



# on the waterfront



Like many Washington, D.C. couples, Linda and Gordon Mansfield often escape the city to a vacation place on the Chesapeake Bay. But there's one big difference: they take along a wheelchair.

Gordon—who was shot in combat during the Vietnam's Tet Offensive in 1968 and is currently deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs—loves driving to the house that he and his wife, Linda, found and renovated a few years ago, where he can fish or just relax by the water.

Built in 1986, the home wasn't much more than a rustic place on the bay when they first saw it. Upgraded conveniences, styling and accessibility were a must, but at least it was one-story construction with a level lot from the driveway in front to the water's edge.

The couple spent the first year in their new getaway planning the redo to come. Gordon envisioned relatively simple fixes, but Linda foresaw a more substantial project. "Linda's the one with the vision. She knew what it would be like," Gordon says.

The pair hired Easton, Maryland based contractor **Scott Cronshaw** to begin a renovation that grew in scope as the Mansfields began spending more and more time at the house. Cronshaw expanded the kitchen to include what had been the home's side porch entrance and outdoor storage area, and enlarged its window – moves that added more space and light. Then he increased accessibility by, among other things, positioning the microwave and dish storage within easy reach. "Now Gordon can get right in there and help with the meals and entertaining," says Linda. Cronshaw also redid windows in the great room, enlarged the master bedroom and added a fireplace in the family room.

The couple then brought in Annapolis-based architect Thomas Davies, a specialist in accessibility issues, who drew up plans for such improvements as a new master bath and revamped exterior entries, which Cronshaw executed. In the master bath, for example, specific details such as wheelchair-level counter heights, a wheel-in shower and threshold-free doorways made a huge impact on Gordon's day-to-day comfort and independence.

Exteriors were reworked with the same sensitivity. Ramps at both ends of a new front porch gives Gordon choices. He can use the one on the left to enter the front door, or use the one on the right to get around the side of the house and back to the water.

Gordon and Linda Mansfield love their remodeled weekend home on the bay more than ever—and even think of retiring there one day. Fortunately, it's all ready for them to age in peace, gracefully.

