

# BUILDING A Legacy ONE HOME AT A TIME

RALPH NIXON OF PRESTIGE HOME BUILDING OF CHATHAM IS PURSUING HIS CHILDHOOD DREAM OF BUILDING HIGH-END HOMES



This page, clockwise from left: The roomy kitchen is part of one large space that dominates the home's first floor. The first-floor master features a fireplace and a door leading to the home's rear deck. A barrel-vaulted archway leading into the living area. Facing page: A 17-foot-high coffered ceiling soars over the great room.



WHEN RALPH NIXON, OWNER OF PRESTIGE HOME BUILDING OF CHATHAM, was a very young boy he spent his summers on construction job sites with his Swedish grandfather and dreamed of building houses when he grew up. He planned to pursue a career as a civil engineer or architect, but his life took a different path and instead he had a successful career in the banking and mutual fund industry. After dabbling in home building with his own homes over the years, he decided to start a second career as a custom home builder when he retired from his career in finance. And he couldn't be happier with his decision.

### A banker's sense of professionalism

"When you deal with mutual funds and banking, you have relationships with people and you create a medium for them to be able to accomplish their goals," he says. "But when you build a house there is a finished product to look at and there is nothing as rewarding as that is."

Nixon brings the same sense of professionalism to his new career as he did to his former one and is a member of the National Association of Home Builders, where he already has the designation of Graduate Builder and is now pursuing his Master Builder designation.

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## RALPH NIXON'S LOVE OF HOME-BUILDING SHINES THROUGHOUT HIS OWN HOME.



Clockwise from above: A custom-crafted window seat spans one end of the dining room. The front of the home. The back of the house was designed to nestle into the surrounding landscape.

Prestige Home Building concentrates on building one home at a time, so Nixon can give each project the personal attention it deserves, whether it is a spec house or a custom-built one. He designs all of his homes with the assistance of a professional architect and executes the designs with the help of his wife Cheryl and a team of the best independent contractors he can find.

### Building his own home

One of the finest examples of his design principles can be found in his own home in Chatham, which is perfectly nestled into the surrounding yard like it was meant to be there. The lot is level in the front with a deep slope to the back that allows three levels of living space, with walk-out ease from the lower level and dramatic vistas of the fully landscaped backyard and the woods beyond from the first and second floors. "It's very important that the house fits where it's going to live, just like the people fit where they're going to be," Nixon says.

Functionality is a key aspect of every house Nixon builds and he says modern homeowners seek wide open spaces and large rooms. To that end, his home has a spacious living room with a 17-foot-high coffered cathedral ceiling that is open to the second floor balcony as well as the adjoining breakfast nook and kitchen, with a formal dining room nearby. Seven-foot doorways and nine-foot ceilings in other rooms add to the spacious feel and allow for upscale appointments like deep crown moldings and custom trims to add to the elegance.

The two master bedroom suites, one up and one down, both have roomy, yet cozy bedrooms with gas fireplaces, and a hallway with a walk-in closet that leads to a private bath each fitted with an oversized tub, walk-in glass shower and his and her sinks.

For Nixon, another aspect of functionality is to divide a house into usable areas that allow family members and guests to pursue different activities. With that in mind, the lower level features a man cave with surround sound, but just two steps down is a large family room, perfect for a pool table or kids' playroom. In addition to the second master suite, the upper floor also has two nice-sized bedrooms with private baths, and a corner tucked into the upper balcony offers the perfect place for a home office.

### Outdoor living at its finest

Living space is extended to the outdoors at every level. The lower level opens to a patio area and the backyard. The first floor has a breakfast deck off the kitchen and a large sitting deck off the living room that can also be accessed by the master bedroom. The second floor master bedroom has its own private deck.

Nixon takes the same care with every home he builds and is thrilled to carry on a family legacy that he is proud of and hopes will carry on.

"We have five grandchildren," he says. "I would love to see somebody interested enough to get into the family business." **SHOME**

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