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Darien Blue

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Neighbors & Friends: Bringing Jumbo Ideas To Life



Best Version Media

Photo by Kersten Schriel, Shadow Lounge Productions



KNOWING THE ROPES

Lessons for Designing Fabulous Waterfront Homes



By Charles Hilton of Charles Hilton Architects

Water! It engages our imagination and our senses. Who can deny the invigorating emotional charge of a ferry ride to a favorite island destination – the dance of sunlight off the water, the mystery in the shroud of fog, the taste of salt on the lips, the cooling breeze across the face, or the crash of the waves? In fact, simply being around water can affect us physiologically: Waves and waterfalls not only stimulate us visually but also exhilarate us by means of the oxygenated, ion-charged particles they inject into the air. It is no surprise then that humans have sought out waterfront sites as dwelling places throughout recorded history.

As anthropologist Loren Eiseley once said, “If there is magic on the planet, it is contained in the water.” This is why I have chosen to make designing waterfront homes a personal specialty. Whatever the site, the presence of a body of water is both inspiring and challenging for an architect. If you too are inspired by the element of water and hope to build your dream home on the waterfront, be prepared to face five main challenges. Property acquisition, regulation compliance, planning, specification of appropriate materials and construction methods, and cost containment will be far more complex than if you were building an inland home.

Nice site, if you can get it. Waterfront properties have always been highly valued, so securing a prime setting usually involves patience, significant financial means, and luck.

Compliance complexities. Waterfront properties almost always face more scrutiny than inland locations. The quantity of regulations, conflicts between applicable codes, and difficulty in sequencing of approvals all add complication, time, and cost to waterfront projects.

Building codes are stricter on many waterfront locations, mandating better performance of structural and mechanical systems and requiring more weather-resistant materials and installation assemblies. Unique waterfront amenities like docks, bridges, and boathouses are also highly regulated.

Planning intricacies. Unlike most homes which have a primary front elevation and secondary back and side

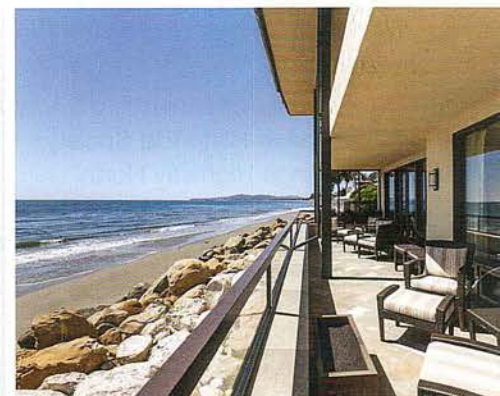
elevations, waterfront homes typically have at least two primary elevations: one addressing the street, accommodating vehicular access, and one or more oriented to the water, accommodating waterfront access. Such dual-focus floor plans need modified circulation patterns, larger openings between rooms, and increased waterside fenestration to capture important views.

Consider also the complexity of building a home in a flood zone. Such homes must have living space, mechanical equipment, and even finished storage areas above the flood plain, each competing for valuable floor space.

Unconventional construction methods. In buildings set near the water, structural components often must be stronger than they would inland. Wind, water, sun, and corrosive compounds like salt all accelerate building materials aging processes. Therefore, homeowners must consider not only initial costs but life-cycle costs.

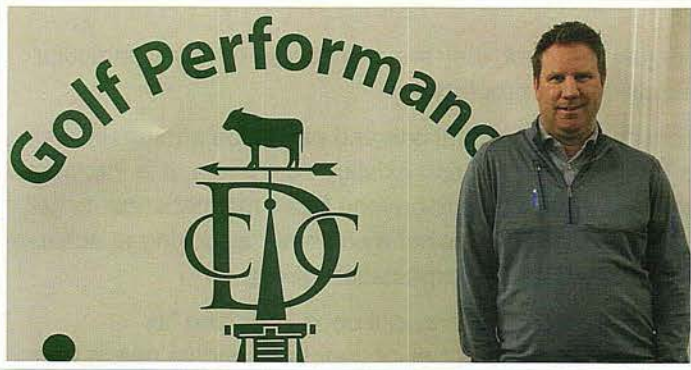
Cost. The high price of land, the need for a knowledgeable and experienced design team, and the need to use upgraded materials combine to make building a waterside home an expensive proposition. Additional difficulties – increased transportation costs, limited construction access, and extreme weather conditions – can add incrementally to the more obvious expenses.

The savvy homeowner will make sure that every possible component of the project is thoroughly designed and specified and that the work is competitively bid before construction begins. Though this will add time and expense to the design budget, it should lead to considerable construction cost savings through efficient design, competitive pricing, a consolidated construction schedule, and minimal change orders.



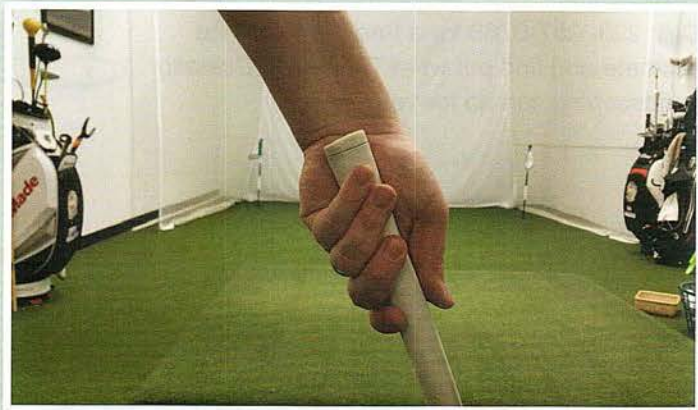
PUTT BETTER FOR “LIFE”

By Cory Muller, PGA, Head Golf Professional, County Club of Darien



When taking the grip you should place the putter running up the “life line” of your left hand. Having the putter running more in the palm of your hand will reduce hand action in the stroke. This position allows the player to keep the club face square longer and promotes a more natural arching motion. Gripping the putter in the fingers is not necessary due to the fact that we don’t need the power created by leverage that we get in our full swing grip. •

The putter is truly the most important club in the bag, often being responsible for up to 30% of the shots in a round of golf. The connection from our bodies to this piece of equipment is key to ensure proper club face alignment and path of swing. Looking at all the great players we see many different styles of grips but all have one common trait. The “Life Line.”



Cory Muller, PGA

Cory Muller is beginning his fifth season as Head Golf Professional at The Country Club of Darien. Cory grew up in Torrington, CT and began his golf career with success as a Junior Golfer. Cory has been a PGA member since 1999, and is a graduate of the Professional Golf Management Program at NMSU with a BS in Marketing. As a member of the Metropolitan PGA Board of Directors, Cory has served as a leader in the section for 10 years with 7 wins and numerous top 10's to his credit. He has two hole-in-one's and holds one course record. His low complete round is 64.



The history of man's occupation of the waterfront is the story written in wood, stone and glass – in light and in shadow. Planning a waterfront home is not a voyage for the novice, but one best navigated with the assistance of a seasoned and experienced crew – architects, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, environmentalists, historians, and attorneys who know the waters. Setting sail with an experienced crew is your best assurance that yours will be a well-navigated journey – that you will not be caught on the shoals in a stormy sea.

Charles Hilton, a Darien resident and founder of Charles Hilton Architects, based in Greenwich, CT, specializes in the design of custom waterfront residences. His projects range from Shingle Style, Georgian, Mediterranean and transitional styles and stretch from the woods of Maine to the beaches of southern California. •

