

at home with





A UNIQUE APPROACH

Modern amenities mix with
early 20th-century design

Story by **Maria Sonnenberg**
Photography by **Rob Downey**

Interior designer Christine Whiteley of Concepts and Dimensions and contractor Craig Dixon of Dixon Builders went back to the future to create not just one, but two cottages for a Cocoa homeowner.

The two residences blend perfectly with the surrounding 1926 houses, but the Bird House and the Tree House, as the owner has nicknamed her new places, are homes for the 21st century, structures born out of a holistic and green approach that incorporate energy-efficient materials with life-cycle considerations, support of local sources and environmental sustainability.

"Everything in this house is very special," says Dixon.

Dixon is the perfect man for the painstaking job of marrying the relaxed ambiance of early-20th-century River Road casual with state-of-the-art technology, for the third-generation contractor boasts an admirable family tree.

"My family has been in construction in Brevard County since 1888," he says.

The conception of the two houses began more than two years ago, when the homeowner bought a lot adjoining her home, which sits less than half a block from River Road. The original house included a 1923 dirt-floor mule buggy garage that over the years had been "renovated" with tacked-on additions.

Next door sat another cottage that had fallen into hard times.

The homeowner salvaged the garage and tried to do the same with the old house, but the building was far too gone to resuscitate. In its stead arrives the Bird House, a three-story, 39-foot-high shotgun-style structure brimming with comfort and style.

Left: The three-story, 39-foot-high Bird House off River Road in Cocoa overflows with comfort and style.



Trendsetting



HOUSE of LIGHTS
and Home Accents
1034 South Harbor City Blvd. - Melbourne, FL
(800) 541-3048
houseoflightsFL.com

FT-0000382131
spaces | 34



Fans



Lighting



Furniture



Accents



Installs



Above: The Bird House's old-fashioned porch is made of indestructible ipe lumber. Above left: Like its sister residence, the 1,530-square-foot Tree House features a variety of custom-fitted woods.

True to their heritage, both the Tree and Bird Houses shine with a variety of custom-fitted woods. Built on piers, above the ground, just like they did way back when, the Bird House is clad with Spanish cedar, or cedrella, a no-nonsense wood that has little patience for Florida bugs.

Also indestructible is ipe lumber, the wood used for the old-fashioned porch that beckons neighbors for a spell.

"These are very, very hard woods," says Dixon.

"No bugs in Florida will eat it. She'll never have termites."

The exterior siding and hand-cut citrella Victorian-style shingles, not to mention the copper flashing, oversized copper gutters, standing seam Galvalume roof and solid mahogany French doors will never be on anyone's honey-do list, for they will require very little maintenance during the next few decades.

The homeowner wanted elegant but informal houses that were also environmentally sensitive spaces that relied on natural, recycled or

The conception of the two houses began more than two years ago, when the homeowner bought a lot adjoining her home, which sits less than half a block from River Road.

Tanzanite Collection

From Paragon



FIFTH AVENUE JEWELERS

luis angel designs

102 N. Ramona at Fifth Avenue
Indialantic, FL

321-726-9992

As Life Changes, So Do Your Financial Needs



Denwood Parrish, CLU®, LUTCF
Financial Representative
366 North Babcock Street, Suite 101
Melbourne, FL 32935
(321) 259-2200
dparrish@nefflorida.com
www.denwood.nefrep.com

**Call Denwood
today at
321-259-2200.**

For the if in life.®

New England Financial®
A MetLife Company

New England Financial is the service mark for New England Life Insurance Company, Boston, MA.
L0309025887[exp0511][All States][DC] 0709-5871

The homeowner wanted elegant but informal houses that were also environmentally sensitive spaces that relied on natural, recycled or renewable materials.





Have You Seen Dr. Sprock lately?

Dr. Sprock is fellowship trained with more than 10 Years Experience. Providing Urogynecology and Cosmetic Gynecology

Services provided:

- Cosmetic gynecology services such as reshaping of the labia, vagina and perineum.
- Urogynecology: treatment of urinary and/ or fecal incontinence, urgency and frequency as well as pelvic floor prolapse.
- Treatment options are numerous and could be pelvic floor muscle training, nerve stimulation, dietary changes, medications, surgical intervention or support devices.
- Surgical repair can be vaginally but also laparoscopically.

Now
Accepting
New
Patients

*"Vaginal Surgery is an art...
Choose a well-rounded experienced
surgeon you can talk to."*

Marja Sprock M.D.

1009 Harvin Way, Suite 110
Rockledge, FL 32955

321-806-3929

www.CFUroGyn.com



Above: The Bird House's open kitchen flows into a comfortable parlor, where guests can gather while the owner prepares a gourmet treat.

renewable materials. She also adheres to a less is more philosophy, so her new houses exude a glittering minimalism.

"The finished home has integrated her request for an open feeling without losing the intimate interaction that occurs when you define the purpose of the space," says Whiteley.

Rooms flow seamlessly into each other, from the "parlor," where guests can gather while the owner prepares a gourmet treat in her handsome open kitchen. This level is open to the stunning second floor bedroom that overlooks it. At the back of the house is the music room, where a piano and cello are shaded by the "leaves" of an art glass chandelier.

"We wanted a significant piece, because this is the visual ending, but we didn't want something you'd expect over a piano," explains Whiteley.

The vast ceilings in the main living area soar to the third floor, a mantle of rich Venetian plaster that glitters at night from the torn lighting, a concept reminiscent of movie magic, of light rays bursting from free-form openings in walls.

"It's an incredible effect," says Whiteley.

"The lighting is just phenomenal."

Anchoring the massive space are equally substantial 24-by-48-inch travertine tiles laid in a brick pattern.

In this visually extraordinary house, perhaps nothing is more striking than the fiber-optic ceiling of the master bedroom.

"To my knowledge, this has not been done in this area," says Whiteley, who was project manager for the two homes.



Left: A piano and cello are shaded by the "leaves" of an eye-catching art glass chandelier in the music room at the back of the house. Chandelier by House of Lights.

From the first floor, visitors can glimpse an accurate depiction of the night sky when the homeowner and her mate met.

Parameters for the master bath insisted on green living and whimsy. Ceilings and custom-fitted cabinetry feature sustainable lyptus as wood of choice.

The two-person shower and tub alcove, complete with waterfall and mermaid mosaic, offer a retreat from the daily grind. Above, an antique chandelier serves to juxtapose the historic with the contemporary. Chiseled out of granite and with a matching backsplash, the sink is organic and natural.

Crowning the house on the third floor is a compact but infi-

Rooms flow seamlessly into each other, from the "parlor," where guests can gather while the owner prepares a gourmet treat in her handsome open kitchen.



Right: The stylish staircase leads to the stunning second-floor bedroom and the cozy third-floor TV lounge. **Above:** The roots of a tree at the base of the stairs, custom-fabricated from iron, give the appearance of a branch growing up from the stairs. The design concept meshes with the whimsical, organic elements scattered throughout the Bird House.



*Waiting for
your furniture
to float in?*

Our furniture never sees a ship!
Our furniture is built in an American
factory by American workers and
delivered by an American truck.



AMERICAN MADE FURNITURE!

Traditional & Elegant Home Furnishings • Solid Wood



Free Delivery for all of Brevard! www.homefurniturefl.com

Hwy 46, Mims, FL 32754 • 321-267-3565 • Monday - Saturday 9:30 am - 5:30 pm

spaces | 40





Left: A piano and cello are shaded by the "leaves" of an eye-catching art glass chandelier in the music room at the back of the house. Chandelier by House of Lights.

From the first floor, visitors can glimpse an accurate depiction of the night sky when the homeowner and her mate met.

Parameters for the master bath insisted on green living and whimsy. Ceilings and custom-fitted cabinetry feature sustainable lyptus as wood of choice.

The two-person shower and tub alcove, complete with waterfall and mermaid mosaic, offer a retreat from the daily grind. Above, an antique chandelier serves to juxtapose the historic with the contemporary. Chiseled out of granite and with a matching backsplash, the sink is organic and natural.

Crowning the house on the third floor is a compact but infi-

Rooms flow seamlessly into each other, from the "parlor," where guests can gather while the owner prepares a gourmet treat in her handsome open kitchen.



nately detailed lounge for television watching. The cutest little sink in the universe saves the homeowners the hassle of two flights of stairs to the kitchen.

The Bird House isn't large, just one bedroom and 1,536 square feet, so the Tree House, at 1,530 square feet, steps in to welcome guests. The sister residence has its own, more relaxed personality.

The entire complex uses a clever rain harvesting system that provides all the water the homes need, plus more.

"The harvested water can be used for all applications, including drinking, and the cisterns are automatically filled with city water if there has not been sufficient rain," says Whiteley.

"The solar panels installed generate electric for all three homes on

Above: Perhaps the most striking feature of the Bird House is the master bedroom's fiber-optic ceiling, depicting constellations in the night sky when the homeowner and her mate met.



Above: Chiseled out of granite and with a matching backsplash, the master bath's sink is organic and natural. Right: Crowning the house on the third floor is a compact but infinitely detailed lounge for television watching.



DRIVE A LITTLE SAVE A LOT!



Gift Certificates Available
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE™

Produce Grocery Wine & Beer
Meats & Seafood Deli Gourmet

View our Weekly
Specials at
downtownproduce.com

More Than Just Produce

A Large Selection Of Fresh Produce
Fresh Cut Meats & Seafood
Imported & Domestic Cheeses
Huge Selection Of Wine & Micro Brew Beers
Gourmet And Hard To Find Items
Ready To Eat Entrées
Hot Lunches Monday-Friday 11am-2pm



7856 Ellis Road • Melbourne, Florida • 321.308.0275
Mon. Fri 9am-6:30pm; Sat. 9am-6pm • Sunday Closed

PT-0000390487

spaces | 42



the compound, and at times the meter runs backwards as FP&L buys back the electricity.”

Whiteley feels privileged to have been a part of the team responsible for the unique residences.

“I think Craig is about the only person in the county to be able to build these houses,” says Whiteley.

“He put his heart and soul into this and it shows.”

Working with Whiteley and Dixon was an A-list of the county’s best craftsmen and businesses, including Moonlight Tile, Absolute Granite, RoomScapes of Brevard, Ceramic Matrix, Stone & Surface Designers, Venetian plasterer John Driscoll, Distinctive Floors, Amazon Metal, Jones Sheet Metal and American Door and Window.

“I was privileged to be part of an elite team of professionals,” adds Whiteley.

“This could only happen with the planning and participation of all involved.” ■



Interior Designer Christine Whiteley of Concepts and Dimensions

SOURCES:

- Builder: Craig Dixon, Dixon Builders
- Framing: Jeff Dixon, JCD Construction
- Home Design: Don Bryant
- Interior Design, Project Manager: Christine Whiteley, Concepts and Dimensions
- Stone: Jeff Spinelli, Absolute Granite & Stone
- Tile: Eric Honkenen, Moonlight Tile
- AC Contractor: Elite Air
- Photo Voltaic Solar: United Solar
- Water Collection and Cisterns: Rain Harvest Systems, installed locally by Cocoa Beach Plumbing
- Plaster: John Driscoll
- Roofing: Turnkey Construction
- Appliances and more: RoomScapes of Brevard
- Custom Painting: Debbie Maxwell