

THE NEXT WAVE: UP AND COMING BUILDING AND DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

# CAPE COD HOME

MARTHA'S VINEYARD & NANTUCKET

Orleans Roof Top

Widow's Walk

Page 72

## 2017 annual guide

REMEMBERING THE PAST, RECOGNIZING THE PRESENT & LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

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# WEST EGG

meets

# EAST BAY

Architect Patrick Ahearn reimagines Captain's Compound as a Gatsby-esque Cape Cod cottage

JAY GATSBY HAS GROWN IN STATURE FROM A TRAGIC character in F. Scott Fitzgerald's iconic book, *The Great Gatsby*, to a symbol of wealth and the fulfillment of the American dream. High school students across the country continue to read the 1925 novel. In 2013, Leonardo DiCaprio updated the screen persona of Gatsby that Robert Redford had owned for more than a generation. While many details of the story have eroded in the popular consciousness, Gatsby still represents luxury and style. In early December 2015, *Town and Country* magazine trumpeted, "The question on every social New Yorker's lips this weekend was 'Are you going to The Gatsby Party?'"

One truly has "made it" in America when one attains Gatsby status. The same holds true for any home that channels this cultural legend. Captain's Compound, in Osterville, is such a dwelling; its distinction as Massachusetts' number one luxury home sale in 2014, when it fetched \$13 million, only serves to solidify its position among such rarified company.

Award-winning architect Patrick Ahearn, FAIA, has given Captain's Compound, situated on the shore of Nantucket Sound, the Gatsby treatment in a massive renovation project that has both preserved the integrity of the original, historic

CAPTAIN'S COMPOUND | GOLD WINNER  
*Excellence in Remodeling - Whole House*

BY CHRIS WHITE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC ROTH





home, in stark contrast to the original landscaping, which obscured most of the house's left flank. Just before the motor court, visitors encounter the boathouse on the right, which, Ahearn says, "reads as a gatehouse when you come down the drive." This outlying structure also received a thorough facelift along with a literal lift and realignment that creates a sharper sense of overall symmetry within the compound.

Where the front door of the original home resembled a service entrance, a new gabled portico creates a welcoming grandeur and helps to establish, in Ahearn's words, "the sense of implied symmetry." The original shape of the house provided "cues" that he used to reinforce this impression. For example, the new wing, he says, "replicates the gambrel" of the pre-existing one. Windows were updated, expanded and framed with black shutters.

Continuing to focus on the overall symmetry of the compound, Ahearn and Jaxtmer constructed a new carriage house that, freestanding diagonally opposite the boathouse, occupies the left side of the motor court. The upstairs floor of the carriage house is a two-bedroom

home and reimagined it for the 21st century. "The goal," says Ahearn, "was to create a grand summer cottage that could have been designed in the 1920s in New England." With the help of E.J. Jaxtmer Builder, Inc. he did so in a way that is both luxurious and understated.

Captain's Compound begins with a long, elegant drive through a woodland lot. Ahearn worked with the Jaxtmer landscaping team to realign the driveway with the center of the home, creating, in his words, "a sense of anticipation of the house." And where the original drive ended in a small, paved loop, the new approach, says Ahearn, is "almost a Gatsby-esque experience that resolves in the motor court." One could easily imagine the appearance of the cream-colored Rolls Royce Silver Ghost that would signify the legendary character's arrival.

Creating a screen between the car park and the grounds is a privet hedge, trimmed to about the height of an automobile's hood. The living border seems to frame and accentuate the geometric balance of the

THE HOME EXUDES THE STYLE AND IMPLIED DECADENCE OF GATSBY'S ROARING 20'S, YET REMAINS DEVOID OF THE GARISHNESS; IT'S THE ULTIMATE REFINED NEW ENGLAND BEACH COTTAGE.



Top: The newly designed motor court greets guests with anticipation of what's to come.

Above and right: A two-bedroom family suite in the carriage house, complete with a breakfast area and kitchenette, allows guests to feel right at home.







Interior designer Anthony Catalfano created an environment of classic comfort through his use of traditional fabrics and furnishings, enhancing the cottage-like feel of this grand estate.



"It's basically a new house," says Jaxtimer. "We had to raise the original one up to build a foundation, then finish the basement, and create outdoor living areas." The team removed the sliding aluminum doors that were out of character with the historical nature of a home originally built in the 1890s and introduced chimneys that, Ahearn says, "express vertically to give more stature." Nearly every downstairs room now accesses the back porch, which brings the outdoors inside.

In something of a thematic mirror, the beach side of Captain's Compound begins with a field of native seagrass. Though carefully planted and maintained, the area looks natural, as does the landscaped woodland of the driveway. When the sun sets, especially in the offseason, the grasses turn gold, undulating in the breeze. Adjacent to the field stands the beach house, or "beach folly," which Ahearn designed "to mimic a miniature version of the main home."

family suite with a breakfast area and kitchenette. Downstairs contains three large garages along with a smaller one. On the ground floor, the right side of the building encloses a wet bar behind barn doors that open poolside. Two outdoor showers set behind the carriage house provide privacy.

One of Ahearn's goals for the renovation of Captain's Compound was to transform the dwelling from an indoor-oriented home to one that would take full advantage of its beachfront setting. The flow from carriage house to pool area is just one example of this metamorphosis. Builder Jonathan Jaxtimer notes that the patio surrounding the swimming pool is constructed of reclaimed brick, imbuing an antique quality. Thematically it also connects the left side of the exterior with the back, as the brickwork continues into a screened porch in the corner with an outdoor fireplace.

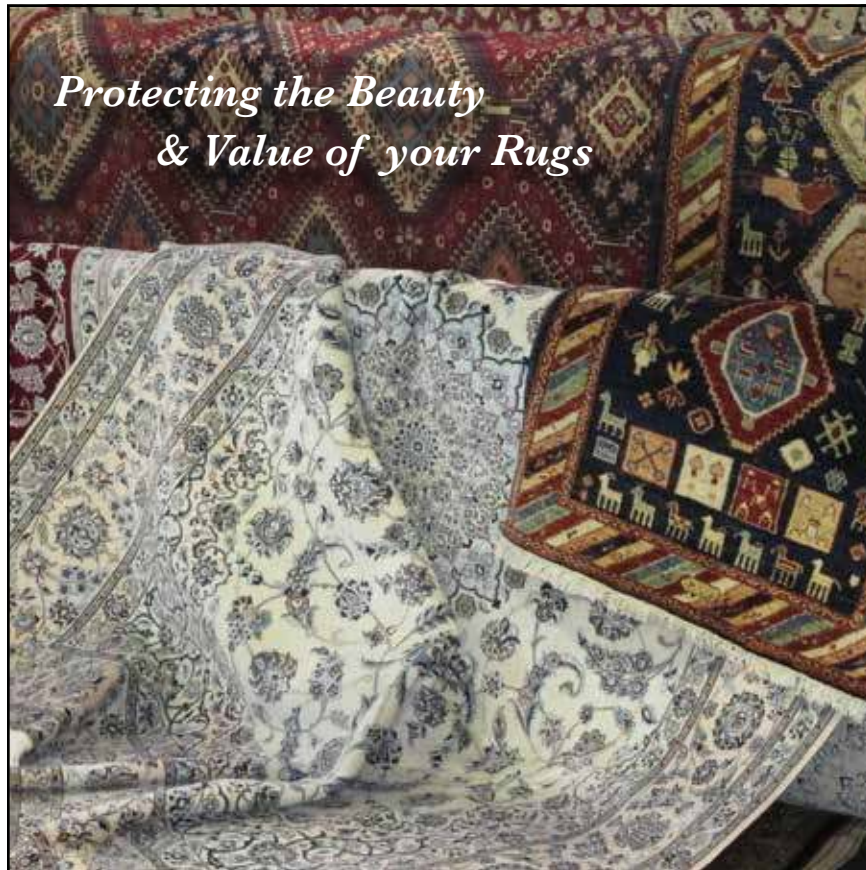


With plenty of places for the homeowners and their large family to gather, Ahearn and Catalfano also planned for areas to rest and reflect.

Bottom left: Ahearn and Jaxtimer restored the original great room, maintaining its historical features while opening up the space and lightening the woodwork.







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It also fits as a kind of reflection of the boathouse, since each marks an entrance to the compound. Unlike the implied symmetry of the front, however, “the rear of the house really does express in a new symmetrical way,” Ahearn notes.

The renovation of Captain's Compound added two new wings to the main house, one of which includes an annexation of the smaller gambrel on its pool side, accommodating two second-floor decks, each with Chippendale railings. Yet, it still “feels very much like a cottage,” Ahearn says, “because the wings are set back; from the water, you're reading only the central portion of the house.”

While nearly the entire floor plan underwent revision, Ahearn made sure to preserve the great room, a two-story room in the center of the house. In order to do so, the team had to overcome a number of challenges, including matching

historical features. For example, Jaxtiner says, “half of the upstairs railings are old, but the other half are new.” The builders enlisted New England Architectural Finishing, a firm based in Seekonk that specializes in stripping, refinishing and restoration processes. Ahearn says the original great room more closely resembled “a hunting lodge in the Adirondacks than a beach house on Cape Cod.” The paneling was stained dark brown, and there wasn't any access to the outdoors. The updated space maintains the formal and historical features of the original room, but, in keeping with the entire renovation, it has been opened up, and the woodwork has been lightened to make it feel more appropriate in its setting.

One of the goals the owners brought to Captain's Compound was to accommodate the needs of their large family. Since the kitchen has become the focal point of so many families' lives, the major addition



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on the house's left side is devoted to the kitchen experience. While the original cooking area was tucked away behind a hallway, the new kitchen occupies the center of its own solar system; its gravitational pull connects the screened porch and outdoor fireplace, the morning room beside the rear porch, the breakfast room, the butler's pantry, and the main pantry. Members of a large family could easily enjoy each other's company within these common spaces, yet each could also find a quiet spot to read a novel or enjoy a coffee.

The new wing on the right side of the home allowed for the master bedroom suite to move downstairs and for the construction of new bedrooms on the second floor. Like the great room, the master bedroom brings in the outdoors as French doors open seaside. The suite includes a den, or library, that abuts

the great room, a dressing area, a walk-in closet, two bathrooms, and an office that flows into the rear porch.

Since the downstairs portion of the new wing so ably satisfies the needs of the owners, the second story could be devoted to children, grandchildren and guests. The great room extends upstairs in a double-height atrium, which creates a gallery to the action down below. The second floor houses a total of six bedrooms, two of which are en suite and four of which share "Jack and Jill" bathrooms. An upper den doubles as a second living room, and it opens to the two decks above the pool area.

The crown of Captain's Compound is an attic living area, with a staircase rising to a widow's walk that was inset into the reframed roof. Recapturing another detail of historic function



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# GREGORY LOMBARDI DESIGN

*Landscape Architecture*



in the home's renovation, the open chimney-side roost is nearly invisible, nestled as it is. Here is the perfect vantage point for spotting schools of bluefish or false albacore in Nantucket Sound, or for taking in the rainbow of billowing spinnakers during a Sunday afternoon Wianno Senior sailboat race. Unlike a typical widow's walk, accessed by a ship's ladder and fenced by white railings, the recessed structure offers an easier, safer experience, especially for small children, and it provides shelter from the wind without compromising the panoramic views. If Jay Gatsby did inhabit Captain's Compound, this is where he'd take Daisy Buchanan, up into the moonlight, removed from the festivities below.

Patrick Ahearn and E.J. Jaxtimer Builder, Inc. won gold in the 2016 BRICC Awards **Excellence in Remodeling** category in part because of the ways the team overcame such challenges as "expanding the home without

sacrificing the original character or increasing its scale," according to Ahearn. The team also succeeded in restricting the height of Captain's Compound to 26 feet, even though zoning permitted 36. The result, says Ahearn, is "all about the smaller scale; it feels like it's from another time."

In the cultural deification of *The Great Gatsby*, many people forget that the character was ostentatious, perhaps even tacky, but this is one quality Captain's Compound has managed to avoid. The home exudes the style and implied decadence of Gatsby's roaring 20s, yet remains devoid of the garishness; it's the ultimate refined New England beach cottage. Of the historic renovation, Jaxtimer says, "Ahearn is known for this." Ahearn himself concludes, "It truly feels timeless in its appeal, with a real sense of intimacy. It's the ultimate seaside experience."

*Chris White is freelance writer who teaches English at Tabor Academy in Marion.*

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