

FAMILY AFFAIR

A couple with six kids builds their Shingle-style dream home on the West River

*By Christianna McCausland
Photography by Tim Lee*

On the bluestone porch, furniture from Restoration Hardware overlooks the pool area and river beyond.



Kathy and Kevin Haley bought their first home in Shady Side, Maryland, near Annapolis in 1996. Back then, the couple often went kayaking on the West River to a popular waterfront restaurant. As they paddled, they'd note an eccentric red-and-white rancher in decline on the opposite bank. Kevin would say, "Someday, someone will tear that down and build their dream house."

Nearly 17 years later, the Haleys did just that.

When they bought the property in 2011, the decrepit rancher had already been razed, leaving a flat, empty lot. At the time, the Haleys were expecting their sixth child and their existing house felt increasingly cramped. Nevertheless, as they planned the home that would take shape on the waterfront lot, the couple decided to buck the current trend towards bigger-is-better living, opting to create a large home that would feel as intimate as possible.

They also wanted to channel the coziness of their former Cape Cod-style home. In fact, Kevin was insistent on low ceilings and

Architecture: Lacy Brittingham, AIA, Lacy Brittingham Architect, Washington, DC. Interior Design: Wesley Thompson, Simply Wesley, Annapolis, Maryland. Kitchen Design: Mark White, Kitchen Encounters, Annapolis, Maryland. Builder: Raymond Gauthier, principal, and Bryan Beauchemin, Lynbrook of Annapolis, Annapolis, Maryland. Landscape Design: Elin Haaga, Elin Haaga Landscape Gardens, Bethesda, Maryland. Landscape Installation: Relms Landscaping, Harwood, Maryland.



The traditional home is clad in hand-stained cedar shingle (top). Inside, the front entry (above) and an open floor plan yield views of the river (opposite). Character-grade white-oak floors in varying widths impart a refined, rustic look.





The massive kitchen/family room easily accommodates the large family. A comfortable sitting area offers plenty of room to relax, while a 10-foot-long, reclaimed-pine table from Arhaus Furniture provides flexible seating and space for entertaining.



The mudroom (above) is flanked by cubbies made of reclaimed fencing. In the kitchen designed by Mark White (right), the furniture-like island is topped with walnut. Appliances and lighting are from Ferguson, and the limestone backsplash is subway tile with a beveled edge. The peripheral countertops are Giallo granite.

narrow doorways. “He was so worried it would feel like a museum and that it would echo,” Kathy says.

With a background in designing high-end condos and row houses, DC architect Lacy Brittingham (at the time, director of design at ASG, Inc.) was the perfect choice to execute the couple’s design program. “In condos, you’re trying to get a lot of spaces into a small box, so I applied a similar mindset to the house,” she explains. “We had two laundry rooms, a sunroom, an office, a den, two staircases—and it all was like a puzzle that had to fit together as efficiently as possible.”

Kevin and Kathy each grew up with five siblings and often shared bedrooms. They wanted their own children to have a similar experience. “We wanted to recreate a little bit of how we grew up while still being practical,” Kathy Haley explains. In their new home, only the eldest daughter, 17, has a private bedroom. The other girls, aged four and seven, share a room while the boys, ranging from nine to 14, have semi-private bedrooms on the third floor that open to a unified play space.

A native of New England, Kathy wanted the home clad in the cedar shingle she loved. But before it could even be constructed, significant remediation needed to take place on the site. Kevin Haley also had a couple of mandates: to preserve two mature trees on the



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property; and to raise the home at least 12 feet off the ground—a precaution against flooding, which the family experienced in their previous house during Hurricane Isabel.

“Some of the first-floor elevation was also determined by ground-water,” says Bryan Beauchemin, vice president of Lynbrook of Annapolis, the general contractor. The property proved to be swampy, yet it needed to support a heavy house. “We had to dig out about 12 to 14 feet and fill it with gravel,” he recalls.

Today, a combination of cedar shingles and cement-board trim on the finished exterior evokes summer homes in Cape Cod. Beauchemin points to important design details that complete the aesthetic, like the way the shingle gently flares over the foundation, with its river-rock veneer. The house is shallow by design, so water views greet guests upon entry.

At just over 6,600-square feet, the home is functional for a big family but still cozy. The Haleys’ lifestyle is casual, so they opted for no formal living or dining room. Instead, Brittingham designed a large, flexible room that houses a massive kitchen and family room. Designer Mark White of Annapolis-based Kitchen Encounters helped create a kitchen that can handle six hungry kids. Kevin requested a

range with a 24-inch griddle for making big breakfasts and Kathy quips that she is like a short order cook most nights, feeding everyone as they sit at the oversized walnut island. Appliance garages keep clutter off the counters and one wall of cabinetry hides a small refrigerator and microwave so the kids can make their own snacks.

Off the kitchen is a sunroom—Kevin’s favorite space in the house—and a nearby den doubles as a guest room.

Kathy, an avid reader of shelter publications, handled much of the interior design herself. She selected a neutral palette of blues and grays to complement the water and woods that surround the house. Annapolis-based designer Wesley Thompson of Simply Wesley helped choose family-room furniture, upholstered in indoor-outdoor fabrics, and met Kathy’s desire for beach-house style without being overly thematic.

“I think we accomplished what we wanted from the house,” says Kathy. “When people come in and say it feels welcoming and cozy—I just love that.” ↓

Writer Christianna McCausland is based in Baltimore. Tim Lee is a New Milford, Connecticut, photographer.



Soft blues and grays in the master bedroom (opposite) create a relaxed, informal feel. In the backyard, a swimming pool beckons (above), while an outdoor fireplace offers an inviting spot to gather (left). The exterior spaces were designed by landscape architect Elin Haaga and installed by Relms Landscaping.