

NEXT LEVEL

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A long-loved retreat perched atop a bluff overlooking the Oyster River, Hardings Beach and beyond to Nantucket Sound gives way to a new home that balances cottage charm with expansive views.



Above: With its traditional cottage facade and back open to the water, the house, says architect Sharon DaSilva, “has a split personality.”
Below: The mudroom porch’s cedar v-groove board cladding creates a small exterior room with a view.

Edged by salt marshes, tidal flats and low dunes, this bluff soaring above the Oyster River offers a serene counterpoint to Chatham’s bustling harbors. Still, the waterway hums with life: quahog boats, charter fishing vessels, pleasure craft and kayaks crisscross the water, providing a constantly shifting tableau. Nearby residents—living in a mix of historic cottages and substantial waterfront estates—take quiet pleasure in watching the activity unfold.

One family had long enjoyed a quintessential Cape Cod vacation home on this site, using it primarily during the summer months. “The house was smaller, older, and had some of that storied Cape Cod character, but it really didn’t take advantage of the views,” says Sharon DaSilva, senior designer at Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders (PSD). That realization became the catalyst for tearing down the original structure and starting anew. “The family wanted it to look like a cottage on the front but live like a year-round house and take advantage of the views facing the water.”

Clad in white cedar shingles with crisp white trim and double-hung windows accented by dark blue shutters, the



Always on the menu is this delicious view of the Oyster River.



Using wood for the island and tray ceiling adds warmth to the kitchen's neutral palette.

four-bedroom, four-bathroom home presents a familiar, traditional façade from the street. The surprise comes at the back, where the house opens fully to the water views. Here, “it’s all about windows and doors and glass,” says DaSilva. “It’s definitely a house with a split personality, but it does what we intended.”

From the moment you step inside, the views run straight through the front door. All of the primary first-floor spaces—living room, dining room and kitchen—are oriented toward the water, as are the second-floor bedrooms along the back of the house. One especially inviting spot is a cozy nook just off the kitchen, furnished with two comfortable chairs. It’s an ideal perch for lingering over morning coffee while gazing out to the water.

Given the setting, it’s no surprise that blues and greens form the foundation of the interior palette. “Because the

view is so stunning, we wanted to play off the exterior elements,” says Elizabeth Thayer, senior interior designer at Carolyn Thayer Interiors. “The client really liked blue, and she definitely leaned a little traditional, which was perfect in this coastal environment.”

Those hues also help the home transition gracefully through all four seasons. “While it needed to feel coastal, it also needed to feel warm enough to carry through the winter,” says Thayer. In the living room, that balance is struck with a fieldstone fireplace—an element discussed early on with PSD and the homeowners. “They have a big family, and they enjoy spending time with each other,” Thayer adds. “One thing they like to do is sit on the raised hearth” when they gather for holidays or relaxed family conversations. The home succeeds in the artful blending of traditional architecture and all season comfort on the water’s edge.

The kitchen serves as another central hub for daily life. Light-filled and inviting, it shares the living room’s year-round sensibility but leans more heavily on warm neutrals and browns—a palette Thayer says repeats throughout the house. An unexpected wood tray ceiling above the island reinforces those earthy tones and brings the space together. At the center, a striking two-inch-thick slab of leathered White Rhino marble tops the island. “The marble took a while to find but ended up being just what the homeowners were looking for,” notes Thayer, also sharing that the kitchen hardware is a mix of nickel and brass, while oil-rubbed bronze was selected for much of the remainder of first-floor hardware, such as door handles.

Kitchen designer Becky Brown of Classic Kitchens & Interiors collaborated closely with the team and the homeowners on both layout and details. “The kitchen and adjacent pantry spaces were designed to support relaxed, everyday living as well as gatherings,” says Brown, who also designed the bathroom vanities, which her team installed.

Mixing blue-based fabric and rug patterns is appropriate for this coastal living room, as is the marine-inspired art installation from Steve Swain of Frying Pan Gallery, right.





One of three guest bedrooms on the second floor, this one comes complete with a picture-postcard view, which is also the focal point of the primary bathroom.

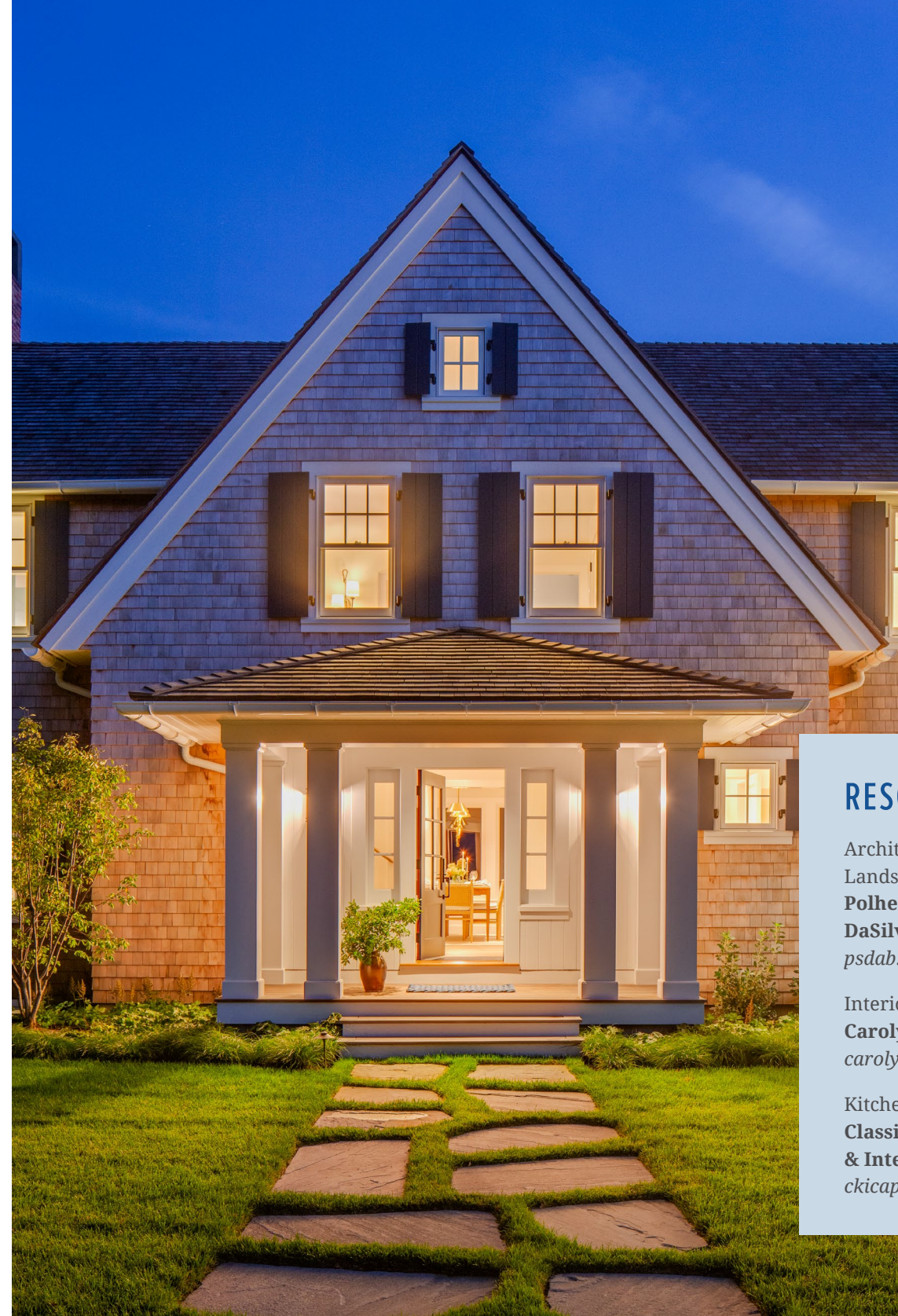
While the living, dining and kitchen areas aren't fully open concept, they connect seamlessly through large cased openings. To ensure visual continuity, "the homeowners requested white perimeter cabinetry in a simple inset style, and the island and pantry cabinets have a light finish on walnut," Brown explains. The walnut finish complements the flooring and the coffered ceiling's wood insert, adding a subtle elegance through the furniture-toe surround detail.

Functionality was just as important as aesthetics. The kitchen includes a hideaway pocket-door cabinet housing the coffee maker and toaster, along with a full suite of high-end appliances: a 42-inch French-door refrigerator/freezer, an induction cooktop with wall ovens, a microwave drawer, a dishwasher, and refrigerator drawers tucked neatly into the island.

All four bedrooms are upstairs, including a spacious primary suite with a bath that balances simplicity with quiet luxury. The room features a curbless shower



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A welcoming, front-gabled porch entry supported by square columns ushers visitors into the home, where they are then met by an arresting view of the Oyster River.

RESOURCES

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

Interior Designer:
Carolyn Thayer Interiors
carolynthayerinteriors.com

Kitchen Designer:
Classic Kitchens & Interiors
ckicapecod.com

with a floating stone bench. Thayer paid particular attention to the shower's detailing, noting that its clean, streamlined design sets the tone for the entire room and is especially well expressed in the gray border. "The border accentuates the long space that carries through from the view wall all the way back into the shower," she says. "It is a sleek design."

The homeowners lived happily in the original house for several years, always knowing that one day they would replace it—not with a modern statement, but with a home that reflected their traditional sensibilities and felt at ease in the neighborhood. They achieved exactly that. The magnificent views were there before, and they will be theirs for years to come. ▲