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MEREDITH SPECIALS

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IT'S A TALE AS  
OLD AS TIME:  
A COUPLE BUILT  
A NEW HOUSE, BUT  
THEY DIDN'T WANT  
IT TO LOOK NEW.  
SO A TALENTED DESIGN  
TEAM BROUGHT IN A  
SENSE OF HISTORY  
WITH A SMATTERING  
OF FAMILY HEIRLOOMS  
AND INSPIRATION  
FROM THE NEARBY  
LANDSCAPE.



# *storied* style

**ABOVE** The design scheme in Susan and Bill Poduska's home is a careful curation of antiques, artwork, custom-made furniture, and elements inspired by the surrounding farmland and ocean. The console table in the entry was crafted by a local artisan to fit this spot just so, and Susan's collection of baskets gathers underneath. She and daughter Lily Flatley, an interior designer, scored the large Italian alabaster lamps on an antiquing trip; the runner is also an antique.

**OPPOSITE** The living room is bright, open, and accommodating, making it a favorite hangout for family and guests alike. It's all thanks to the thoughtful layout and comfy furnishings Lily and interior designer Annsley McAleer chose. Soft blues, sandy tans, and rich woods reflect the watery landscape outside, inviting in a little light and some of that natural beauty.









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**ARCHITECT PATRICK AHEARN HAS AN INTRIGUING APPROACH WITH HIS CLIENTS: HE WRITES NARRATIVES ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT FROM**

their new or remodeled homes, then he designs their houses based on these stories. "I call it scripting," Ahearn explains. "It's a way of getting people, from the very beginning, to think about what the house should be like and feel like."

For Susan and Bill Poduska, who hired the well-known classical architect to build a home on Martha's Vineyard, at least some of the story came easy. From the get-go, they knew they wanted a home that, inside and out, didn't look or feel new. Rather, they envisioned a classic Greek Revival farmhouse—circa 1820s like so many others on the island—that had been enlarged and added onto over the generations. They also wanted a house big enough for children and grandchildren to stay over on holidays and summer vacations, but still cozy and snug when Susan and Bill popped out by themselves for a weekend.

To that end, Ahearn came up with an entire fictional backstory for the home, which was built at the top of a hill with sweeping views of the ocean both north and south. In his script, the home started as a modest farmhouse, and after some years, a secondary wing (with the primary suite) was built. Then came the portion comprising the kitchen,

**ABOVE LEFT** A fortuitous find at a Connecticut antique mall, the bamboo étagère "is just a fun little catchall," McAleer says. "We're all kind of obsessed with that piece!" It is loaded with Susan's collections of pottery and handblown glass bowls from a local studio, Martha's Vineyard Glassworks.

**ABOVE RIGHT** One weekend, Susan and Lily stayed at the Mayflower Inn in Connecticut, where a collection of wall mirrors in one of the rooms stopped them in their tracks. "We started collecting mirrors from that moment on," Lily says, "and one fateful day, with a hammer, I went and installed them on this wall." Clustered above an antique buffet in deep green (a fab find on Chairish), the mirrors make a striking statement.

**OPPOSITE** The dining room features a round pedestal table from Restoration Hardware, freshly upholstered chairs, and a focal-point chandelier from British lighting company Soane. "That light is where they had to push me a little—it looked big," Susan says. "But I absolutely love it. Because it's a basket, it doesn't feel heavy, and when the light is on, it shines through the weave."









Martha's Vineyard hosts an agricultural fair every summer, and Susan has been collecting the commemorative posters for years. After slipping them into identical simple black frames and lining the wall, this humble hallway turns into an art gallery. The wicker bench was a basement treasure ("I'd had that forever," Susan says) and needed only a new cushion and a couple of pillows to be a happy fit here.





**“Even with so many period-appropriate elements, including beaded-board paneling and reproduction hardware, it’s not like a museum.”**

—ARCHITECT PATRICK AHEARN

living room, and dining area. Then the carriage house was added and, last, a garage with a barnlike silhouette. The grand total is a sprawling 8,000 square feet, which somehow feels much more modest. “Those five components of the structure, in theory, were connected over time,” Ahearn says. “At any given moment, you never really see the whole house at once—you see it in pieces and experience it in pieces.”

To furnish and finish the home, Susan tapped two designers from Annsley Interiors: owner Annsley McAleer and Lily Flatley, who is also the couple’s daughter. “Lily got the design gene from my mother, who wasn’t in the business but had wonderful taste,” Susan says. “Nobody knows my taste better than Lily, and it was a great collaboration—and we had a great time doing it.”

To outfit the spacious home, the two designing women found inspiration and various pieces from near and far. Some were very near—on the property itself. “We spent a lot of time on-site taking in what was around,” Lily says. “You can see the ocean from everywhere, and the water is such

**TOP LEFT** The hallway stretches through much of the first floor, starting at the front door and ending in the mudroom. Both doors are painted the same blue-green hue as a nod to the nearby water. The hallway ceiling lights—three of the same brass fixtures in a gleaming row—are a slightly more modern choice. The repetition is one of Lily’s favorite ways to give lighting extra impact. **ABOVE** Slate-look tile flooring, beaded-board wall paneling, and a cushioned bench outfit the mudroom at the back of the house. **ABOVE LEFT** Susan and Bill adore the traditional-style kitchen in their main home in Boston, so they asked architect Patrick Ahearn to build a duplicate in this house. Lily gently objected: “We had to make it feel a little more authentic to this space,” which is less formal. In the end, light fixtures and cabinet hardware are a bit rustic, subway tile appears handmade, and rattan seating has a casual feel.



“If you walked into this house and someone told you it was built two years ago, most people would say, ‘no way!’ It feels way too collected and put-together and comfortable—and that was always the intent.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER ANNSLEY McALEER







a big part of our lives. That's where the color scheme really started." In addition, a few case goods and lamps were tucked in the basement of Susan and Bill's Boston home, including a decades-old butler's table that is now in the living room. "One thing I absolutely loved is that Susan had so many fantastic accessories, art, and furniture she'd collected over the years," McAleer says, "and that's what made the house feel so personal."

Many of the home's accessories, including paintings and baskets, were crafted by locals. "The thought was to create spaces for island artists," says Susan, who is deeply involved in the arts and philanthropy. "I feel really blessed that I started collecting a long time ago, and now I have beautiful spaces to highlight their work."

The collaboration between the couple and the design team yielded a comfortable, welcoming home where guests and family flock throughout the year—and whose story is still being written. "When they say it takes a village, well, it really takes a fabulous team," Susan sums up. "They nailed the design, and I just love it. I walk in the door and say to Bill, 'I'm so happy to be here.'" □

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**OPPOSITE** With its cushioned teak furniture and a brick fireplace, the back patio is as comfortably appointed as the living room—the dual-sided fireplace is shared with that space. Beefy posts and beams are classic architectural elements common to older houses on the island. **ABOVE LEFT** All the guest bedrooms reside on the second floor, and this one is where Lily and her husband, Brian, stay when they're visiting. "I just love that it feels playful but sophisticated," Lily says. The commode belonged to Lily's grandmother, and the chair had been in Lily's bedroom when she was a child—it was re-covered for a fresh outlook. Hand-painted walls are a charming touch. **TOP RIGHT** The powder room is dressed in gorgeous floral wallpaper from Jasper, a mirror Bill bought for Susan years ago, and a custom-built vanity with bamboo accents. "Small spaces are so fun to decorate because you can kind of go wild," Lily says. **ABOVE RIGHT** Like many homes on Martha's Vineyard, this one is built in Greek Revival style.





**ABOVE** The primary suite is the only bedroom on the first floor ("so we can age in place," Susan says), and the rest of the bedrooms are upstairs, giving both the Poduskas and their guests plenty of privacy. For the color scheme, this room basks in celadon green and white, which is especially lovely when sunlight slants through the windows and lends the room a real sense of serenity. **BELOW LEFT** The lamps on the dresser are vintage. Lily had them rewired for this perfect perch; their classic shape pops against the grass-cloth wallcovering. **BELOW RIGHT** The primary bathroom is white, clean-lined, and fresh, with a couple of vintage touches. The alabaster lamp on the vanity belongs to Susan's mother, and the chair dates back even further—to Susan's grandmother. Lily and McAleer had the seat repaired and reupholstered, and it now holds this place of honor.







Just off the den on the first floor is this small bathroom. The wallpaper is another floral from Jasper, and its teal color is repeated in the hexagonal tile floor. "Every detail counts," Lily notes, which is why classic beehive knobs and antique Irish linen towels round out the room.