

Entrepreneur remodels James Island home and fulfills dream of living by the water

By Jesse Naranjo jnaranjo@postandcourier.com Jun 3, 2018

Jim Arnold developed a longing for warm air and the beach when he grew up in Upstate New York.

Arnold, an entrepreneur, said he finally got to follow through on his dreams of moving to the coast after 2014 when he sold the Greensboro, North Carolina-based audit recovery company he founded in 1988. He has since started FinHealth, a rapidly emerging health care technology company.

"After visiting Charleston, (it) felt this could become home," Arnold says.

Arnold explored West Ashley and Mount Pleasant, among other locations, but finally settled on a home on James Island —

purchased for \$1.3 million, according to county records. He says he liked the house but he loves the waterfront property, which benefits from a back-porch view of the sunset.

"It looked like it was not done with the most thought to it," says Marta Mitchell, a Greensboro-based interior designer whose firm Arnold commissioned for an extensive remodeling of the home, which was built in 1989.

Mitchell says when they redesigned the house she took into account Arnold's fun personality but also made sure the home didn't seem out of place on the 1-acre property. The house is surrounded by dozens of live oak trees.

"He wanted a coastal feel," Mitchell says. "He wanted an informal feel. He wanted lots of color, but not crazy contrast." The two researched and interviewed contractors in the Charleston area and settled on Christopher Klick's CK Contracting, a member of the Charleston Home Builders Association.

"It was a collaborative effort between the builder, myself, Marta and also Jim himself," says Klick. "He's as much of a team player as anyone else."

The Wampler Drive home was built in a Lowcountry vernacular style, with hipped roofs and windows which mimic each on the first and second floor. "The home had very good bones to it," Klick says. "Jim is a brilliant person and he has the ability to see value, and there's a ton of value in this property."

A primary goal of the project was opening up the interior to allow more natural light. The original floor plan was compartmentalized, Klick says, and the team saw an opportunity to remove some of the walls and modernize the house. The redesign called for new floor plans on all three levels of the house, which has more than 3,600 square feet of floor space.



The more than 3,600-square-foot house was built in 1989.

Marta Mitchell Interior Design/Provided

At Klick's suggestion, they replaced a set of windows overlooking the nearby marsh with full-view fixed glass doors.

Klick says a remodeling project entails a balance between a homeowner's taste and the requirements of the project itself.

"People nowadays rarely go to a coffee shop and say I want a coffee with milk and sugar," Klick says. "In today's world when people want a coffee, they want a skinny nonfat latte made from fair trade beans. And that's very specific to their wants and needs. CK Contracting is the same thing."

One feature he says other firms might not have agreed to install is a floor-to-ceiling slab of marble surrounding the fireplace, fitted with a reclaimed piece of wood as the mantel. Arnold had his home fitted with impact windows, one feature Klick says was not cut-and-dry for remodeling projects but within the scope of his firm's "yes" mentality.

The intention to install the specialized windows dates back to when Arnold first purchased the home in 2016. Within 30 days of moving in, he learned Hurricane Matthew was approaching the area.

"I basically came down, got up on a ladder and put up all the hurricane stuff," Arnold says, adding that he wanted to save himself from having to do the same thing again. Arnold says his favorite part of the house is the back porch, where he can sit and catch the sunset. He also found a nearby path to go on runs. Other features included in the redesign of the five-bedroom, five-bathroom home included solar power, a home theater and room fans, which can sense when someone is in the room to conserve power.

Looking forward, Mitchell says they have a full landscape plan in the works and are probably a year away from building a pool. She plans to submit the remodeled house for consideration to the American Society of Interior Designers.



The remodeled recreation room in Jim Arnold's home has a custom pool cue rack made from reclaimed wood and an original Wurlitzer jukebox. Marta Mitchell Interior Design/Provided



The team that redesigned Jim Arnold's home added a deck on the side of the kitchen to enable grilling. Marta Mitchell Interior Design/Provided



The team that remodeled Jim Arnold's home installed a floor-to-ceiling marble slab surrounding the fireplace with a piece of reclaimed wood as the mantel. Marta Mitchell Interior Design/Provided