

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Cape
&
Islands

Water's Edge

Luxe coastal living





"It's an exaggerated version of a traditional entry," says architect John DaSilva of the fanciful entrance he designed for the new central section of this Lower Cape home. Tiny shuttered dormers crown the roof, which features a widow's walk bracketed by chimneys and adorned with arches that echo throughout the home. **FACING PAGE:** The arch motif extends to the whimsical entrance to the pool area.



NIP & TUCK

A Cape Cod vacation home goes from chalet to seashore thanks to an all-star team's deft design.

Text by FRED ALBERT | Photography by JOSEPH KELLER | Produced by KARIN LIDBECK BRENT

Views and light flood the family room, which is flanked by cutout Greek Revival columns and an inglenook (far right) designed for conversation or contemplation. "The owners really wanted it to feel bright, open, and coastal," says Polhemus Savery DaSilva owner and CEO Aaron Polhemus.





RIGHT: The center section of the twenty-year-old house was razed and rebuilt atop its old foundation in a mix of Federal and Dutch Colonial styles that suggest additions made over time. **BELOW:** The main staircase passes in front of an arcade of flattened Greek Revival columns dividing the entry hall from the family room. **FACING PAGE:** In the old kitchen, an appliance wall blocked the ocean view; now a custom lantern illuminates a Shaws sink in the island, which enjoys unobstructed ocean vistas.



As any Hollywood observer will tell you, the secret to a good face-lift is to improve what's there without betraying what came before. By this measure, the surgery that Polhemus Savery DaSilva performed on a Cape Cod home was very good, indeed.

Nestled on nearly an acre and a half of shoreline, the house was blessed with the kind of panoramic vistas most mortals merely dream about. But its rugged fir beams, dark cabinets, and massive stone fireplace felt more appropriate for a day on the slopes than an afternoon at the shore. At the behest of the home's new owners, PSD's team of architects and builders preserved the wings at either end of the 6,000-square-foot house but rebuilt the center, replacing Aspen bravado with an airy, sun-drenched effervescence.



“Obviously,
this is a client
who was open
to having fun.”

—ARCHITECT
JOHN DASILVA

LEFT: The homeowners asked interior designer Susanne Lichten Csongor for a traditional Cape Cod interior, and the designer obliged with a predominantly blue-and-white palette. **BELOW:** The kitchen cabinets are from Christopher Peacock and include a secondary island topped with walnut that services the dining room and includes slots at either end for trays. **FACING PAGE:** The couple wanted to reuse their existing dining table and chairs, so Csongor updated the latter with new fabric and paired them with a Paul Ferrante chandelier that hangs from a ceiling adorned with arches that are echoed in the transoms.

“It was a very complex problem, to adapt that footprint to something that feels more in character with Cape Cod,” says design principal John DaSilva. The architect incorporated elements of Federal, Dutch Colonial, and cape-style architecture on the exterior to make the house look like it had evolved over time, then united it all under a continuous shingled skin.

Leavening this historicism with a healthy dose of whimsy, DaSilva fashioned an exuberant front entry that skewers convention with cheeky abandon. Inside the foyer, a grand staircase culminates in a dizzying vortex of balusters, while a cavalcade of cutout columns flanks the family room, recalling architect Michael Graves at his postmodernist zenith. (Not surprisingly, DaSilva was a student of Graves at Princeton University.)

Radial arches were woven throughout, looping across ceilings, transoms,





and archways, and culminating in a hallucinogenic veil of circles shrouding the built-in bench and storage niches in the mudroom. “Obviously, this is a client who was open to having fun,” says DaSilva.

The homeowners took a more traditional approach with the decor, which was designed by Susanne Lichten Csongor of SLC Interiors. “They wanted something that felt comfortable and kind of refined, but without feeling too stuffy,” notes SLC’s Joseph Chartier-Petrelis. Working within the owners’ preferred palette of blue and white, Csongor anchored one side of the family room with an eleven-foot sofa, which



ABOVE: The Stark carpet in the primary bedroom echoes the rippling waters beyond; the bed was repurposed from the owners’ previous Cape Cod home, and the chandeliers are from Visual Comfort. **LEFT:** A dizzying veil of circles, fashioned from MDF by a computer-controlled jigsaw, adorns the built-in storage in the mudroom. **FACING PAGE:** The house is filled with cozy nooks, including this conversation niche situated on the landing leading to the primary suite; the walls are Benjamin Moore Glass Slipper.



she paired with plump easy chairs and ottomans covered in indoor-outdoor fabrics so they stand up to anything.

Conversation nooks and window seats abound, offering an intimate respite from the home’s grander spaces, where friends and family (the owners have two grown daughters) can curl up with a book or just contemplate the passing boats.

The gleaming white kitchen, devised in tandem with Boston’s Christopher Peacock showroom, features pristine quartz-topped cabinets punctuated with

quartersawn oak accents. While the adjacent dining area commands a lot of attention (thanks to its prime placement and ten-foot-long table), meals are often savored outside, where a full kitchen awaits on the bluestone terrace alongside an infinity pool and gas firepit.

Although the Boston-based owners have summered on the Cape for much of their lives, the husband admits he's tempted to pinch himself every time he turns in the driveway. "It's just a wonderful place," he says, "and we feel extremely fortunate to have it."

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE, BUILDER,
AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Polhemus
Savery DaSilva

INTERIOR DESIGN: SLC Interiors

The new infinity pool and spa seem to hover over the hillside, merging with the ocean beyond, while Kingsley Bate lounges stand at the ready. Steamed clams are a specialty at the outdoor kitchen, which includes a grill, pizza oven, side burners, refrigerator, and sink, as well as counter seating to take it all in.

