



## FAST FACTS:

**LOCATION:**

Virginia Beach, Virginia

**DEVELOPER:**

Stephen Alexander Homes

**ARCHITECT:**

Retnauer Baynes Associates

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**

Stephen Alexander Homes

**SUPPLIER:**

84 Lumber (Chesapeake, VA)

**WINDOWS:**

MIRA Aluminum

Clad-Wood Windows

## TURNING AN IDEA INTO REALITY: COASTAL VIRGINIA “IDEA HOUSE” DESIGN INSPIRED BY NATURE, PROTECTED FROM THE ELEMENTS THROUGH WEATHER RESISTANT, ELEGANTLY DESIGNED FEATURES

**Ply Gem’s MIRA aluminum-clad wood windows create a perfect frame  
for the natural beauty of the Virginia coastline**

When architect Thomas Retnauer of Retnauer Baynes Associates began the initial Idea House design, it started out as merely that – an idea to create a home that exuded luxury and was completely different in its design style from the other homes found in the Virginia Beach area. In collaboration with builder Stephen Quick IV from Stephen Alexander Homes, the idea began to come to life on the waterfront of the Bay Colony neighborhood of Virginia Beach. According to Quick, the coastal location guided every decision for the design and build of the home, including the products and finishes that were selected.

Otherwise known as the York Lane Cottage, the Nantucket-inspired home stretches 4,300 square feet and includes an infinity style pool that overlooks the water beyond. To frame

this beautiful setting, selecting the perfect windows was necessary. Retnauer and Quick wanted windows with large panes in order to fully take in the view, without compromising performance to withstand the occasional harsh weather patterns of the coastal climate. Through a working relationship with Ply Gem’s Market Development Manager, Kathy Schirmer, the architect-builder team learned more about what MIRA aluminum-clad wood windows could offer.

### **BRINGING A NEW ENGLAND FEEL TO THE VIRGINIA COAST**

The Idea House allowed Retnauer and Quick to explore new home design concepts and innovations, which found life in the design and build of the home. Part of that was exploring how natural light enters the

home and what windows would provide the best means for achieving that.

“We were aiming to create a home that looked like it was built in the 1800s or 1900s, so we couldn’t just put in big modern windows,” Quick explained.

### **BLENDING IN BY STICKING OUT**

Quick has been relying on Ply Gem vinyl windows since 2001, but after being

“The window design had to be authentic, as well as reasonable in price. Ply Gem MIRA aluminum-clad wood windows are true to wood window sizes, provide a large viewing area in a noticeably larger than life window, and offer customizable options down to colors and grid patterns. The window series just exudes quality and really checked all our boxes.”





introduced to MIRA, he felt that aluminum-clad wood windows with an aluminum exterior and wood interior would be a better option for the Idea House to set it apart from neighboring homes and stay true to the historical character. For a dramatic effect, white exterior windows were built into the main house while the pool house was designed with contrasting black windows. To add to the dramatic appeal, the windows in the back of the house were designed to span to a massive 5 feet by 6 feet and perfectly encompass the breathtaking view. Retnauer echoed Quick's sentiment, also having become familiar with Ply Gem windows throughout the last several years.

"We wanted the home to break away from the typical coastal style architecture popping up everywhere and create something with more of a Nantucket feel, which is not normally seen in the southern parts of the country," Retnauer said. "A big part of achieving that design was through the materials and the windows."

### MAKING THE OLD NEW (AND SAFE) AGAIN

Another huge factor to the Idea House's design was the need for its exterior architecture to stand up to the sometimes treacherous weather found on the Virginia coast.

With this house sitting on the open water, it faces a lot of wind and rain that comes in from the Northeast and it was imperative for the home to have a strong window water management system and best defense system in place to prevent any damage from occurring.

The MIRA aluminum-clad wood windows installed in the Idea House are made with a patented water management system that creates a barrier between the glass and the wood surrounding it, thus ensuring that water can't reach any part of the wood.

"I've always had great experiences with Ply Gem windows preventing against leakage and maintaining a strong seal," Retnauer

said. "Building for the long term is important, especially in this area, and I can trust Ply Gem windows to provide that."

Quick emphasized the importance of installing Design Pressure (DP) 50 rated windows into the home. DP ratings measure how strong a window is based on how many pounds per square foot of pressure against wind or snow a window can withstand. In order to achieve a DP rating of 50, windows have to be able to undergo rigorous tests battling against hurricane force winds of up to 173 mph. Due to the geographic location of the home, DP ratings were top of mind for the builder.

"Many of the other brands we looked at had to have attachments added in order to bring the windows up to the safety levels we were looking for," added Quick. "These windows didn't need that. We've used the best materials and products; the style and design is so different for this area, and you just can't beat what Mother Nature has offered as a setting for this home."

"We've been able to do something more unique with the design of the home. We wanted the home to break away from the coastal style homes popping up everywhere and create something with more of a Nantucket feel, which is not normally seen in the southern parts of the country. A big part of achieving that design was through the materials and the windows."

**THOMAS RETNAUER**

Architect, Retnauer Baynes Associates

For more information on this project and Ply Gem MIRA aluminum-clad wood windows, please contact your local Ply Gem sales representative or call 888-9PLYGEM. Product information can be found at [www.plygem.com](http://www.plygem.com).

To learn more about The Idea House, visit <http://www.coastalvirginiamag.com/Coastal-Virginia-Idea-House/>.