

THE BAYS OF Burton Staniar's barn/guesthouse face the harbor so he can see the water as he tinkers with his vintage cars. The garage is equipped with a hydraulic lift so he can easily work on vehicles from underneath. Upstairs, a large window in the living room of the guest apartment allows for a panoramic view.



## No Mini-Me

**In the finest New England tradition, when the big house needed a barn, the result was sympathetic in style yet designed to do its own thing**

WRITTEN BY LARRY LINDNER • PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK

**Y**es, the 7,000-square-foot, four-bedroom summer home that Burton and Nancy Staniar built at water's edge in Chatham, Massachusetts, certainly seemed big enough at the time (*Design New England*, July/August 2011, "Perfect Setting"). But that was before the grandchildren kept coming; they are up to nine, and counting. "We joke that we sort of miscalculated when we built the home," says Burton.

Thus their decision to build a two-bedroom guesthouse — that would also house a car barn for Burton's collection of vintage cars. They again called on John DaSilva of Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders, which has offices in Chatham, East Harwich, and Osterville, Massachusetts, the architect who designed the main house. "We loved their work," says Burton, who asked that the new building be "in the same style, with even the same type of shingles and peaks and all." Much effort went into siting the second edifice on the Staniar's





THE WIDE GABLES, cedar roof, and rafter tails of the main house (ABOVE) served as a template for the details of the guesthouse facade. The guesthouse kitchen (FAR LEFT) is a happy mix of beadboard-faced cabinets and Knoll chairs grouped around a simple farm table. A large window (LEFT) provides a leafy view.

10-plus acres. Like the main house, it had to allow for expansive views of Stage Harbor, looking south toward Nantucket Sound — even from the car barn on the first floor. Burton, who is chairman and former CEO of Knoll, manufacturers of iconic Modern furniture, wanted to “open the garage doors, work on his cars, and see the view,” says DaSilva.

The clients didn’t want the guesthouse to overwhelm the site, a design goal DaSilva accomplished by nestling the structure into an

existing hillside so that only the top floor is visible as guests approach from the 500-foot-long driveway.

DaSilva and the Staniers also worked carefully with landscape architect David Hawk of Hawk Design in Boston and Orleans, Massachusetts, deciding which trees to leave or take out and where to plant new ones to create a peekaboo view of the building from the main house, which is a short distance away.



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At first glance, the guesthouse is a close take on the shingled main house, with its wide gables, cedar roof, and exposed rafter tails, but details such as the huge brackets announcing the front door and the oversize windows make the structure, at 2,200 square feet, seem “more cottagey,” says DaSilva. “It’s a perception issue.” Making these elements larger “confounds your sense of scale,” he says. It makes the building appear smaller than it actually is, creating a balance between it and the main house and ensuring it doesn’t call undue attention to itself. At the same time, says DaSilva, such gestures make the guesthouse “different and unexpected without being outrageous and radical.”

Inside, the guest apartment is a surprising hybrid of traditional and contemporary design that is crisp yet warm and inviting. “I very much like this kind of eclecticism,” says DaSilva. “I have no interest in slavish re-creation. I’m much more interested in a living,



SUNLIGHT STREAMS IN through the living-room windows, with the cool blues and greens of the sky, water, and trees outside making a vibrant contrast to the earth tones of the decor. An eclectic mix of contemporary furnishings such as the classic orange Knoll womb chair and traditional pieces such as the antique drop-leaf table and Shaker-style built-in cupboard invigorate the space.



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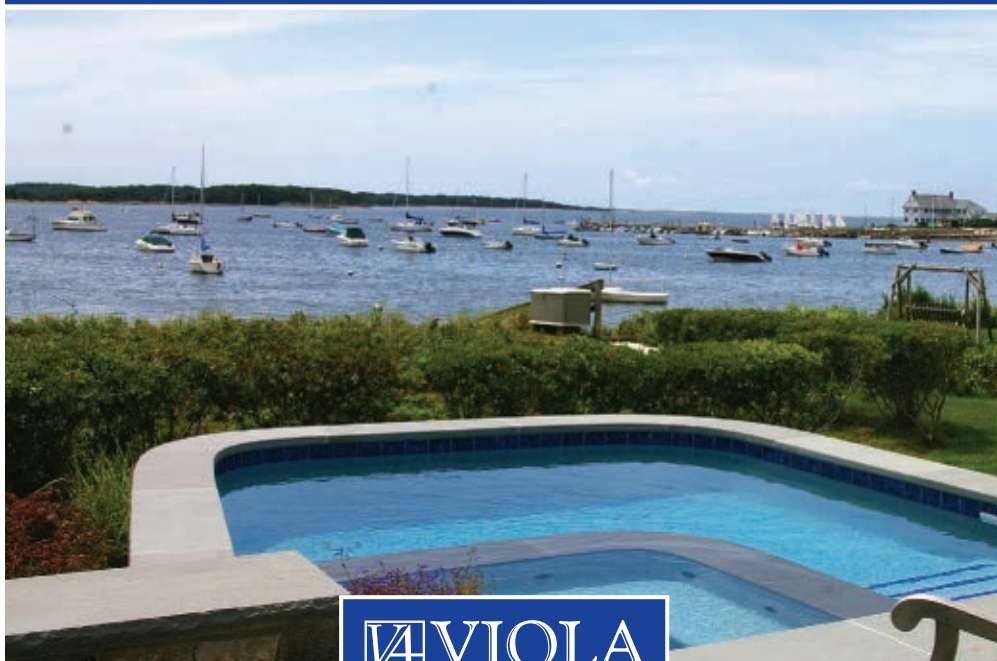
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traditional architecture that accommodates contemporary needs and tastes. And not just accommodates them but also celebrates them.”

That approach is simpatico with Nancy Staniar’s design sensibilities. A professional interior designer, she furnished the living room with a classic Midcentury Modern Knoll womb chair in orange, a neutral transitional sofa, and a vintage drop-leaf side table. A stack of antique Shaker boxes coexist with contemporary paintings by Cape Cod artists Chet Jones and Robert Brooks.





THE HUGE BRACKETS announcing the building's front door (ABOVE AND FACING PAGE, TOP) give the perception that the building is smaller than it is. Using such oversize elements "confounds your sense of scale," says architect John DaSilva. The large windowpanes have the same effect, making the 2,200-square-foot garage and guesthouse look more like a small cottage. "If we had three smaller windows" upstairs instead of one large one, says DaSilva, "it would feel like a bigger building." Details such as the curved wall under the eave (FACING PAGE, BOTTOM) and the alternating courses of large and small shingles elevate the building to classic status.

"We don't plan things with lofty goals," Nancy says, referring to her mix of traditional and contemporary. "We just wanted things to be simple and comfortable, relaxing." She adds: "Sticking with one style becomes less interesting than mixing. When you put a Knoll chair and a rocker together, they have a more interesting conversation with each other than possibly two Knoll chairs would."

And, says Burton, "I think it's more fun."

Fun, of course, is the name of the game. It's a summer place, after all. ■

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