

# *Guest House Revival*

Steps from their main house, a Chatham family restores an antique home in the old village to welcome guests in style.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK





**W**hen Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders (PSD) and Washashore Home Interior Design were hired to bring an antique house in the center of Chatham back to life, their familiarity with the homeowners ensured that a nice working relationship and a level of trust would support the project at hand. Both parties had worked with the client previously on the renovation of their summer home overlooking Lighthouse Beach, just a two-minute walk from the in-town site. Since the main house had no room to expand and limited parking, the second home was to be refurbished for use as a guest house.

“We love the old village,” say the owners, who have been coming to Chatham as a family for more than 20 years. “This house had wonderful curb appeal to begin with, but we saw the opportunity to really clean up the exterior and to modernize the interior.”

(Left) A look that’s sophisticated, yet light, bright, and cheerful, characterizes the interiors, even in a bedroom corner. (Below) A combination of small windows within solid walls and bands of windows makes for a historic house that still has great natural light. Oil seascape by Mary Nolan.



The kitchen, designed by Classic Kitchens & Interiors, is coastal New England style with soft tones and natural oak accents. A structural beam is wrapped with wood from the original house—it serves as a design feature and a tangible link to the home’s history.



### ***Breathing new life into history***

Situated on a winding gravel road, the 1790s shingled Cape required a gut renovation and the removal of an unattractive, old back addition, which was replaced with a better-looking, functional one that gives the house a one-car garage and a back entry into a mudroom that leads to the kitchen.

“It is essentially a new house within a historic shell,” says John DaSilva, PSD’s lead architect on the project. “The existing interior did not have any 18th-century character; it was a very basic house that was not particularly livable by today’s terms.” PSD served as architects, landscape architects and builders.

To fit in with the beautiful old homes surrounding it and stay within the Historic District parameters the Cape-style portion and the central fireplace, which harken back to the 1790s, were kept, while the front entry porch and the two wings with balconies above were restored to the character of the early to mid-20th century. All new windows were installed, but they are the same size and configuration and in the same location as the originals.

The innovative use of arches in the back portion of the house is the only exterior detail that breaks with tradition. “The arches have a little bit more of a contemporary feeling, but they fit with the house and call out the mudroom entry as something different,” says DaSilva.

**Modern comforts with a classic touch**

Inside is a whole different story. With the original interior layout largely reused by PSD, Sarah Waldo and Peyton Lambton of Washashore Home Interior Design had a blank slate to work with. “It’s a really lovely way to be involved in a project and make the selections with the whole house in mind,” says Waldo, explaining that Washashore addressed everything from tile and plumbing fixtures to cabinetry and flooring. “In that way, we were able to deliver a really cohesive design.”

Waldo says that the homeowners’ primary goal was to have the guest house be an extension of their primary home. “They wanted it to be really welcoming, warm and unfussy, and to express the essence of easy vacation living.” The homeowners are particularly fond of the open-plan living, dining and kitchen area, which invites casual mingling from dawn to dusk. Part of this space was once a sunroom, and its distinctive wraparound windows now allow sunlight to flood the entire first floor.



Simple yet robust architectural details combine with cheerful furnishings and finishes.



(Above and bottom right) The traditional full Cape Cod Cottage with center entry and chimney are reflected at the interior but with a more contemporary feeling. Painting above the fireplace by Lauren DiFerdinando, The Nines Art Gallery. (Bottom left) The first-floor bedroom is cozy but still accommodates a king-size bed.



One of the bathrooms is an elegant and accommodating retreat within the retreat.



(Above) Careful planning allows for multiple guests in modest space. (Left) The powder room vanity is styled after an antique dresser one might find in an Old Village house. Lobster wallpaper by Sara Fitz.



While 21st-century convenience was critical, equally important was “giving a nod to the age of the original home,” says Waldo. To that end, selections balance new with vintage. For example, the powder room has wallpaper with a jaunty red lobster motif, but the whimsicality is kept in check by the floor of reclaimed brick that has some age and variation, the antique look of a replica wooden vanity, and plumbing and lighting fixtures that are not too modern looking.

What Waldo calls “a classic New England vibe” that’s reflected in the distressed wood of the dining table and a primary bedroom bureau is also expressed by the rustic-looking 9.5-inch-wide engineered European white oak flooring and a structural beam in the kitchen wrapped with wood from the original house. And an aura of nostalgia is conjured in the upstairs bunkroom inspired by “the original Cape cottages that have exposed wood walls,” says Waldo. “This is a sleek version of that, but it still has a sleepaway camp feeling.”

### **Built for future generations**

The house was lifted to create the finished basement, where a rec room, like the bunkroom, is a space dedicated to a gaggle of nieces and nephews (and eventually grandchildren) whose post-beach activities might include watching movies or playing foosball together. Its high ceilings and smart yet comfy couches keep it from feeling like a basement, as does the use of bright colors from a fun beach painting by local artist Bethany Harper Williams. Other locally rooted art in the home includes an oil seascape by Mary Nolan, a Lauren DiFerdinando (The Nines Gallery) painting above the fireplace and framed photographs by Ashley Bilodeau.

### **RESOURCES**

Architect, Builder and Landscape Architect  
**Polhemus Savery DaSilva (PSD)**  
*psdab.com*

Interior Designer  
**Washashore Home Interior Design**  
*washashorehome.com*

Kitchen Designer  
**Classic Kitchens & Interiors**  
*ckicapecod.com*

Calling it “the perfect beach house,” the homeowners say they get compliments on the house itself and the interior design all the time.

“It’s gratifying to bring a place like this back to life,” says DaSilva. “The opportunities to be creative are different than they are with a brand-new house, but a house like this deserves to serve the next generation.” ▲



The innovative use of arches in the back portion of the house add a contemporary touch, highlighting the mudroom entry while blending seamlessly with the home’s traditional design. Below, a brick-clad light well brightens the basement playroom with full-sized windows. Beach painting by local artist Bethany Harper Williams.



# CLASSIC KITCHENS & INTERIORS