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A Painter's Palette

A harmonious mixing of bold colors serves as an uplifting backdrop to a Martha's Vineyard home built to welcome family. WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY STACY KUNSTEL •

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PARTENIO • ARCHITECTURE: PATRICK AHEARN, AHEARN-SCHOPFER AND ASSOCIATES • INTERIOR DESIGN: JON HATTAWAY AND MARTIN POTTER, MJ BERRIES DESIGN

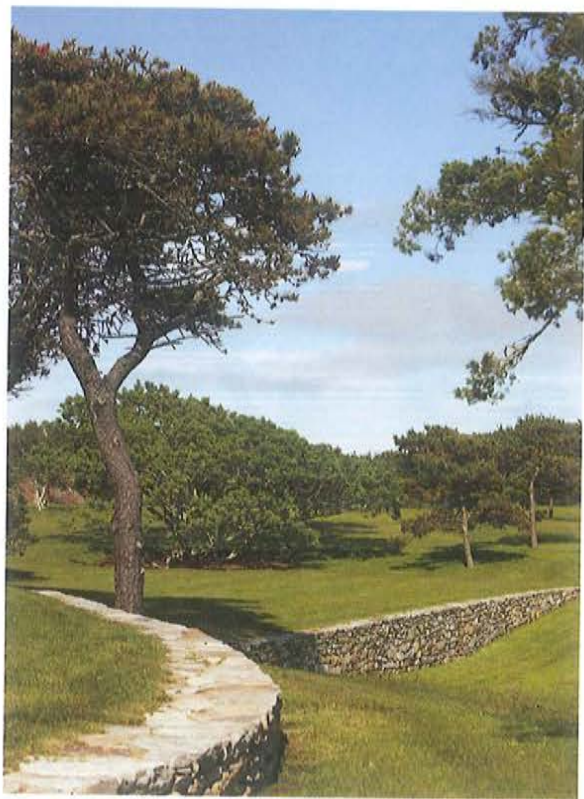
Dick Morash and his wife, Brad, could not have been happier in their new waterfront home on Chappaquiddick, the tiny island off Martha's Vineyard. They marveled at how well it accommodated their three grown children and five grandchildren when everyone joined them for the summer. That is, until the cat got out. As Dick recalls, he was tromping through overgrown bushes and weeds on their neighbor's thickly wooded lot looking for the family pet when he looked up and saw the view. A panorama lay at his feet—nearly 360 degrees of waterfront on this particular point. Cat in hand, Dick trudged back to the house and told Brad they had built their dream home in the wrong spot. • Brad, exhausted by building and designing the house they were in, could barely entertain the idea of tackling another, but Dick, still full of persuasion even after their forty-three years of marriage, convinced her it would be a move

Traditional and modern meet in the dining room where a Lichtenstein print shares space with Brad Morash's geometric watercolors. The Empire-style table is custom. *Previous pages:* Hues as vivid as homeowner Brad Morash's pastels echo throughout the eight-bedroom home built to accommodate three generations.





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to a place they would never want to leave.

Enlisting the same team that had designed their four previous houses, the Morashes called architect Patrick Ahearn of Ahearn-Schopfer and Associates and interior designers Jon Hattaway and Martin Potter of MJ Berries Design for their input.

The result isn't a copy of the spaces they had so lovingly created in the house next door, but rather an opportunity to revise the rooms that weren't quite working for them while also emboldening the color palette. The front facade sports two large gambrel roof structures with generous dormers on each, giving more room to a painting studio for Brad and upstairs guest suites. In conjunction with a stone wall, a gambrel-roofed garage opposite the front door creates an enclosed parking court for the family and friends. The back of the house, with its many windows and curved screened porch, provides enviable views of the water from every perch. "We employed the gambrel here," says Ahearn, "because it is the only classical architectural form that gives you the most height and volume for the space."

The weathered shingles and white trim would lull any passersby into thinking that, within these walls, there would be nautical motifs and chintz, but with the Morashes—specifically Brad—you soon learn that it is all about color. Brad, an artist whose paintings appear in every room (the only painting in the house that isn't hers is the Lichtenstein print in the dining room), loves to experiment with color. Celadon, turquoise, yellow, royal blue, orange and laven-

der all meet under this roof, providing such an exciting sensory experience that most first-time visitors can barely muster a "Wow."

The living room walls play with creamy-toned white and bright white trim, but the insides of bookcases are soft lavender. The upholstered loveseats are tomato red, armchairs are the color of butternut squash, and ticking (designed by Brad and Hattaway and made in France) covers all the pillows and draperies, filling the room with pattern and energy. It's not just this room that brims with pattern and life, but all of them, right down to the eight bedrooms, TV room, kitchen sitting area and porch.

Brad and Dick have always taken an active role in designing their houses. Dick is more involved with the architecture (he insisted on the curved ceiling in the master bedroom) and Brad with the interiors (she has an amazing command of color and always lays out the kitchen and bathrooms). "It's a creative process we've always shared together," says Brad. "We've created a dozen houses for ourselves and numerous ones for others. We love doing it."

That creative process also extends to Brad's long friendship with interior designer Hattaway. "We have a rhythm when we work together," says Hattaway. "We often laugh about the Fred

Clockwise from above: Layers of ticking, quilts and color in the living room extend to the study beyond. Brad Morash kicks back in her art studio. Undulating rock walls surround the waterfront property. The collection of ironstone isn't just for display. Every piece is used.



The kitchen was built to accommodate a lot of cooks and even more onlookers. Chairs covered in striped ticking are on casters so they can turn toward the water view or toward the cook.





and Ginger relationship we have. We easily move back and forth between who gets to lead.

"I trust her instincts as a painter," he adds. "We could maybe do it without one another, but what's the point? We enjoy the work and that's clearly reflected in the result."

Together, they instill color confidence in each other. In the master bedroom, two shades of lavender cover the barrel-vaulted ceiling and trim. Unusual, perhaps, but Brad says it's like waking up outside every morning. The bed floats within the room and Hattaway and Potter created seating areas around it. The bookcases, painted deep lavender at the back, hold trinkets and photos and Brad's geometric watercolors all framed in a deep blue. "Paint provides dimension," says Hattaway. "In the moldings, in the backs of bookcases or the backs of cupboards, it grounds them. Even a low-contrast color."

Most walls throughout the house are a shade of white with the trim color or background color (such as in the bookcases) adding depth. Almost randomly, a lime-green wall appears between the kitchen and dining room or a turquoise wall at the end of a long hall. The kitchen cabinets may be white, but the backsplash tile is bright gold and the seating area chairs are upholstered in the same ticking

found in the living room. The colors and the patterns create an energy that buoys visitors any time of the year. The boldness, playfulness and harmony are so masterful that a few pillows out of place could throw off the whole scheme.

The dining room was one place in the house where the right color wasn't immediately obvious to Brad and Hattaway. In the Morashes' previous house, the dining room walls had been turquoise. Navy seemed too flat, so they decided on what Hattaway calls a patriotic blue with a robin's egg blue ceiling and shelf color. The blue pops behind Brad's extensive collection of ironstone, while a large grouping of glass turquoise candlesticks on the table recalls the previous dining room. "It's not studied, it's not contrived, it's not labored," says Hattaway of the space. Contrasting with the deep-blue walls is a custom-designed, Empire-inspired, long dining table painted glossy white. The room inspired Brad to paint a series of geometrics in black. "Something that Brad has taught me—she always wants a touch of black in a room and she's right," says Hattaway. They hang gathered around wall sconces and the Lichtenstein (a gift from Hattaway and Potter).

The room, like rest of the house, has drama, but in the most spectacular way.

"Interior design should be fun, it should be creative, it should not be copied," says Hattaway. "At its best it's inspiration. I would hope this interior is inspiring." •

Resources For more information about this home, see page 228.

Clockwise from above: A balcony across the back of the house gives every guest a water view. Brad's hydrangea painting plays off the hues of the master bedroom's ceiling and fabrics. Accessories and books adhere to the master bedroom's color scheme. A screened porch curves toward the water views.

