

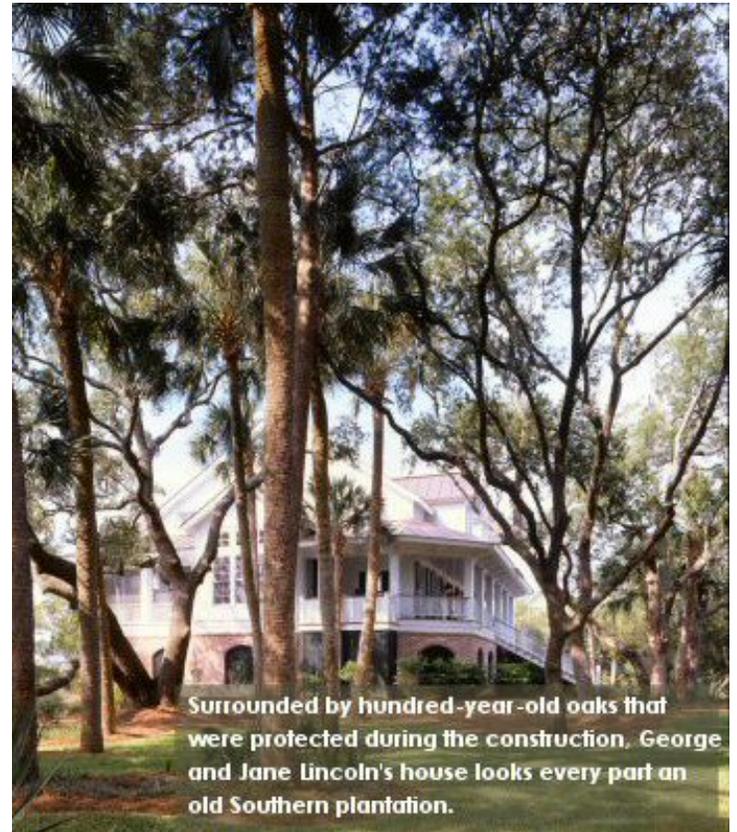
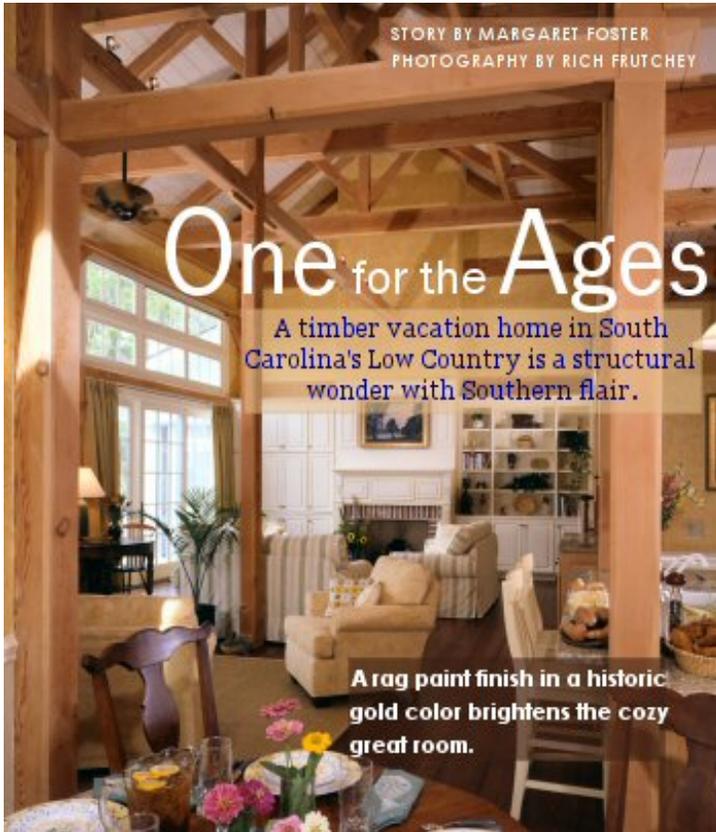
TIMBERPEG®

The Artisans of Post & Beam.



Timber Home Living - August 2005

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LEFT: The kitchen cabinets are custom-made from cypress.

Getting sick on a family vacation in South Carolina was no fun for George and Jane Lincoln's sons. But their brief illness turned into a stroke of luck for this family escaping New England's chilly spring. During their visit to the local pediatrician's office, George just happened to ask the doctor what stretch of sand he preferred, hoping to find a nearby beach. "He said, 'If I tell you, you have to promise not to tell anyone,'" George remembers.

That's how the Lincolns discovered the barrier island that they've returned to every spring for more than two decades. They had always dreamed of building a house on the island. Three years ago, the couple made it happen. "We've seen barns that have been standing since the early 1700s, so we're pretty well convinced that post-and-beam construction lasts," George says. "With some of the hurricane damage we've seen on the Carolina coastline, we thought it was a pretty good fit for down here."

A Plan in the Making

George and Jane always planned to build their own getaway, so 15 years ago, they began buying lots on the island. Set on a golf course,

the home is a dead ringer for a Southern plantation house. "The exterior is Low Country," says architect Tim Hilkhuisen, AIA. "But when you walk into the house, you have a feeling that you're actually in a retreat somewhere up in the mountains."

Timberpeg, a 30-year-old timber home manufacturer based in New Hampshire and Oregon, supplied the timber frame package for the home. When George paid a visit to the northeastern factory to see if the company was a fit for their project, President Richard Neroni gave him a personal tour of the facility, and

"he was so down-to-earth that he sold us," George says. With a computerized cutting process—a Hundegger CNC cutting machine—Timberpeg produced perfectly measured beams.

On their annual vacations, George and Jane researched the area's builders and interviewed a few. "We'd been going down to the area for a long time, and we've always known that at some point we would build, so we were conscious of who the good builders were," says George. And when he met Fisher Walter, owner of Walter Construction Co., he knew right away that this was the right man for the job. "Fisher was head and shoulders above the rest," George says. "Our personalities meshed."

BELOW: A long staircase that leads to the front porch is the perfect dramatic entrance to this home.



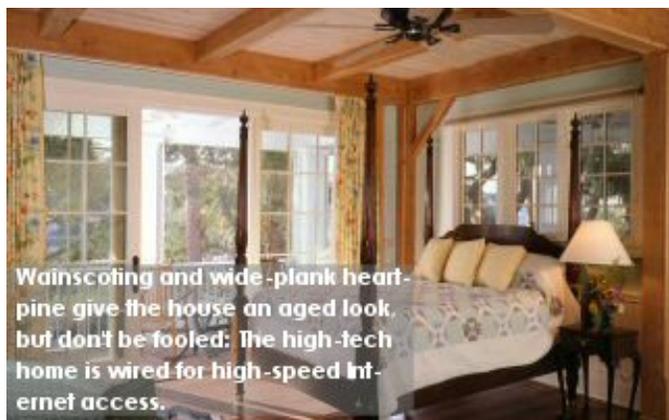
Strong Structure, Southern Style

Those instincts paid off. The 3,588-square-foot home was built to last—it's as sturdy as a New England barn. A 24-gauge copper roof and hurricane-resistant windows fend off the elements. Guests can sip mint juleps on a front porch made of ironwood, a strong South American hardwood that's a mahogany look-alike. Fisher even tracked down some reproduction bricks to make the foundation look older. And the traditional-looking Bahama shutters? Fiberglass. "The whole exterior of the house is virtually maintenance-free and rot-proof, but with high structural qualities," he says.

Inside, the home's details also echo its Southern setting. That century-old look took a little creativity. Using some historic photographs of a nearby plantation house, Fisher's crew reproduced the handmade staircase with cypress, a native wood also used for the wainscoting and kitchen

cabinets. Wide-plank heart-pine floor-ing lines the home, which gives the place a wonderfully aged look. A snug built-in bed in one of the three upstairs bedrooms also adds to the historic feel. On the front porch, there's a joggling board, which is a bouncy wood bench that's a Southern plantation's answer to a hammock.

With an open great room and kitchen down-stairs, the house reflects its environment in another way, Jane says: "It just seems to suit the climate because everything is so open and wide." The airy vacation home is a far cry from their New England roots. "We live in a very traditional home in Vermont with small rooms," she says. "But on the island, there's so much space." With that in mind, Jane, a former decorator who's now a school principal, chose bright colors for the walls.



Wainscoting and wide-plank heart-pine give the house an aged look, but don't be fooled: The high-tech home is wired for high-speed Internet access.

She settled on gold and found a painter who could imitate a faux finish she'd seen in Sweden. The result is a historic-looking rag finish. "I wanted some stronger colors, and that was hard to create," she says. "But now we're thrilled."

The Lincolns' house, like the family itself, is truly a blend of North and South. "It has a spacious feel, but it also has intimate areas," George says. "We like the openness, and yet there are areas of the house where you have abundant privacy. It really gives you a feeling that this house is of another era."

Up to Code

Building George and Jane Lincoln's home within the flood codes of a Low Country barrier island was a bit of a challenge. Like many beach houses, the home is elevated 10 feet above the ground. To offset the high foundation, the couple lined the surface area with old-looking faux stone that also made it look thicker and fuller. In addition, the high-press heating and cooling system is unusual, says builder Fisher Walter. "It had to be run from the attic via chases

to keep it above flood level."

It took a little planning to bring the house down to earth, but a local landscaper found the perfect solution. "We used layers of plants to create the illusion that the house is built on a rise," says Joe Gessner of Landplan Associates, based in Charleston. "That way it doesn't look like the house is floating 10 feet off the ground."