

On the Waterfront

For architect **Dennis Chavez**, each home is a response to the needs of the homeowners and their environment.

Living in a home that overlooks a majestic body of water is a dream for many. But when that dream meets the reality of hurricane season, the fantasy can quickly go south.

It's in the challenge of creating waterfront homes that architect Dennis Chavez thrives. "I've lived on the waterfront for a number of years," says Chavez, president of the design-build firm DC Architects, Inc. "The architecture of a home needs to partner with the environment. Science and technology are married to the art and craft. Without looking like a bunker, everything must be designed to withstand hurricane forces."

Designed as a one-stop shop for architecture and construction, Chavez's firm has built trust with clients through a notably customizable approach. The reputation has led to an almost entirely repeat or referral clientele.

For third-time clients moving into a single-story Lowcountry home overlooking a bayou, the process was centered on maximizing the scenery. "We manipulated the space to give nearly every room a view of the water," Chavez says.

Blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor living, the home's kitchen and living room flow naturally into the covered back patio that serves as a gathering place perfect in both inclement and picturesque weather.

"Reclaimed brick is the vernacular of the South and continues to perform against the climate, so we used it for the patio's walls and floor," Chavez explains. "Beyond being environmentally friendly, it brings beauty and history from the region's architectural past while meeting the client's needs."

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1. The reclaimed brick patio serves as an extension of the indoor living areas where the homeowners can entertain guests year-round. 2. Hurricane-resistant glass walls and windows overlook the bayou from nearly every room of the home. 3. High windows draw in natural light without sacrificing privacy in the spacious master bathroom, where cobalt blue walls coolly contrast with the white finish on the adjacent walls and the rich, knotty alder flooring. 4. The kitchen purposely bleeds into the living area and back patio, creating an open and inviting space for entertaining. Photos by Tim Kramer Photography.



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