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RICH IN HISTORY

A NEW, FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOUSE HAS ALL THE CHARM OF A 19TH-CENTURY BEACH COTTAGE

Period details such as the painted bead-board backsplash and island, seeded-glass cabinet doors, and oil-rubbed hardware turn back the clock in this new kitchen. Behind the sink wall is a 6-by-8-foot pantry, accessed by a door to the left (not shown).

When architect Patrick Ahearn, of Ahearn/Schopfer Architects in Boston, designed a family home to be built on one of the rare undeveloped beachfront parcels on Martha's Vineyard, he started by inventing a venerable past for the residence. "The homeowners and I imagined that there was a rambling Shingle-style cottage already on the property, like the ones that dotted the New England coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and that the surrounding houses had been wiped









OPPOSITE Nestled in a window bay, the eating nook at the far end of the kitchen has views of an adjacent farm and grassy municipal airstrip. Wooden rosettes at the top corners of each window casement lend old-time flourish, while striped Roman shades repeat the beadboard wall design and, along with cane blinds, control light in the area.

LEFT Stainless steel appliances, sinks, and faucets are warmed by a creamy white and sage green palette and 2-inch-thick varnished mahogany counters that have been distressed to look timeworn.

out in a hurricane. In our made-up scenario the house had been neglected until now, and we were to restore it to its former glory," explains Ahearn. Never mind that the real-life neighboring homes were contemporary in style. Writing a script for the soon-to-be-built structure helped ground its architectural features in history and guided the design of the interiors as well.

So, following the lead of turn-of-the-20th-century Shingle-style cottages, Ahearn incorporated gabled porches, lots of dormers, and a low, sweeping roof into the 6,500-square-foot house, but also created the spacious rooms and easy flow desired by families today. "The interior detailing, too, gives the sense of an older house," says Ahearn. There is tall beadboard wainscoting with 8-inch-high baseboards running throughout the main rooms. Six-panel doors and chunky door casings featuring rosette corner blocks all reflect a vintage cottage vernacular. And the large windows, with divided-light upper sashes and single-paned lower sashes, are set low—the better to take in the panoramic beachfront vistas.

"The challenge of this house was that to get a view of the ocean, the main living area needed to be on the second floor, which is typical in coastal homes," explains





OPPOSITE For indoor-outdoor party flow, the dining area's glazed doors lead to a deck. A mahogany-topped cabinet conceals a bar and refrigerator. Echoing 19th-century woodwork in local cottages, bead-board ceiling panels form a basket-weave pattern, while a gingerbread transom divides dining and living spaces.

ABOVE The living room's shallow, heat-efficient Rumford fireplace has a brick herringbone firebox and honed green slate surround. The mantel rests on brackets that resemble those on the eaves of the house. A windowed alcove, set off by another transom, has bookshelves at each end.

Ahearn, "but the owners didn't want to lose the sense of a formal entrance." So he created a gracious entry hall on the first floor, and because the family has two sons and a daughter, all tweens, Ahearn made this 2,600-square-foot level "kid central," with two bedrooms flanking a generously sized play-family room, along with a mudroom and shower for easy après-beach cleanups. The living spaces, including an eat-in kitchen, dining area, living room, den, and a guest suite, are all located on the 2,600-square-foot second, or main level. The 800-square-foot third floor features a master suite, with bedroom, bath, dressing rooms, home office, and exercise room. To take full advantage of the property's views, the main-floor living areas open to a large wrap-around deck—bookended by pergolas—that extends the length of the house and provides an additional 800 square feet of alfresco dining and entertaining space. There is also a private deck off the study on the third floor.

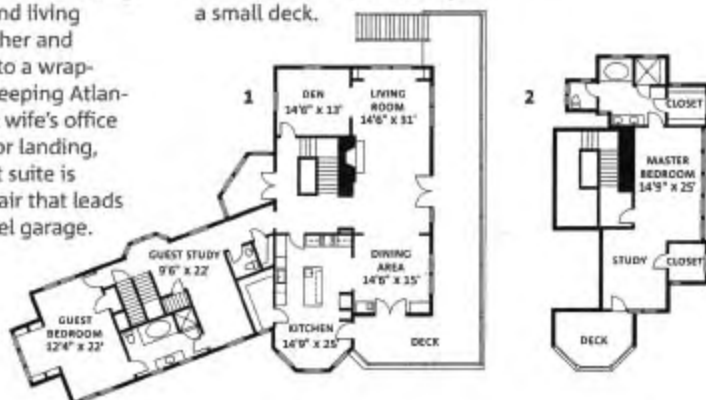
The family wanted the interior to feel airy and open, with plenty of room for children and guests. Designer Jeffrey B. Haines, of Butler's in Far Hills, New Jersey, with whom the owners had worked before, was enlisted to



floor plans

1. The L-shape plan of the newly built home places the main living space on the 2,600-square-foot second floor. Here, the kitchen and eating nook, dining area, and living rooms all flow together and provide easy access to a wrap-around deck and sweeping Atlantic Ocean views. The wife's office is off the second-floor landing, and a separate guest suite is reached by a back stair that leads from the ground-level garage.

2. The 800-square-foot third level includes a master suite, his-and-hers dressing rooms, and the husband's office, which adjoins a small deck.



create just such a relaxed atmosphere while also establishing a seamless continuity throughout the house. To that end, Haines used a creamy white and sage green palette throughout the main-floor living spaces and highlighted each room with mahogany accents. He then chose clean, minimal furnishings with a beachy feeling, mixing comfortable, upholstered pieces in sandy tones of linen and cotton with chairs of woven natural fibers such as sea grass and raffia. "Because accessories and patterns are kept to a minimum, the nubbinness of the textiles adds texture and interest," says Haines.

In the kitchen, materials were chosen to give the illusion of age: oak floors, thick mahogany countertops, seeded-glass-front doors on upper cabinets, and oil-rubbed bronze knobs and bin pulls. Continuing the old-world look, Victorian-style gingerbread transoms provide a demarcation between the dining and living spaces, and also frame a window bay in the living room.

Inventing a romantic history for the new home was so successful that reality soon imitated fiction. After the family moved in, the owners of a contemporary house next door tore it down and hired Ahearn to design a similar Shingle-style cottage in its place. ■

OPPOSITE In the third-floor master bedroom, a British Colonial-style bed is positioned to take in uninterrupted views of the Atlantic Ocean. Window treatments are simple wooden blinds with fixed curtain panels to frame and soften them. A woven raffia club chair adds intriguing texture to the serene setting. The master bath and one of two walk-in closets are accessed through the doorway to the left of the dresser.

LEFT In the master bath, more beadboard paneling and white Carrara marble—on the whirlpool tub surround and a toiletry niche above—have vintage appeal. A separate WC has an old-fashioned paneled door with a frosted-glass window for privacy.

