

# Time After Time

In Charleston, an affectionate restoration writes a new chapter for a Georgian pre-revolutionary dwelling.

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**Architecture:** Glenn Keyes, Glenn Keyes Architects **Interior Design:** Mark Zeff and Daniella Santo, Mark Zeff Architecture + Interior Design  
**Home Builder:** Richard Marks, Richard Marks Restorations





The mudroom entry of this updated 18<sup>th</sup>-century abode balances historical details with practical charm. An Obsolete teardrop pendant, for instance, shines above the custom storage cabinetry and a vintage bench from Laurin Copen Antiques.

For a while, one vibrant family could never quite settle down. Stylish bohemians by many definitions, they filled houses from New York to Birmingham with treasures accumulated along the way. Designer Mark Zeff loved composing each one. But their next—a South of Broad abode blending classic Charleston single and Georgian styles—would be different. “The wife declared this house would be the last,” Zeff recalls. “This was where they were going to spend the rest of their days.”

Built circa-1764, the walls of their Holy City home chronicled a long journey. Each passing century beget structural changes and revisions. Some proved harmonious, such as the drawing room arch likely created in the 1920s. Others felt less gracious—from bulky Victorian mantles to a bathroom jutting out into the balcony. Yet ghosts of past elegance endured in well-proportioned rooms touting original molding and trim.

Zeff sought to embrace these layers of time, melding the family’s own history with their storied residence. “We wanted to honor the historic references without replicating them exactly,” he explains. “The house, in a sense, felt like an artifact,” adds Daniella Santo, Zeff’s head residential designer who stewarded the project. “We needed to breathe new life into it.”

Architect Glenn Keyes brought on general contractor and architectural conservator Richard Marks to spearhead the home’s structural rebirth. Liaising with another architect, Lisa Botticelli, the group revived the abode’s Georgian symmetry while smoothing the transition to a rear extension completed during the midcentury. Working closely with researchers at Clemson University, Marks carefully examined nailheads, paint layers and hand-hued woods to trace which components were constructed when. The process resembled “a kind of architectural archeology, giving a blow-by-blow evolution of the house,” Marks explains. “We searched for those character-defining features: what’s sacred and should be restored.”

Keyes then mended the façade’s south-facing piazza (the local nomenclature for Charleston’s iconic two-story porches). Marks, meanwhile, repaired original dentil crown molding, window casements and doors wherever possible, also replacing incongruous features like mantles with

custom period-authentic millwork—a reverent ode to nameless artisans that history never recorded.

The renovation essentially doubled the newer wing’s footprint—making way for a new family room, wine room and guest quarters, plus the new primary suite above these. In lending his talents to the lush new poolside cabana, Keyes reached back to history, letting a contemporary take on old Charleston outbuildings inspire its architectural envelope. “We didn’t want it to look like a Georgian extension,” he shares. By contrast, “We wanted the addition to be sympathetic in style and proportion, yet deferential to the historic main house.” The collaboration produced an assemblage of paneled walls, peak ceilings, paned windows and porches that achieve this subtle contrast, with the new kitchen and mudroom capturing the Nantucket notes Botticelli knew her clients loved.

Zeff and Santo’s interior design also played with a continuum of style. Front rooms lean more traditional and ornate, adorned with mural wallpapers, floral embroidery and prints, tufted upholstery and antique rugs. But the formality softens as one moves throughout the house. More contemporary nods emerge in the home’s newer portion—from the kitchen’s oversize island to the primary bedroom’s graphic carpeting. “By the time you reach the cabana, it feels very modern,” says Santo, pointing to her and Zeff’s selections of variegated Ipe floors and streamlined furnishings.

Blurring different periods from one space to the next helped the transitions between historic and modern feel seamlessly diffused. “We loved the juxtaposition of a modern carpet next to a 1750s chair,” Zeff notes. Color became a steady through line, with the home’s neutral ground enlivened by generous dollops of pink, yellow, turquoise and green. “The height of Charleston’s beauty appears in spring and summer, so we wanted to bring that inside as much as possible,” Santo says.

Landscape architect Sheila Wertimer’s design touched everything from the arrival garden and kitchen plot to the circular lawn and pool courtyard, nestled in a thicket of bamboo and sago palm. Tried-and-true local species like yaupon holly, sweetbay magnolia and oakleaf hydrangea add textural interest.

Enveloped in blooms and dappled by the canopy of old-growth trees, the house feels whole again—and ready for the family to inscribe their own lives onto every room. “They will grow along with it,” Zeff predicts. “I’d love to come back 20 years from now to see what’s changed.” **L**





**Above:** Lush textiles swath the drawing room, from the custom sofa upholstered in Brunswick & Fils' Lazare velvet to a silk rug by Sacco Carpet. An ottoman of Pierre Frey linen converses with draperies of Cowtan & Tout's Somerley textile. The green ceramic side tables are from 1stdibs.

**Opposite:** In the adjoining office, Benjamin Moore's Graystone updates a vignette anchored by a 1975 Henredon rattan desk from 1stdibs. Accenting the space are Cole & Son's Versailles wallpaper, Roman shades of Scalamandré's Kensington embroidery, and a custom sofa featuring pink Holland & Sherry fabric.





Surrounded by Lee Jofa's Beaujeu floral grass cloth and accented by pillows in Cowtan & Tout textiles, the sun room leans playfully eclectic. The Louise Bourgeois artwork at right was sourced by Andrea Hazen of Hazen Art Advisory.





**Right:** Benjamin Moore's San Antonio Gray continues from the kitchen to the pantry's custom cabinetry and open shelving. Marble countertops fabricated by Lowcountry Tile Contractors, Inc. join brass hardware from Horton Brasses, Inc.

**Opposite:** The new cooking space boasts paneled walls and custom cabinetry. Sol&Luna leather counter stools, Obsolete opaline-glass pendants and limestone flooring from Lowcountry Tile Contractors, Inc. prove equal parts sensible and chic.







**Above:** Adorned with Barber Wilsons unlacquered-brass hardware, a custom marble vanity by The Water Monopoly adds graceful flair to the primary bathroom. A vintage Turkish rug from 1stdibs and French floral armchair from Nickey Kehoe create a spot for repose.

**Opposite:** The primary bedroom skews graphic, its crosshatch-pattern Sacco Carpet juxtaposing a Robert Kime textile on the upholstered bed. Manuel Canovas' Fabry green linen from Cowtan & Tout covers the custom bench. A scalloped rattan pendant by Soane Britain suspends above.