection process. This gives everyone the opportunity to ensure a cohesive



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE

The living area in the Hughes' residence. "We genuinely enjoyed the process of designing and building the home. What makes that extraordinary to say is that we went through the entire process in the middle of a global pandemic and shut down, but we never felt like the process got away from us or from Bruce. Things stayed on schedule, and we were fully aware of anything that was going to be an issue beforehand and how it would be resolved," said Jessica Hughes.

outcome. At the same time, customers are not limited to particular vendors or products. "Really anything you can think of we

can get. If one of our vendors doesn't have it, we'll locate it. If we can't find it, we'll make it." Bruce's wife Kristy not only works as the Office Manager

and helps with interior design, she is also a Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices who can find customers that special property to build their dream home, as well as the sale of any properties a customer may have. Senior Project Manager Charlie Floyd is also at the forefront of the Heritage team and is Bruce's right hand man in providing an exceptional building experience.

Consistent themes emerged when speaking with homeowners who chose Heritage Building & Design for their custom home. They appreciated the comprehensive approach to pricing; the investment of Bruce's time before, during, and after the build; and Heritage's customer service, including their artistic spark.

Until recently, Jodie and Jessica Hughes moved every three to five



The master bathroom in the Hughes' residence.

years. When they could finally settle, they asked their broker for builder recommendations; Heritage Building & Design was among the suggestions. Jodie said, "Quite honestly once we met with Bruce, we didn't even meet with anybody else." Jessica agreed, "We just connected with the philosophy of how he designed and built houses, and the attention to detail he put into his work was something that resonated with us." Knowing that Bruce was hands-on mattered to the couple. Also, as Jessica said, "There's not a 'look' to Bruce's houses where you say, 'Oh that's a Heritage house.' It's all about the people he is building for and not some specific esthetic or element that is his signature. It mattered more what we wanted than any sort of agenda he may have in the process. That was a big thing to us." For the Hughes, a British West Indies-inspired home is what they wanted. Jodie added, "He's a super nice guy, very genuine. It's not often that you do something like this and at the end of it feel like you made a friend, as well as have a builder that you trust."

Jessica summed it up, "We genuinely enjoyed the process of



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE

The outdoor living area in the rear of the Hughes' residence.

designing and building the home. What makes that extraordinary to say is that we went through the entire process in the middle of a global pandemic and shut down, but we never felt like the process got away from us or from Bruce. Things stayed on schedule, and we were fully aware of anything that was going to be an issue beforehand and how it would be resolved. Building a house is what made 2020 bearable for us!"

After looking at dozens of existing

homes, Jeff and Sharon Rice realized they weren't going to find the living space they wanted on one floor, so they bought a lot in Dye Estates. When it came time to build, they made contact with Bruce through the Heritage Building & Design website. Jeff recalled, "Bruce spent his time literally for 6 months [working on the design with the couple] and never asked for dime. During that time, I knew this was the guy I wanted to build my house. He worked that long with me and trusted me enough that I wasn't going to take his design and go to another builder."

Sharon and Jeff also appreciated the attention to detail, creativity, and willingness to change course. This included changing the existing ceiling in the kitchen to a wood ceiling. The metal strappings ordered for the ceiling didn't meet expectations, so Bruce fabricated and antiqued the straps in his shop. Because the Rice's style runs toward rustic Jeff said, "We couldn't find the right fireplace mantles. I wanted big, very thick old pieces of wood." Bruce made the two mantles, which included an elaborate distressing process to get the right patina. He also aged new, raw shiplap to make it look a century old. Jeff was



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Bruce Atkins (far left), Kristy Atkins (2nd from left), Jeff Rice (2nd from right) & Sharon Rice (far right) in the Rice's kitchen. The Rice residence is in Dye Estates. After spending some time with Bruce discussing and working on the design of their home, Jeff said, "I knew this was the guy I wanted to build my house."



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE

The kitchen in the Rice residence. “All the walls in the house are insulated – interior and exterior – so you can’t hear anything from one room to another. Bruce was very good about making the house unique,” said Jeff Rice.

impressed with several design details, “All the walls in the house are insulated – interior and exterior – so you can’t hear anything from one room to another,” he said. Another

thoughtful touch is that the electrical outlets are in the baseboards. “He was very good about making the house unique,” Jeff added.

Glenn and Kim Stengel were first-



The pool and outdoor living area in the rear of the Rice residence.

time custom home clients. Glenn said, “All we heard were horror stories so we were really kind of nervous about it.” They valued a friend’s opinion who had given them Bruce’s contact information. They also heard unsolicited rave reviews about Heritage from other Cypress River Plantation homeowners. Glenn recalled, “When we first met Bruce, he came to Cypress River and literally spent all day looking at lots and giving us so much insight to things that would add expense that we would have never seen.” A self-described detail person who needs lots of information, Glenn particularly appreciated the hours and hours of time Bruce invested with them. “He didn’t want to do what a lot of builders do, which is low-ball you on your allowances. I appreciated that; I like everything up front.”

The Stengels were admirers of many Donald Gardner designs, and upon learning that Bruce previously designed for the firm, Kim felt, “It was meant to be.” Glenn found Bruce exceptionally easy to work with. He said, “Literally the day before they were going to pour the footers, my wife and I were looking at the lot and I was standing where the garage was going to be and thought, ‘You know what, we should have flipped this thing so it’s a mirror image.’ My wife said, ‘Well they haven’t poured anything yet.’ I thought Bruce would kill me when I called. He just said, ‘Let me take a look,’ and called back



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE

The residence of Glenn and Kim Stengel in Cypress River Plantation. “When we first met Bruce, he came to Cypress River and literally spent all day looking at lots and giving us so much insight to things that would add expense that we would have never seen,” said Glenn. Even after moving into their home, the Stengels still have questions for Bruce from time to time. “He’s still delivering; if I have a question about something, he promptly answers my calls,” said Glenn.

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The master bathroom in the Baker residence in Pawleys Island.

in about 10 minutes to say, ‘We can do that, no problem,’ (it meant pushing the footprint back and restaking it). He wanted to do what would make us happy.” Glenn found that Bruce delivered on what he said, “He’s still delivering; if I have a question about something, he promptly answers my calls.”

David and Stacie Baker had built custom homes twice before. Their marsh-front home in Pawley’s Island was the third, and best, experience. David said, “Bruce started to redraw [a plan they had already designed with an architect] and we thought, ‘Oh, boy we should have come to him first because he had such wonderful ideas.’ He made the plan absolutely perfect.” Stacie liked Bruce’s pricing process. When the couple built a large custom home in Winston-Salem, Stacie made selections with one vendor, and then the builder informed them they were 26-thousand over their allowance. “I didn’t get anything I wanted,” she said. David wasn’t ready for the build to end, “It was such a pleasant time that I was ready to sell and start on

another house with him; it was that nice." It was nice for the neighbors too. The President of the HOA told the Bakers after they moved in that Bruce and Charlie were probably the best builders they had had in the community for their onsite management, responsiveness to rules, and keeping a clean job site.

Ryan Schubiger, a repeat client of Heritage Building & Design, and a Realtor who works with a handful of builders said, "Seven or eight years ago Heritage told clients that they were going to pick everything out before they signed the contract. They did that with me and I was impressed



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE

The kitchen area in the Baker residence looking out over the marsh in Pawleys Island. David Baker thoroughly enjoyed the overall building experience. "It was such a pleasant time that I

was ready to sell and start on another house with Bruce; it was that nice," said David. The president of the HOA told the Bakers after they moved in that Bruce and his superintendent, Charlie Floyd, were probably the best builders they had in the community for their onsite management, responsiveness to rules, and keeping a clean jobsite.

with it. Bruce has been doing this for a really long time. He knows a lot of people in the business and he's pretty darn accurate with pricing." Ryan added, "You call Bruce, and he's going to get back to you within the hour. To be able to talk with your builder directly is not that easy in a lot of cases. He's a great designer as well. I never have to worry about recommending them." ■



The residence of Ryan Schubiger in Vereens Landing. Ryan is a local Realtor and repeat client of Heritage Building & Design. "Bruce knows a lot of people in the business and he's pretty darn accurate with pricing. You call Bruce, and he's going to get back to you within the hour. He's a great designer as well. I never have to worry about recommending them," said Ryan.



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