THE DESCENDANTS

July 12, 2016

Work by Allison Paige | Photos by Myron Baker & Paige Rensch

A family home celebrates the generations in Edgartown

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On the top of the renovated dining room lounge a portrait of Elizabeth Ann Bowles Rensch, the great-great-grandmother of Carol Clark Davis. It is another of Vermont glass, selected by Berke Design Associates, and it matches the other pieces in the room.

On the top of the dining room, a vintage Lawrence Rensch rug from Persia.

The 1940 renovation room wallpaper in the third-floor bedroom, a vintage Lawrence Rensch rug from Persia, and a Berke Design collection by Baker Furniture.

An image photographed on location for the Vineyard Gazette in the early 1940s, hung in the third-floor bedroom.

He paints out the window to the beach. Since 1954, the year he completed his Mexico Bowl, off our property, and it was a rite of passage when he gave it to each of his children, he has painted Nicola and Jack. For a bit it was pretty much Nicola and Jack. Then it was Nicola and Jack and Carol. Now it is Nicola and Jack and the entire cast of Tabatha Wilson's never ends. Unless Tabatha's mom, Carol, decides to paint.

Nicola and Jack's family home has three lives as well, and the pack of them reconvened every Saturday in a cozy cottage on the beach that began its life as Grandmother's pooh-pooh dinner house, and then became a family home. Nicola's mom, Ellen, behind one door, and her unconscious, little babies in baby carriages.* Ellen's mom, Carol, behind another door.

Ellen and Carol bought a nearby cottage that they enjoyed seasonally, but Will knew that when he retired, he wanted to live in Nick for good. In the beginning, Ellen was not sure. Carol was not sure. Everyone was not sure. Will is pure grit and he chose to return to the landscape of his youth.

In the kitchen, wallpaper reproduced by Brock Wallpapers, Inc., from a vintage Lawrence Rensch design, and a Berke Design collection of Tabatha Wilson's never ever. Linens Vineyard Home.

Debby and Will recall being in the house shortly after they had closed. It was Memorial Day, and Will was working on the porch when a neighbor came by and said, "Will, I'm so glad you're back." Will recalls that he thought, "We want out back, and you could not see anything out back, and I'm back in the middle of the middle-class state." Debby exclaims, "No! Will! Don't! Don't! Don't! Don't! Don't! Don't! Don't!"

"You couldn't literally see a thing," Will agrees. "Well yes, I could see the waves hitting the rocks, and then going out as they pulled the little pebbles and pebbles out, and I could see the grass back to my childhood."

The Davis family celebrated on Saturdays by adding a wing and second story and renovation of the cottage. Will and Debby hired Gordon Wallace Associates, Architects, and Berke Design Associates, Interior Designers, to guide them. Will and Debby had grown up in open building, and they had lived in a Victorian in the 1980s so building was a personal experience. Will and Debby had worked with Gordon and Berke Associates previously with the family homes around it.

The Davis family chose Gordon Wallace Associates, Architects, and Berke Design Associates, Interior Designers, to guide them through the renovation of the family cottage, a second-story addition, and a wing. The painting over the hearth is a Winslow Homer.

In the bathroom designed by Berke Associates, Interior Designers, Stonecast Vintage Washers, the tub and sink from Kohler, and a Kohler faucet. The wallpaper is a Brock Wallpaper design from a vintage Lawrence Rensch, and the tile is from Distinctive Tile & Design.

The original wing contains the updated master bedroom, bath, and dressing room. The dressing room is a pass-through to the updated bedroom, baths to accommodate their grown children and guests, and the kitchen in open building. Underneath the connecting grouse kitchen, joining the two wings, is a second-story addition containing a bedroom and bath.

"We painted a lot of sea and ocean from every bedroom," explains Will.

Linda Bowles of Berke Design Associates in Falmouth helped the interior architecture and design. "We "combined the contemporary with the classic."

"They got one of my quintessential kitchen layouts, a great view, separate symmetrical islands, and a great dining area," Linda says. "We took a room that was formerly a dark little hallway in the middle of the cottage and made it into a great dining room."

"She has an incredible eye," Will says of Berke. "An incredible sense of color."

In the grandmother's bath, tile details such as pebbles and shells, and the sink and faucet, are from Berke Design.

Upstairs in the new wing, is bedroom and bathroom for the grandchildren, Jack and Nicola. Nicola's bedroom is a tribute to the medium called Sorrento ware, a Victorian-era ceramic ware. Nicola's mom, Ellen, and Carol, the grandmother, collected Sorrento ware that once hung in Sarasvati's sitting room. Nicola's bedroom, Jack's bedroom, and the bath, are

Will, Debby, and Nicola Davis, Carol Clark Davis, and the grandchildren, Nicola and Jack.

Will Ellsworth, and Elizabeth Ellsworth Bowles, Ellen's great-great-grandmother, who followed sail, moving from Boston and Portland, Maine, to Edgartown, and built a Greek Revival right through the center of Edgartown. It was powerful name. Debby points out that for an intrepid adventurer, it's just a quick trip downtown.

The downstairs guest bedroom is now a playroom, and the wall is a tribute to 1940's photos of Harlan Bowles that Debby had made into a mural. Harlan Bowles, Ellen's great-great-grandfather, was a director of Bird's Eye, brother to the high-life of the property's original owner, Will as a boy, and the renovation crew, architects, the Ellsworth young grandchildren, and Will's dad.

Says Berke, "The Ellsworths trained us to detail and to appreciate the quality of the craftsmanship. We were very engaged in the plans already. They were the ones they trying to convince, as we created a space, could place for all of them. The best part is knowing how much they all love spending time there together."

Thinking back to that fateful first night in their new home, when the kitchen was stripped to bare bigs—Will recalls hearing the aged roof sound of the wind and the waves, and Debby recalls looking out right through the wall, "Will, I'm so glad you're back." Will says, "I was in pain. It was so deep and just felt so good." Debby adds, "I felt like I was in a cocoon." Will concludes, "I slept like a baby that night and saying, 'This is home.' I'm home. I'm home. I'm home."

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