



A FAMILY AFFAIR

A cherished Cape property carries
on a family legacy.

*Architect Patrick Ahearn Architect / Builder Halliday Builders / Interior Design Leigh Dyer Design
Photography Dan Cutrona / Writer Maddie Brisbane*



Though newly built, this Cape Cod home symbolizes generations of familial ties. Once home to a well-loved summer cottage—the heart of family gatherings for over 50 years—the vast, salt-tinged stretch of land called for a new chapter, but with a dose of familiarity. The design team, comprising Patrick Ahearn Architect, Halliday Builders, and Leigh Dyer Design, had all previously worked on various projects with members of the family.

“This was a passion project for us, and it was a privilege to bring the family’s vision to life,” says Kristen Diotte, General Manager of Halliday Builders. “The clients trusted the process completely, and entrusted us with building their dream home.” While the original structure was much smaller, the plot of land was generously sized, allowing for expansion while adhering to setback limitations. “We really tried to make the most of what was possible on the property,” Diotte notes.

While designed to accommodate multiple generations—and nearly 20 grandchildren—the charming Gambrel-style home nestles neatly into the neighborhood. “We wanted to maintain a real understated sensibility on the front, keeping with the scale of the surrounding cottages,” says Mike Tartamella, Managing Principal at Patrick Ahearn Architect.

Along with the gambrel roofline, the combination of recessed windows, continuity of shingles, an oversized front door, and a stone base grounds the home in classic New England coastal style. Stepping inside, the home’s grandeur unfolds—facing Buzzards Bay, a dramatic composition of four levels is revealed, with expansive decks and balconies designed for effortless indoor-outdoor living.





*"The vision was to create
a home that wouldn't be
timestamped - something
timeless yet current."*
- Kristen Diotte, Halliday Builders



Due to the property's location on a coastal bank, the build presented its own set of challenges. Strategic planning was required to mitigate stormwater impact and ensure environmental sustainability. "Weather is always a factor in a coastal build, but we adapted to every challenge to bring the family's vision to life," says Diotte.

The home's interiors balance classic design details with a clean, coastal feel. "We created a classic exterior that looks like it could have always been there, but when you walk inside, it's fresh and updated," Tartamella describes. Traditional elements such as shiplap, heavy

trims, and reclaimed wood pair with clean lines, v-groove paneling and pickled oak beams, with interior designer Leigh Dyer's curated selections favoring a timeless yet confident approach.

"I want someone to walk into the home 20 years from now, and not feel like it's stuck in a certain era," Dyer says. "It was also important to reflect the clients' personalities, and create a fun environment for multiple generations." A mélange of playful elements, performance fabrics, and unexpected pops of color coalesce with layered textures, soft coastal hues, and sophisticated furnishings.

The kitchen serves as a striking yet harmonious statement, with Calacatta Gold marble countertops and white oak cabinetry anchored by a seamlessly integrated range hood. "The marble is a strong material choice, but it melds beautifully with the cabinetry, the hardware, and the overall style of the home," Dyer explains.

White oak beams unify the open living spaces, balancing warmth with modernity, while black accents provide a grounding contrast. "Every room should have black in it somewhere, even on a beach. It makes the materials—whether it be oak or marble—really pop," the designer adds.

Throughout the home, Dyer played with subtle yet unexpected color infusions. "I personally loved throwing in a tomato red accent here or there. I think it makes the blues shine," she says. The palette, much like the family itself, is dynamic and full of life. Whimsical notes are carried through a curated selection of sea-inspired art work, sourced from a local antique shop on Nantucket, including a teal octopus on the front door and a colorful school of horseshoe crabs in the family room.

A nostalgic element was woven into the living room, where a faithful replica of the original cottage's fireplace stands as a tribute to the past. "The clients wanted to completely duplicate the fireplace from the previous home," shares Dyer. Stones and shells from the original home were also carefully preserved and integrated into the new design, a concept that was extended to the home's exterior. "On a retaining wall leading down to the water, we incorporated the same whimsical mix of stone and seashells," Dyer describes.

The home's flexible spaces reflect its purpose as a retreat for multiple generations, including a custom couch in the family room designed to fit all 18 grandchildren. "The home is designed for everyone to gather without feeling crowded," Diotte notes. The bunk room, designed with performance fabrics and durable materials, embraces a casual, lived-in aesthetic perfect for siblings and cousins. The screened porch, an oasis punctuated by sweeping water views and filled with furnishings fit for family gatherings, is the most popular place in the house.

A labor of love, the project was completed just in time for the family's annual June return to the Cape, marking a seamless transition into their new space. "The homeowners were elated—it was an incredible moment for everyone involved," Diotte reflects. Thoughtfully designed, expertly built, and elegantly appointed, the residence will serve as the backdrop for precious moments spent together, for family and friends of all ages. 🏡

