

**Shannon and Cynthia Strunk** were three months away from completing the remodeling on their Pascagoula, Miss. house and moving back in when Hurricane Katrina hit. After the storm, the Strunks returned to their home to find it gutted and full of water, with only the studs remaining. "We knew right away we wanted to rebuild," says Mrs. Strunk. "This is our home, we live on the coast and it's beautiful here." But once the decision was made, the challenges were just beginning. "Where do we get contractors? Where do we get materials? It was another six months before we started construction," she says.

### In the beginning, there was a ranch

The Strunk house was originally a very flat house built in the early 1960s. "The rooms were open and had great views of the gulf," explains Bruce Tolar, architect for the Strunks. "The view from each of the rooms was important to the Strunks. That was one of the things we wanted to capture." Although the house had its



charms, it was lacking in a number of areas. He explains that the family areas had a '60s feeling and were very compartmentalized.

"Part of the process was opening up the family-related areas and allowing for better interactions between spaces," he says.



the kitchen while he was preparing a meal. Mrs. Strunk and guests would lounge in the den or other area of the house



**ARCHITECT:**  
*Bruce Tolar,  
Tolar-LeBartard-Denmark  
Architects, PLLC*

**HOMEOWNERS:**  
*Cynthia & Shannon Strunk*

**PROJECT:**  
*Re-construction of a home that  
was under renovation and three  
months from move-in when  
Hurricane Katrina struck*

**LOCATION:**  
*Pascagoula, Mississippi*



Another consideration was the kitchen. It was too small to allow Mr. Strunk, a gourmet cook, to have company in

while he was cooking. The goal was to create a roomy and modern kitchen that fit the resident chef's needs while also accommodating the Strunks' large family gatherings. "In addition to providing the space for this to happen, it was also important to keep the feeling of being able to sit in your home and have the picturesque views," says Tolar. ---->



### Uniting each room through a shared look

The Strunk house is truly a Woodharbor home, uniting a common feeling and look with consistent use of wood species, style, stain/paint and finish used in doors, mantles,



millwork and cabinetry. "Everything in the house is visible, it's very open," says Tolar. "You don't just see it up close; you see it from 1500 feet away. If there is something that isn't detailed or flowing right, it's going to be seen."

According to Mrs. Strunk, Augusta

Tapia of Kitchens by Design, their interior designer for the project, was instrumental in leading them through the selection of cabinetry. "With Woodharbor being in Iowa, we were not sure what to expect," she admits. She said their concern quickly disappeared as the boxes began arriving.

"It was such a pleasure when the cabinetry arrived. The living room was full of boxes. Little by little, each room came together and the empty space became a home." She goes on to say they were very pleasantly surprised. "It was very heartening after Katrina to have this come together so easily. It was delightful."

