



The Goetsch House on High Island has four suites, a completely open first floor and one heck of a wrap-around deck.

Mike Hales photo

#### SIMON/BELLAMY HOUSE I

When architect Mark Simon and lawyer Penny Bellamy moved to Stony Creek almost 30 years ago, they bought a classic Creeker residence — small, one-story gable-roofed home — held together by a little bit of this and a little bit of that, which leaked air and water without much resistance, and had little rooms and sad windows.

But the house faced south and the Ells House — those twin inspirations made a hybrid of old/new that is a local landmark. Architect Simon added a second floor and mimicked its stick-style porches in a new central tower — capped a direct copy of the Ells House cupola in lattice, with solar panels nestled into the open lattice work — pretty edgy for 1980, and a delight to the streetscape ever since it was built.

#### MCLENNAN/BROOM HOUSE

Julie McClellan moved to Stony Creek 14 years ago. As she found it, the home she and her ex-husband Bruce bought was a 1950s remodeling of a boathouse originally owned by the Hall family, summer residents. The boathouse was built right after the 1938 hurricane wiped many sites clean of the simple homes that huddled close to the coast.

They transformed a summer house into a lovely year-round residence, but did not create a McMansion typical of the era. Instead, they created an intricate renovation that opened up water-views and provided a real kitchen and functional laundry. The phased renovation ultimately expanded the home by 200 square feet, but made its plumbing, heating and exterior skin good to go for another generation or two of New Creakers. The home now harbors a new family: Julie and her husband, Anthony Broom.

#### THE GOETSCH HOUSE

Built 10 years ago on High Island, a 105-year-old cooperative owned by The Buccaneers Co., this house follows the exact footprint of an original predecessor that was beyond salvage. Set on a 30-foot granite cliff this four-suite house has a common first floor and a wrap-around deck, with a cupola that

commands what is reputed to be the highest perch in all the Thimbles. The completely open first floor and deck, plus second floor covered porches, provide ample space for the extended families and friends of fourth-generation owners, brothers Charlie and Jamie Goetsch.

Like all Thimble Island residences, rainwater is gathered for use, and since only about half a dozen island homes have power from the shore, electricity comes from solar panels that juice up batteries. The island has a shared cove, dock, sandy beach (sand imported a few decades ago), and a clay tennis court (again a relic of an earlier era).

#### VLOCK/ARBONIES HOUSE

When two architects go looking for a house, you would assume the built result might be a bit too “distinctive” for the neighborhood. But these two principals of Vlock King Arbonies Architects (Sandra Vlock and Glenn Arbonies) had lived in the town as renters for three years before finding a building that used to serve as quarry worker housing. Sandra says, “Our corner was the starting point for the Memorial Day Parade, town celebrations, drum corps and road race.”

The complete rebuild of the existing structure created a nest for both a new family and a fledgling design firm. As kids and the client list grew, the office migrated (but only a few miles away in Branford). The home’s lively lines of trim and windowscaping and familiar shingle siding and granite appurtenances made the home fit in by being unique — just like Stony Creek on the Connecticut Coast.

#### IZENOUR HOUSE

Steve Izenour was a partner at the vaunted Pennsylvania firm of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown; but like many architects, he had a family who wanted some design work. His father, George Izenour, the world-famous theatrical architectural designer and historian at Yale, had a coastal site in Stony Creek and called his son 30 years ago. Both men have since passed on (Steve at a tragically young age) but their house remains.

What resulted was a rare product of federal coastal regulations, a father’s passion for sound and theater and a gifted architect’s vision. First, a Stony Creek granite plinth/base elevated the house to meet the federal regulations. Second, the water-facing living space on the second floor was an exquisite space for view, but also sound — father Izenour wanted a world-class stereo space — and got it. Third, Steve Izenour rode the whimsy of the age and the town to apply overtly nautical allusions to his creation (a two-story window array in the form of a ship’s wheel, wonderfully symbolic/graphic lattice columns) on a perfect gable house shape.

Set at the end of Thimble Island Road, it remains a happily proud icon of an equally self-aware community. 🌟

Madison architect Duo Dickinson is the author of “The House You Build,” and is the contributing writer in residential design for Money magazine. For more, go to [www.duodickinson.com](http://www.duodickinson.com).



Woodwork on a porch in the neighborhood of Thimble Island, Prospect and Flying Point roads.