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DESIGN

NEW ENGLAND

*seaside
romance*



PRISTINE IN ITS new role of restored Americana, this storied Cape Codder has replicated-original trim, shingle patterns, and porch posts, while new stormproof Andersen windows and doors mingle with old casings. The single door at far left opens to a small foyer, then into the large open living room. Behind the center double doors is the dining room, and at right, the single door is nonfunctional. Behind it, in the Gothic cottage turned kitchen, is a farm-style sink.



HISTORIC



COMMISSION

A CAPE COD HOUSE COMBINES THREE CLASSIC NEW ENGLAND ARCHITECTURAL TYPES INTO ONE FINE HOME WRITTEN BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK • PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC ROTH



It would be hard to find a better example of strange architectural bedfellows than the combination of buildings that forms what is one of the most intriguing and attractive houses on Cape Cod. “This is the most unique project I have ever done,” says history buff and period perfectionist Judy Sobolik of Heritage Design in San Mateo, California. “Believe me, it’s not your usual dwelling.”

IN THE DINING ROOM (ABOVE), reproduction raised paneling is painted and glazed a custom shade of blue-green sea foam. The massive dining table made from antique and reclaimed wood is a custom design by Nautique. French doors swing open to the porch. As in the rest of the house, the ceilings here are 6-inch-wide beadboard planks and the floors are antique beech.



WITH THE LOW CEILING removed, the kitchen (ABOVE RIGHT) has a mix of old and new rafters all uniformly stained to look aged. The new countertops are Carrara marble; the hood above the range is a custom design. The farmer's sink looks as if it is in front of an antique rectangular window, which is actually the upper half of the now-blocked door to the wraparound porch.



Lost to history is why two houses and a small commercial building were moved from various parts of Massachusetts's Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard and joined together on a beautiful ocean-side site on the mainland. The seemingly random moving and conjoining began in 1869 when a prefabricated Gothic cottage arrived via barge from the famed Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association, a Methodist Church campground in Oak Bluffs. "Who knows why?" asks Sobolik. "Perhaps it was just surplus." In the ensuing decades, two more structures, one a small store with Gothic touches, the other a traditional two-story New England farmhouse, arrived separately from various locations on the Cape. In the late 1800s, the buildings were connected, the shop sandwiched between the houses. By 1900, the sprawling jigsaw of a



house was an inn for 20 years before being sold as a residence.

Leap ahead to 2008, when the quirky, now deteriorated house was on the market and its space, history, and offbeat qualities proved irresistible to a dynamic San Francisco couple with six children, now ages 12 to 22. Bicoastal living was already something of a routine for them. The husband, a native Cape Codder from a big New England family, had grown up just two miles away. For 15 years or more, the family summered on the Cape, renting different houses, always on the lookout for the right one to buy. Despite its obvious decrepitude, the sagging, weary giant of a house spoke to them, wrinkles, warts, and all. "It would be hard to find anything like this anywhere," says the husband. "With all its different angles and heights, this is very much a Cape Cod house."

To do their prize catch justice, they hired E.J. Jaxtimer,

A HANDMADE MAHOGANY bed is the focal point of the master bedroom (ABOVE), which opens to a small balcony above the wraparound porch. The beach theme is expressed by the striped aqua-and-cream dhurrie rug and the woven-wood shades. The fancifully curved bedside table is a new piece from Nautique. For a nook with a view (FACING PAGE), a slipcovered chaise provides a quiet place to relax.

a well-known custom builder in Hyannis, Massachusetts, and Sobolik, whose job it was to research and design historically accurate millwork and paneling, as well as determine the new layout. "E.J.'s work and crews are legendary, and Judy had already worked on our house in the Bay Area, so we knew we had the best possible talent," says the wife, who also worked with Marsha Malone of Nautique, a home furnishings company and interior design store in Brewster, Massachusetts, which supplied much of the furnishings.

To renovate the approximately 5,500-square-foot house, Jaxtimer, who says working on the project "was a once-in-a-lifetime privilege," had to coordinate with local historic commissions before any building could begin, a process that took 15 months. Next, each of the original three sections had to be jacked up and rolled out of the way so his team could excavate for a new poured-concrete foundation. The old shop was so far gone, it had to be rebuilt before the house could be reassembled on the new foundation, which now accommodates a large media room and sleeping spaces. A new two-car garage and generous mudroom with a bunk room above were also added.

The exterior is now a spruced-up and healthy replica of the original. Inside, it feels as though crisp ocean breezes have





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blown through to eliminate the original jumble of little rooms in favor of fresh open spaces. Among the most striking new elements is the custom lighting, all handmade by Eloise Pickard, whose business, Sandy Springs Gallery, is just outside Atlanta in Adairsville, Georgia. She specializes in “the period when gas became electric,” and according to Sobolik, “she’s an American gem who came to see the house first, then returned to oversee the lighting installation.”

Another of Sobolik’s bold moves was to turn the entire Gothic cottage into one big kitchen. She took down the original 7-foot-6-inch ceiling to expose a soaring 15-foot-high peak. “It’s essential to have a great kitchen with so many kids and guests,” says Sobolik. “The 5-foot range with two griddles can turn out tons of pancakes.” Next to the kitchen, the old shop now con-

tains the dining room, den, and a guest bedroom suite. In the old farmhouse, the new 25-by-25-foot living room has multiple seating groupings, a game table, fireplace, and long side-by-side sofas facing the ocean. “A very congenial room,” says Sobolik. “Almost like an inn.”

Leonards New England in Seekonk, Massachusetts, was the source for the beautiful handmade beds for the master bedroom and two guest rooms. In California, Jessica Sobolik, Judy’s daughter and partner in the firm, sourced plumbing fixtures, fabrics, porch furniture, tile, hardware, and dozens of paint colors.

Last summer, two weeks after arriving, the family hosted a dual bridal shower for two cousins who were each about to get married. Thirty-five houseguests filled every corner, sleeping everywhere — on the wraparound porches as well as in the bunk room and bedrooms. “Kids particularly love to sleep on the porch,” says Sobolik. “These owners love to fill the house with family and friends.”

“It’s our one-of-a-kind dream home,” says the husband. “We reconnect here with old friends and hold family reunions. Every year when we arrive, it feels like coming home. Best of all, the kids love it even more than we do.” ■

SIDE-BY-SIDE sofas and spool chairs slipcovered in turquoise fabric (ABOVE), all from Nautique, form a cozy grouping in the living room. (FACING PAGE) 1. Barn-style sliding doors fitted with special hardware. 2. Coral at the windows and on beds enliven a guest bedroom. 3. The girls’ bathroom has double sinks. 4. Built-in drawers and closets line the hallway to the bunk room. 5. The butler’s pantry has gray-painted cupboards with green accents. 6. The new mudroom addition. 7. The den, seen from the adjacent dining room, has an inviting coral sofa.

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