

# New England HOME

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## INSIDE & OUT

Inspiring Interiors, Glorious Gardens



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The dining room's custom built-ins have Niobe Beige marble countertops that double as serving surfaces. The Keith Fritz table, Sunbrella-upholstered chairs, and an Urban Electric Co. chandelier emphasize a circular motif. **FACING PAGE:** The entry's bi-directional shiplap and custom newels deliver pared-down detailing that riffs on traditional vernacular.



# BLUE HEAVEN

Watery hues define a wee end retreat on the Rhode Island coast that's all family, no fuss.

TEXT BY MEAGHAN O'NEILL

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For ample seating in the living room while keeping the space airy, designer Patti Watson brought in ottomans that tuck under the coffee table and portable benches in playful blue and yellow. A photograph by Newport, Rhode Island, photographer Onne van der Wal hides the television above the fireplace.





The Calacatta Bluette marble that tops the kitchen's double islands informed the palette in the room and just beyond, while mixed-metallic finishes heighten the drama. The client also "thought through every daily ritual," says Watson, which helped define realistic storage that results in a calm, clutter-free space.

In the late 1880s, the village of Quonochontaug—"Quonnie" to locals—became a popular resort for its beautiful beaches and relaxed atmosphere. Today, its vintage charm remains. "It's an old-fashioned summer community," says Courtenay Berckemeyer, a seasonal resident. When she and her husband, Ricardo, discovered the Charlestown, Rhode Island,

neighborhood more than a decade ago, they knew they'd found their perfect summer spot. But as their family of six grew—their four kids are now aged twenty-three to fifteen—so did their needs. When a generous corner lot came on the market, they traded in their starter beach house for the opportunity to build from the ground up.

Architect George Penniman's first challenge was to develop a structure that would maximize the lot and take advantage of natural light and views. The solution was an L-shaped building with varying roof lines and dormers that break up the exterior masses, "making it feel more cottage-like," Penniman says. With architectural plans and a trusted builder, Randy Gardner of Gardner Woodwrights, in place, the group tackled the next obstacle: strict local regulations stipulated that no construction could take place during summer months, leaving less than a year to build the 5,400-square-foot residence.



The sunroom's V-groove ceiling and slate tile floor evoke a classic beach house vibe. Wedge ottomans under the coffee table provide extra seating. **FACING PAGE:** The breakfast nook's table by Lorimer Studios is where the family takes most meals. Artwork by Christian Potter Drury adds a color pop.







A television hides in the master bed's footboard; a wire-and-glass tapestry by artist Susan Freda was commissioned for the room. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** A lacquered mirror and tasseled lamp hang in a playful powder room. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** Luxurious details in the master bath include a mosaic stone backsplash and grasscloth-clad cabinetry.

*THE HOMEOWNER SURPRISED HERSELF BY GRAVITATING AWAY FROM THE WARMER COLORS SHE'S TYPICALLY DRAWN TO AND TOWARD A COOLER PALETTE THAT EMPHASIZES SHADES OF BLUE.*



After framing was completed in the fall, interior designer Patti Watson, principal and owner of Taste, joined the team, just before electricians, plumbers, and other trade specialists arrived. "We were hired in the nick of time," says Watson, who worked fast to develop plans to "amp up the personalization" that would fulfill the Berckmeyers' dream vacation home without creating construction delays.

Since programming for the five-bedroom house revolves around its gathering spaces, the double-island kitchen and breakfast nook, living room, and patio are aligned and define with arched doorways that keep them open yet cozy. Among the family's favorite spots is a breezy sunroom that feels as if it was once a porch that's been enclosed. Says Catherine Young, associate architect at Penniman, "It helps make it look like a house that evolved over time."

"It's such a quiet, comfortable room," says Berckmeyer, who emerged victorious in the playful battle with her family to keep a television out of the space. "I haven't heard anyone complain yet!"





Berckemeyer surprised herself by gravitating away from the warmer colors she's typically drawn to and toward a cooler palette. The combination of blues and teals used throughout paved the way for more contemporary and mixed-metallic finishes, explain Watson. Further details, such as a porthole-style window between kitchen and sunroom, built-in cabinetry with a circular motif, and orb-shaped lighting also "tie spaces together to bring a story to the house," the designer says.

While the home's thoughtful layout and decor are stunning, it may be the

main stairway's newel—the gratifying result of a collaboration between the interior and architectural teams—that best sums up the project. "It's historically grounded in the New England vernacular, but clean and well edited," says Watson.

Traditional but pared down, it symbolizes the elegant but unfussy flow of the family-friendly home. "The house just sings," says Berckemeyer of her family's retreat. "It all carries from one room to the next."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For details about this home, see *Resources*.

**ARCHITECTURE:**

George Penniman and Catherine Young, Penniman Architects

**INTERIOR DESIGN:**

Patti Watson and Wendi Dickey-Scalora, Taste

**BUILDER:**

Randy Gardner, Gardner Woodwrights

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:**

Anne Penniman Associates



On the back patio, a Santa Barbara umbrella provides shade for a dining area with seating for up to ten. Landscape architect Anne Penniman also carved out spaces for lounging and sunning as well as an outdoor kitchen. **FACING PAGE:** A bluestone-topped fireplace complements the patio pavers and cozies up a seating area.