

INSPIRATION

# SOUTHERN BELLE

Beyond the front door of this South Carolina home designed by Cortney Bishop lies an interior that masters simple modernity

WORDS VIVIANNE WYERS PHOTOGRAPHS KATIE CHARLOTTE

## SITTING ROOM

Artist Brian Coleman came to the house and created the artwork hanging above the fireplace, which decided the room's colour palette. Duke custom sectional sofa, Verellen. Mirror, South of Market. Hans J Wegner Papa chair and ottoman, purchased on 1st Dibs and covered in fabric by Kelly Wearstler, Cloud, pendant light, Apparatus.



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**A**t first glance, Molly and Ted Finning's elegant home looks as if it has stood for hundreds of years. Located in the historic city of Charleston, South Carolina, with its cobbled streets, horse-drawn carriages and antebellum houses, the property fits perfectly into its setting on the idyllic waterfront.

Molly and Ted, the founders of baby sunglasses company Babiators, have two sons, Sawyer, seven, and Fox, three, and moved to Charleston five years ago. 'We wanted to raise our family here,' says Molly. 'Building our own home was on our bucket list, but we were intending to buy a period home and restore it. We wanted to create an interior with a New York loft/warehouse feel, whereas a lot of South Carolina interiors have rooms designed for a purpose. I wanted a house that had flow for entertaining and one where the boys could easily run around.'

Molly and Ted searched for a year for a house, then their architect Heather Wilson suggested they build their own home with a traditional Southern exterior and a modern interior. The idea made perfect sense. Molly and Ted managed to secure the last available lot on the city's downtown waterfront, then they worked with Heather on plans for the design.

'We worked for a month to design a house that honoured the city's historic architecture but that was fresh and modern,' says Molly. 'We wanted a traditional Southern two-storey house with a raised ground level in case of floods, and the columns and wide porches that are so typical of Charleston. We made minor differences to the exterior to show it was modern – for instance, there are no shutters and we chose black window mullions and a metal roof.'

Eventually the plan was approved and Molly and Ted then met Cortney Bishop of design/build firm Cortney Bishop Design, who joined the project a year before the building work commenced. 'Cortney and I instantly hit it off,' says Molly. 'We had the same vision.' The house took two years to build and

was completed in 2016. For Molly, it was important that the interior had 'a clean, almost Scandi base as its bones'. One of the ways this was achieved was by using wide-plank, bleached grey European oak flooring throughout most of the house.

Different wall treatments are used to differentiate areas. The rooms at the front of the house have white plaster walls for a clean look; shiplap is used in the boys' playroom for an informal feel; and charcoal wallpaper in the library creates a dark, cosy nook.

'Being from New York, black, grey and white are my favourite colours,' says Molly, with a smile. This set the tone for the family's Charleston home. 'We played the same palette throughout the house,' says Cortney, 'but incorporated pops of colour.'

The large open-plan reception room encompasses a relaxed living area and more formal dining space that's perfect for entertaining. 'The living and dining area is an ideal gathering space for a family that loves to host,' says Cortney.

The separate kitchen soon became the heart of the home. 'It's where we spend 75 per cent of our time as a family,' says Molly. 'I work here and the boys eat and do their homework here. It's the focus of the family's day. It also has beautiful water views.'

'The kitchen has custom cabinetry that intentionally matches the hardwood floors, but getting it right was a gruelling project,' says Cortney. 'We installed the kitchen and then had to rip it out because it was too green. We were nervous we'd suggested something we couldn't achieve, but I'm happy to say we got there eventually.'

Upstairs, the emphasis is on tranquillity. 'The master bedroom was designed as a sanctuary,' says Molly. 'You get there and exhale.' It is also special because it has its own balcony where Molly and Ted can sit and enjoy the views of Charleston Harbour.

'We all love the end result,' says Molly. 'The house blends beautifully into the area but still has a modern interior with a rock-and-roll edge. It's a little bit of New York in the South!' 📍



**KITCHEN-DINER**  
A circular table, comfy chairs and banquette seating creates an informal dining area for the family.  
Dining table, Clubcu; Jill chairs, Verellen, with fabric by Peter Dunham; Triad 9 chandelier, Apparatus.

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### HALLWAY

The wooden flooring is replaced with tiles in an area that leads to an exterior door. Navajo Zebra cement tiles, Commune for Exquisite Surfaces. Custom metal bannister, Eurocraft.



### KITCHEN

Custom cabinetry was stained to match the colour of the floorboards and topped with marble worktops for contrast. Custom cabinetry, Eurocraft. Utopia pendant light (above island), Kelly Wearstler for Visual Comfort. Custom Merida runner, Ashe Leandro.

**INSIDER INSIGHT  
FROM DESIGNER  
CORTNEY BISHOP**

**SECRET ADDRESS**

Love Adorned in NYC. The owners have curated a shop full of artisan-made, craft-driven surprises that always end up coming home with me.

**BEST FEELING**

We live for 'the reveal'. I ask clients to stay away on installation day because it can be overwhelming and chaotic. So when they walk into their 'new' home, it is the best reward. We've seen tears, gasps and screams... and it's all worth it.

**GO-TO COLOURS**

Down Pipe and School House White, both by Farrow & Ball.

**SMALL CHANGE -  
BIG IMPACT**

Definitely wallpaper - it's instant art on your walls.

**DINING AREA**

Designer Cortney wanted a more formal look for the entertaining area, with curved statement chairs adding to the sense of occasion.

Custom dining table, Eurocraft. Elliott chairs, Kelly Wearstler for E.J. Victor, in fabric by Gretchen Bellinger. Cloud pendant light, Apparatus. Merida rug, Ashe Leandro.





**MASTER BATHROOM**  
 Floating cabinetry keeps the look modern while a sheepskin chair and Moroccan rug add an eclectic touch. Custom floating **cabinetry**, Eurocraft. Utopia double **wall light**, Kelly Wearstler for Visual Comfort.



**MASTER BEDROOM**  
 Clean lines and graphic shapes, including a bed with elliptical styling and a light modelled on an arrow, add to the contemporary aesthetic. Velvet upholstered Hope **bed**, Hable Construction for Hickory Chair Furniture Company. **Rug**, Vivienne Westwood for The Rug Company. Burl wood bedside **chest of drawers**, Bennett Galleries. Arrow pendant **light**, Apparatus.



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**GUEST BATHROOM**  
 Brass accents bring glamour to the monochrome scheme. **Vanity** made out of Eros Grey marble tile, Ann Sacks. Fan **wallpaper**, Erica Wakerly. Openwork **wall lights**, Visual Comfort.