



RUGGED *Elegance*

The Charleston Group owner Robert Chapman takes his childhood treehouse to the next level in a charming custom home with no shortage of character.





(left) Details such as the exposed beam ceiling and slotted top cabinets add architectural interest throughout the space. (above) Custom built-ins and millwork can be found around every turn.

Builder's Notebook

Robert Chapman, owner of The Charleston Group, began sketching the design for his “sophisticated cottage” on the back of a piece of cardboard folded inside a new set of sheets. His vision was to create a space reminiscent of a converted warehouse or loft that would exude a sort of “rugged elegance,” as he describes it. For Robert, it is all about having a home that is far from standard, yet completely livable and usable; somewhere that is fun to live and that can show wear and tear. “The dogs scratch the floor with their nails and sometimes chew the baseboards, but we love it; it makes the house feel lived in,” Robert reiterates, “We’re not building museums, not everything has to be a showcase.” From the ornate trim and millwork to the

amazing attention to detail throughout the home, one would never believe it was anything less than immaculate.

Robert also draws much of his inspiration from time spent constructing skateboard ramps and tree forts as a kid. He explains that he and his friends continued modifying their structures long after they were complete, making the skate ramps higher and the tree forts larger. Consequently, Robert believes that becoming a custom contractor was simply a natural progression; “this is just the next skateboard ramp or tree fort,” he quips, “only now I buy the nails, lumber, and windows from my friends instead of taking them out of our parents’ garages.” Robert’s building experience during childhood led him to create many of the unique features of his current home, such as the “Juliet balcony” overlooking the living room from the children’s bedroom above. “If I were a kid, I would be jumping off onto a mattress when my parents weren’t home. It’s just so cool and fun, like having a secret entrance to a tree fort.”

Another aspect Robert tries to incorporate into his design is a play on space and texture. The nine foot ceiling in the kitchen actually appears taller because the floor joists and beams are exposed, and the slotted portion at the top of the custom cabinet doors intrigues you to see what is inside. Playing with space also contributes to the lack of negative energy in the house, creating an appealing flow from room to room, which is ideal for entertaining. Details such as the open columns which support the fireplace mantel and the opening in the shaft above allow light to cast through from the windows, making the room feel light and open. Other custom elements such as built-in bookshelves, buffet cabinets, and deep corner drawers provide extra room for storage, while the intricate trim details and wood plank paneling add architectural interest. Unlikely touches of character and personality abound throughout the home, as portrayed by the sliding barn door and the tractor trailer mirrors of the powder room, or the confessional style door below the stairs. From the skateboard on the porch to the foosball table in the living room, the entire house tells the story of those who dwell there; clearly not a book you can judge by its cover. ❖

For more information about custom homes or custom cabinetry, visit *The Charleston Group's* 10,000 sq. ft. cabinet shop at 5465 Woodbine Avenue, Suite A in North Charleston, call (843) 637-4246, or log on to thecharlestongroup.com.



A cozy screened porch combines both old and new pieces for an eclectic and personal style.



Authentic tractor trailer mirrors offer a creative solution to working around a window.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Appliances: Jenn-Air from Appliance Towne

Building Materials: 84 Lumber, Southern Lumber

Cabinets: Designed and constructed by The Charleston Group; materials from Wurth Wood Group

Countertops: Stone Hands, LLC

Decorative Hardware: Foxworth Decorative Hardware

Flooring: Berlin G. Myers Lumber Corp.

Lighting: Rick's Lighting, Lamps Plus, Lowe's

Plumbing Fixtures: Ferguson Bath, Kitchen, & Lighting Gallery

Tile: Headlands Tile, Melcer Tile

Wall Covering: Sherwin-Williams