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CHARLESTON STYLE & DESIGN

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RIVERFRONT RETREAT

A Mount Pleasant interior designer captures a couple's true identity in their new riverfront home

by ANGELA CARAWAY-CARLTON / *photography by* HOLGER OBENAU



previous:
Designer Alexandre Fleuren created a custom wall color to set the mood in the masculine but elegant sitting room.

Rattan swivel chairs from Kenian cozy up to a portable Flickr firepit on a brass drum table. Door hardware through Beers Millwork.

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F THERE'S ONE WORD THAT IS CENTRAL to Alexandre Fleuren's design mindset, it is identity. In an ever-evolving world of trends and fleeting aesthetics, the master interior designer, who's been in the industry for more than 25 years, strives to find individuality and distinctiveness in every project.

"I spend a lot of time listening so I can see the client as they truly are," says Alexandre Fleuren, principal of Alexandre Fleuren Interiors in Mount Pleasant. "The whole point of what I do is to make their home their literal identity, not just comfortable and pretty. I never want someone to look at my design and say, 'That's Alex's project.' I want them to say that it embodies that particular client."

Passion Project

When Fleuren was recently commissioned by a high-profile couple and repeat client to design their new Lowcountry home, which is perched above the deep waters of the scenic Wando River, she immediately began shaping the interiors around their personal uniqueness. "They're so full of life and vitality," says Fleuren of the clients, whose family builds stunning, hand-carved Pulsifer Hampton boats that resemble pieces of art. "They're a boating family, so this is a dream home to enjoy an active lifestyle on the water."

Fleuren always tries to begin designing around people's passions, and she beautifully intermixed the couple's lifestyle, hobbies and family history throughout the home. "He's a sommelier, and she loves art photography," says Fleuren, who took cues from their personal interests when planning the interiors of the master study, which also doubles as a sitting room for entertaining. The true pièce de résistance is artwork from a Nevada photographer and sommelier. "The entire room was designed around it," says Fleuren of the film negative that

Art photography by Jen Pulsifer commands attention in the room, while a Thibaut mohair throw adds extra color to the bed.



showcases the Russian River Valley, a California wine region beloved by the couple. “The piece is interactive. You can hold your phone up to the photo and see the work as it was originally.” The study’s walls are swathed in a deep moss hue, a special color mix created by Sherwin-Williams for the room, along with artwork by world-renowned Charleston artist Sally Hughes Smith. Another attention-grabbing piece from the couple’s coveted family collection is a piece of the original Wright Brothers’ plane signed by the brothers, which Fleuren had reframed.

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Stylish Slumber

Even a power couple must have a private retreat in the home, and the master bedroom is a stylish sanctuary dashed in muted tones of white, navy and moss and fitted with exclusive designs. Fleuren acquired a custom-made, Italian leather chair in a whiskey hue that brings warmth to the room, along with a one-of-a-kind Afghan rug in a navy ikat pattern that makes a bold statement. A standout feature is a moss-colored throw draped across the bed that’s from Thibaut’s new mohair collection, a first for the country’s oldest wallpaper and fabric company. “The mohair collection won’t be released until October, so this is the first time you’ll see this,” Fleuren says.



Custom leather pillows from Erika Lynn Studio & Boutique complement the rich hues in the sitting room.

opposite:
Fleuren collaborated with Beers Millwork to create a panel with the wood species used in the family's boat business.

Other intricate details that allude to the family's boating history include a 9-foot mosaic panel fashioned with a collage of white oak, pine and cedar that's used to create the hull of a boat. The master bedroom's doors can be flung open to reveal a deck that offers picturesque views of the river, and another oasis fit for drinking morning coffee or cozying up to the firepit.

Color Story

Fleuren is best known for infusing spaces with vibrant colors, and an unexpected color story unfolds in the master bathroom, starting with fabulous Thibaut blue and gold wallcoverings. However, the focal point is a metallic orange lacquer soaking tub that overlooks the marsh through two huge windows. The homeowners can step out of the tub onto a one-of-a-kind Turkish rug in moss green, vivid blues and oranges. "This is another example of things that I specifically source for clients," says Fleuren, who also added a special touch, a photograph taken by the owner of her husband and son hiking in the mountains, which rests near the tub. Metal round mirrors above the vanity and a modern sputnik chandelier with gold arms and globes from Sazerac Stitches punctuate the space. Since the designer favors a lot of light, she also used white cylinder overhead lights as sconces to add fun and function. As a final touch, the designer took note that the husband hates damp towels, so she finished the bathroom with thinner towels made in Portugal, which are lightweight and dry quickly.

"I do try to think of every detail," she says. "We manage every part of a project, from conception to finishes—even hanging the towels. When a client walks in their home, I want them to see themselves." It all goes back to identity, and Fleuren knows who she is as a designer, and more importantly, who her customers are. *

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Fleuren added a metallic orange tub for a pop of color in the master bath.

