

New England HOME

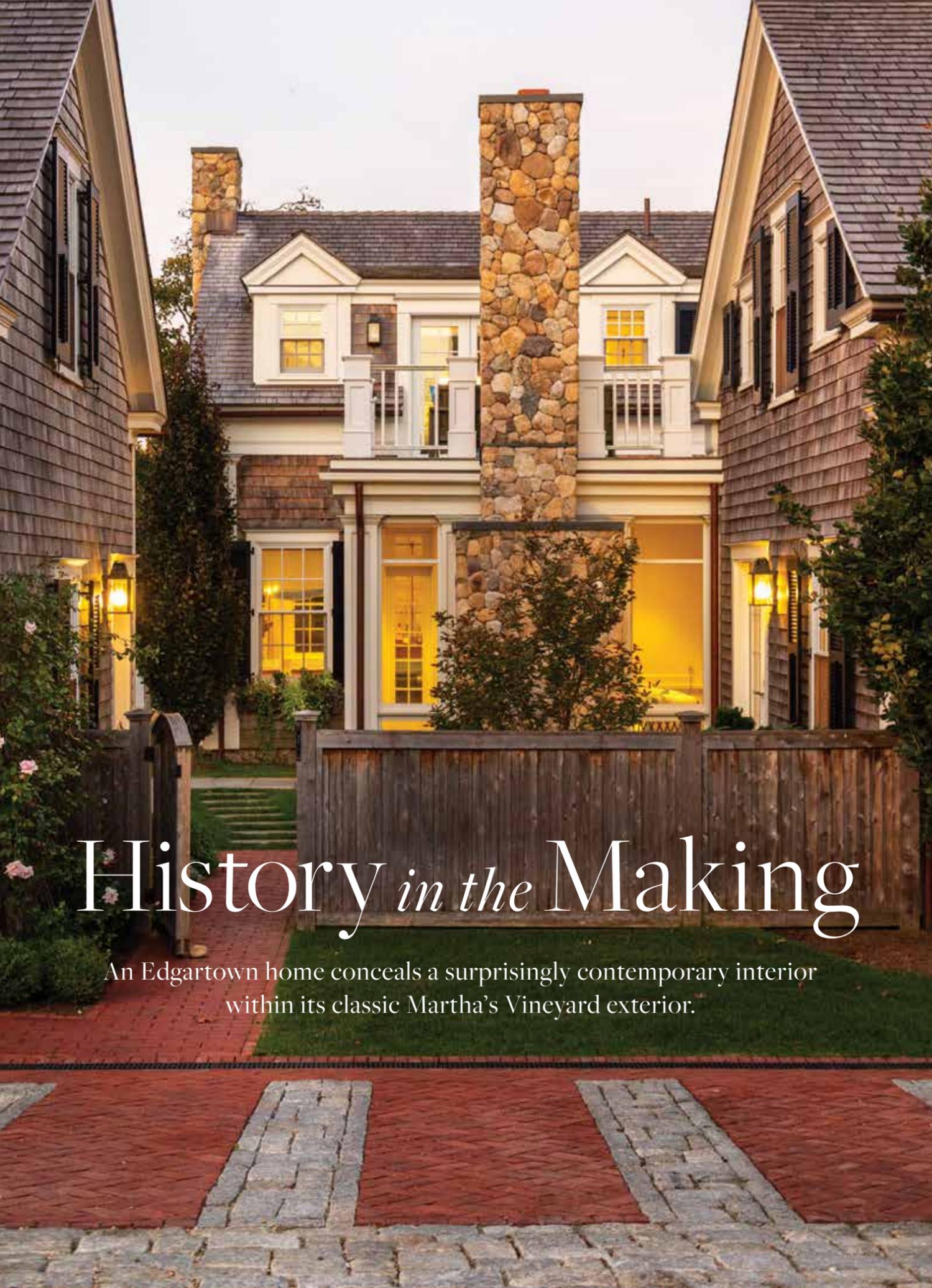
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History *in the* Making

An Edgartown home conceals a surprisingly contemporary interior within its classic Martha's Vineyard exterior.

BELOW: A covered portico shelters the front door to the main house, which is designed in keeping with the historic vernacular of the island.
FACING PAGE: An entrance off the side lane leads to a courtyard created by the carriage house (left) and the main house ahead and to the right.



Text by JORGE S. ARANGO | Photography by TAYLOR AHEARN and AMY VISCHIO



Building a new home in a picture-postcard New England village like Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard—where the oldest surviving house dates to 1672—requires a profound respect for tradition. Patrick Ahearn knows this well. He estimates that about seventy percent of his Edgartown projects have been restorations. For the rest, the architect developed a typology he calls “the urban island village compound.”



ABOVE: The main house's fieldstone chimney is actually a thick stone veneer, while the house is clad in white cedar shakes and clapboard and topped by a red cedar roof.
RIGHT: An entrance at the side of the main house leads to a mudroom with a slate tile floor.

It has to do primarily with historic styles and massing, where various subordinate structures are anchored by a main section. “It’s implied history,” Ahearn explains. “It looks like the main building was added onto and tells the story, theoretically, of how the house grew over a couple hundred years.” Take the 4,500-square-foot Greek Revival residence he designed for an empty nester couple, where the “original” house commands the show and other volumes are stepped back from it or, in the case of the carriage house, detached and off to the side.

The challenge, of course, lies with making something designed for the past livable for today. The husband’s tastes skew traditional, but his wife loves



ABOVE: In lieu of formal living and dining rooms, the clients opted for a large great room for more fluid entertaining. The custom dining table by Richard Wrightman has leaves to seat up to seventeen and sports brass nautical-style details. Between the kitchen and living area is a brass-and-glass wet bar by Amuneal. **LEFT:** A Rosemary Hallgarten “paint-splatter” fabric covers the modern ottoman, and a Barbara Erdmann waterscape graces the mantel.

“There’s no one who entertains more or better than this couple, except maybe Martha Stewart. But they’d even give her a run for her money!”

—Interior designer Karen Bow



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A Lacanche range features brass dials and details to match the brass cabinet pulls and plumbing fixtures in the kitchen. A second door in the mudroom transitions guests to a screened porch. Waterworks pendants hang above the island of an English deVOL kitchen.



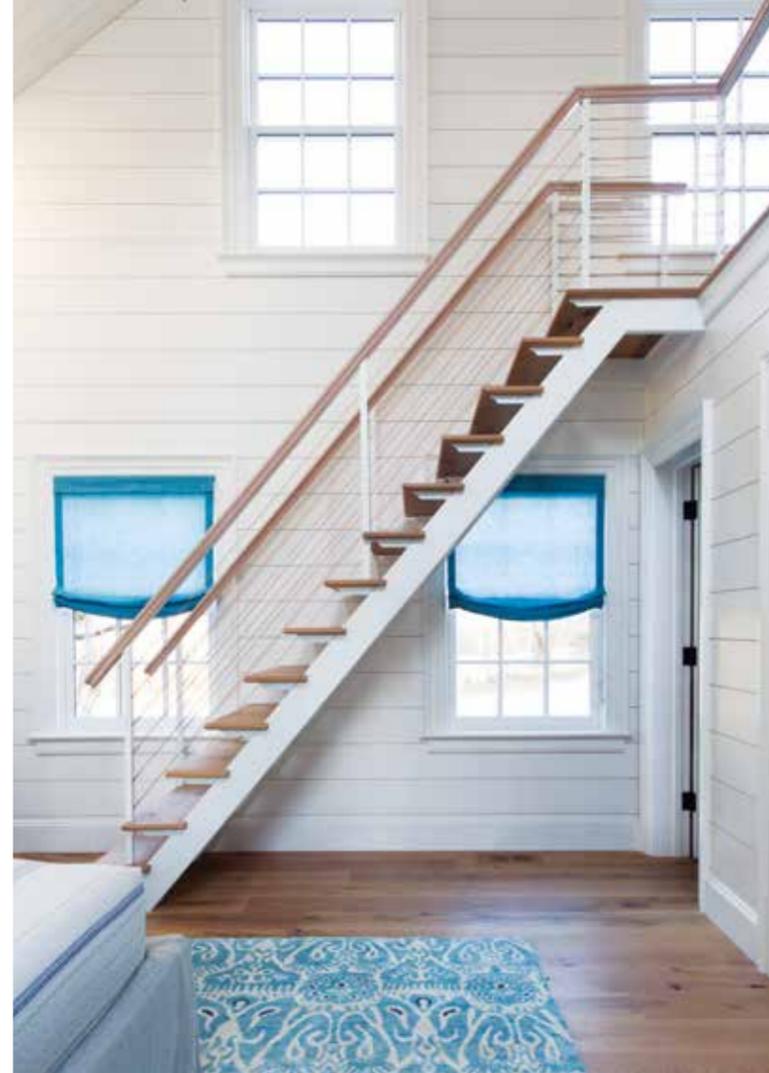
contemporary comfort and color. “During the process, we reached consensus,” recalls Ahearn. While the exterior would be classic Vineyard, “the interiors and finishes would be more modern and beachy.” All living spaces also had to be packed with function.

“There’s no one who entertains more or better than this couple, except maybe

Martha Stewart,” explains interior designer Karen Bow. “But they’d even give her a run for her money!” There were also dogs and visiting grown children to consider. Ahearn addressed this by building, he says, “architecture you can use.” This translates to lots of built-ins and tuckaways that also add cottage flavor. Bow packed in the outdoor fabrics and

furniture to ensure easy maintenance and durability.

It fell to Bow to reconcile her clients’ disparate approaches to interiors. The husband wanted a nautical theme—naturally *de rigueur* in these parts—while his wife, Bow observes, “is so full of life” that, were it up to her alone, the place would explode with color.



While the exterior would be classic Vineyard, “the interiors and finishes would be more modern and beachy.”

—Architect Patrick Ahearn

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The stairs in the primary suite lead to a loft with the wife’s office and additional sleeping accommodations. What designer Karen Bow calls a “bunk-less bunkroom” nevertheless sleeps four on toe-to-toe window mattresses and trundles underneath. Bow created a moodier look by painting the nickel board in a guest bath a deep navy blue. **FACING PAGE:** The primary bedroom features an ikat-style rug in turquoise. The linens, curtains, and art pull in other marine blues.



“We wanted it to nod to Martha’s Vineyard, but it was important for me to add texture and do things that were new,” Bow says. Nautical decor, for example, calls for brass details. There are obvious applications, such as the large dining table and ship-deck chairs, which boast brass brackets and trestle braces. Kitchen fixtures and hardware are also all brass. But there are less obvious touches too, namely the lights above the bed in a guest suite. Their positioning and round shapes are subtly reminiscent of portholes.

Shades of blue were a no-brainer for a quaint fishing village. But in a cedar-paneled den, “There’s a little introduction of lavender,” says Bow. Chairs with traditional silhouettes surround a



RIGHT: Island Pools built the pool with a spa sunken beneath the water level. **LEFT:** The pool is invisible from the front road and side lane thanks to its position behind the carriage house and landscaping by Donaroma’s Nursery, Landscaping + Floral Design. **FACING PAGE:** The screened porch boasts a massive fireplace, slate tile floors, and a nickel-board-lined coffered ceiling.



modern round ottoman with a more contemporary paint-splatter pattern. In the primary bedroom, a turquoise rug sporting a Central Asian ikat design grounds the bed.

From the outside, however, you’d never know. For Edgartown and other similar historic seaside locales, says Ahearn, “This is really like the prototype for a new ‘old’ house. You can’t tell it from the real old houses. It’s a convincing story.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE:
Patrick Ahearn, Patrick Ahearn Architect

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Karen Bow, Karen Bow Interiors

BUILDER:
John Magnuson, Burnham + Magnuson Builders

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Mike Donaroma, Donaroma’s Nursery, Landscaping + Floral Design

