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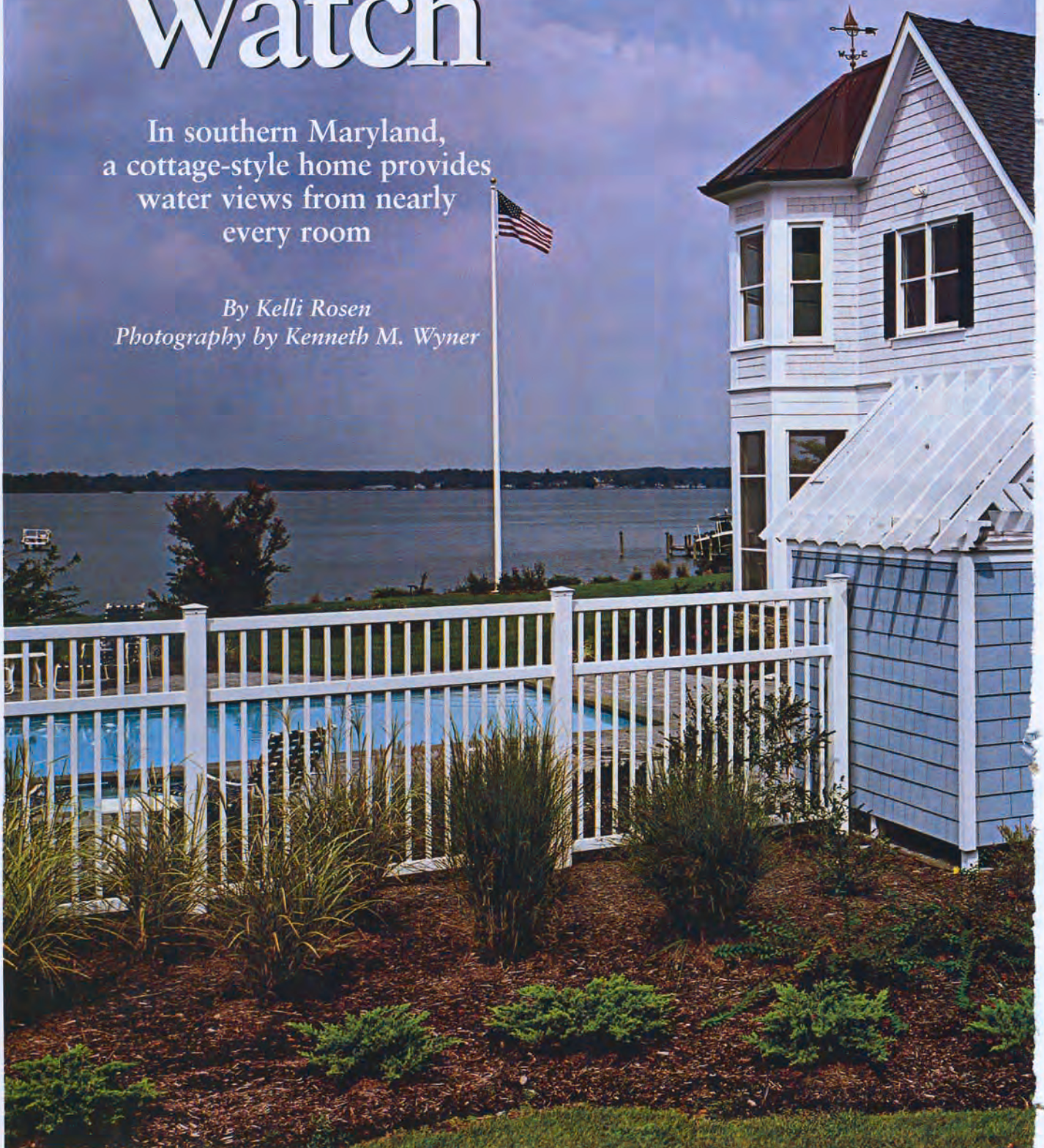
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# Bay Watch

In southern Maryland,  
a cottage-style home provides  
water views from nearly  
every room

*By Kelli Rosen  
Photography by Kenneth M. Wyner*





George Myers of Bethesda-based GTM Architects sculpted the front of the house with staggered bays topped with gabled roofs to reduce the apparent mass of the structure.





When Washingtonians Tracey and Jamey Nugent happened upon a small cottage on Breton Bay, a tributary of the Potomac River, in Leonardtown, Maryland, they instantly knew it was the perfect spot for their family's vacation home. The stay-at-home mom and businessman and their teenage sons James and Andrew already knew the area, having regularly visited Jamey's parents in nearby Calvert County on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. "When we purchased the property in 1998, Leonardtown, which is just about 11 miles from Solomons Island, was one of Maryland's best-kept secrets," says Tracey. "Homes were reasonably priced and there were no crowds—plus lots were large enough that your neighbors were not too close. We also really liked the proximity to Washington, DC. It's just 90 minutes away, so Jamey could travel to work easily and the boys could get to their sporting events."

But it was the land they loved, not the small existing structure on the property. "We have the water on one side and are otherwise surrounded by farmland, and we just fell in love with it," says Tracey, "but we bought it hoping that someday we would build our own home." When it finally came time to create the family-friendly retreat in 2002, the Nugents donated the existing cottage to local firefighters, who burned it to the ground for a training exercise. Then the couple



hired architect George Myers of Bethesda-based GTM Architects. "He was very familiar with our tastes because he had remodeled a previous home for us," says Tracey, who admits she and Jamey were very comfortable turning over the design reins to their long-time friend.

"When you are designing a waterfront home, one thing is for sure: You need to make as many rooms as possible face the water," says Myers. "That is a paramount consideration." The meandering two-acre lot also influenced the new house's configuration. "I pictured a longer home, rather than a tall one, so I sketched out a 1.5-story cottage-style home with gables, dormers, a turret and roof lines that reached down to the

first floor," he says. "Fortunately, Tracey and Jamey really liked it so very few changes were made."

The bayfront location also dictated to a degree the placement of the pool, located next to the house. The garage flanks the end of the pool opposite from the home and includes a second-floor guest quarters. "Because this home is on the water, there were set-back lines that we had to adhere to," says Myers, "but mostly the design was based on how the family planned to use the space." For example, the Nugents are very active, especially when it comes to water sports. "So I knew the garage had to be big and include lots of storage for things like boats, kayaks and jet skis," the architect notes.

*Architecture:* George Myers and Keith Palma, GTM Architects, Bethesda, Maryland

*Builder:* W. M. Davis, Inc., Leonardtown, Maryland





The swimming pool and concrete-paved patio extend from the side of the house (opposite). They are visible through the bay window in the dining area (pictured here), where a pine farmhouse table from Drexel Heritage seats 10 for special family dinners.



Situated next to the dining area, the living room offers views of Breton Bay through tall windows. The fireplace is surrounded by authentic Pennsylvania bluestone and slate. Custom cabinets by Miller Cabinetry in Loveville, Maryland, house the television and audio components. Homeowner Tracey Nugent chose distressed pine tables from Drexel Heritage and upholstered chairs from Stanford. Many of the nautical accents such as the sailboat on the mantel were housewarming gifts.







Because harsh weather conditions on the waterfront can wreak havoc on the home's exterior, Myers chose HardiePlank siding and shingles made of composite cement board—cement that's been mixed with ground sand, cellulose fiber and other additives for durability greater than wood or stucco. "I wanted to make the house as maintenance-free as possible," he says.

Myers also balanced the family's need for more space with his desire to respect and embrace the site, rather than create a structure that would compete with it. "I didn't want it to feel like a big house, like some sort of sprawling mansion," he says of the 3,500-square-foot home.

The Nugents could not have agreed more. "We really wanted something comfortable, nothing formal," says Tracey. "I wanted my friends and family to visit and not worry if their kids spilled something on the floor." Another of the architect's ideas was to build a freestanding outdoor shower adjacent to the home and pool, a practical decision considering the house is often brimming with guests. But its open-rafters design, which adds a creative, unexpected architectural punch, was actually the homeowner's idea. "I saw a picture of a shower similar to this in a magazine and knew that's what I wanted here," says Tracey.

Comfort is key in the Nugents' vacation home and nowhere is that more evident than the interior design. Tracey classifies her décor as traditional, not "beachy," but admits many of her decisions, like berber carpeting throughout much of the home, were based on having two sons. "I'm sure someday when they are older, we'll replace it with hard wood," she laughs.

She also chose vibrant paint colors for rooms throughout the home—bright yellow in the master suite, for example, to brighten the space, especially during the winter months. "I did not want any earth tones," she says. "But I did want to bring a



bit of the outdoors in so I chose sky blue for much of the first floor.”

The cozy furniture pieces, too, demonstrate that Tracey isn't afraid to infuse a bit of personality and whimsy into her fabric selections. “One of my favorite pieces in the house is the sofa with the lady bugs on it in the den,” she says. “My son was really into bugs at the time so I thought it would be fun.” The Nugents are also avid boaters, so Tracey selected a red fabric with sailboats for a chair in the living room.

And because the couple enjoys hosting large family gatherings, they insisted on an open floor plan. The common area consists of a kitchen, living room and dining room—all of which have spectacular views of the water. The modern kitchen, complete with granite-topped island, is a popular gathering spot and the adjoining living and dining rooms mean lots of people can socialize while Tracey prepares holiday meals. The library and guest bedroom on the first floor, as well as the four additional bedrooms upstairs, also all face the water.

The couple's favorite part of the house is the substantial screened porch that overlooks the pool and bay. “The back of the home faces due west,” says Myers, “so I knew there would be some amazing sunsets out there.” He chose rugged flagstone tiles for the floor and warmed the room by installing Douglas fir planks on the ceiling. And according to Tracey, who filled the porch area with plenty of cushioned wicker seating and a large teak dining set, the entire family takes advantage of the space. “We are out there from spring through fall,” she says. ☺

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*Writer Kelli Rosen is based in Monkton, Maryland. Kenneth M. Wyner is a photographer based in Takoma Park, Maryland.*

The screened porch is adjacent to the dining area to embrace views of Breton Bay. Wicker seating from Lloyd/Flanders is arranged on a flagstone floor under a ceiling of Douglas fir.















The sunny master bedroom (top) extends into a turret (opposite) with a tongue-and-groove pine ceiling and built-in bookshelves. For her sons' bedroom (above), Nugent opted for a boating theme, complete with an Adirondack-style chair and sailboat-decorated headboards. "A man was selling the headboards on the side of the road when we were driving home from the Outer Banks," she laughs. "I just had to have them." Ocean-blue checkerboard linens are from Pinecone Hill.