

# Hen House

by Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders

By Haley Cote • Photography by Brian Vanden Brink



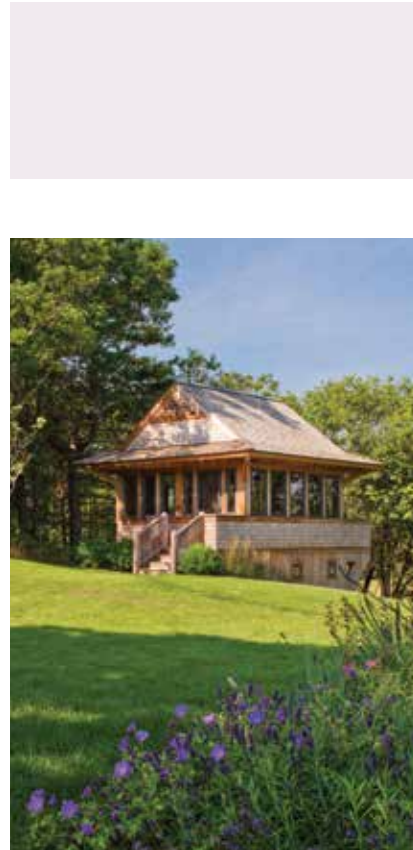
Providing all of the comforts of home within just 450 square feet for a family of four is a true coup. Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders (PSD) made such a challenge fun in the playful yet well-appointed design of the Hen House, a guest cottage sited atop a hill overlooking a coastal bank in Chatham. While its tongue-and-cheek moniker certainly hints at the nature of its design, the Hen House offers an even greater sense of character than its name implies.

John DaSilva, design principal of PSD, says the guest house was conceptualized to prompt multiple interpretations. From the front, it can be seen as an Asian tea house, with its pitched roof and the traditional Japanese



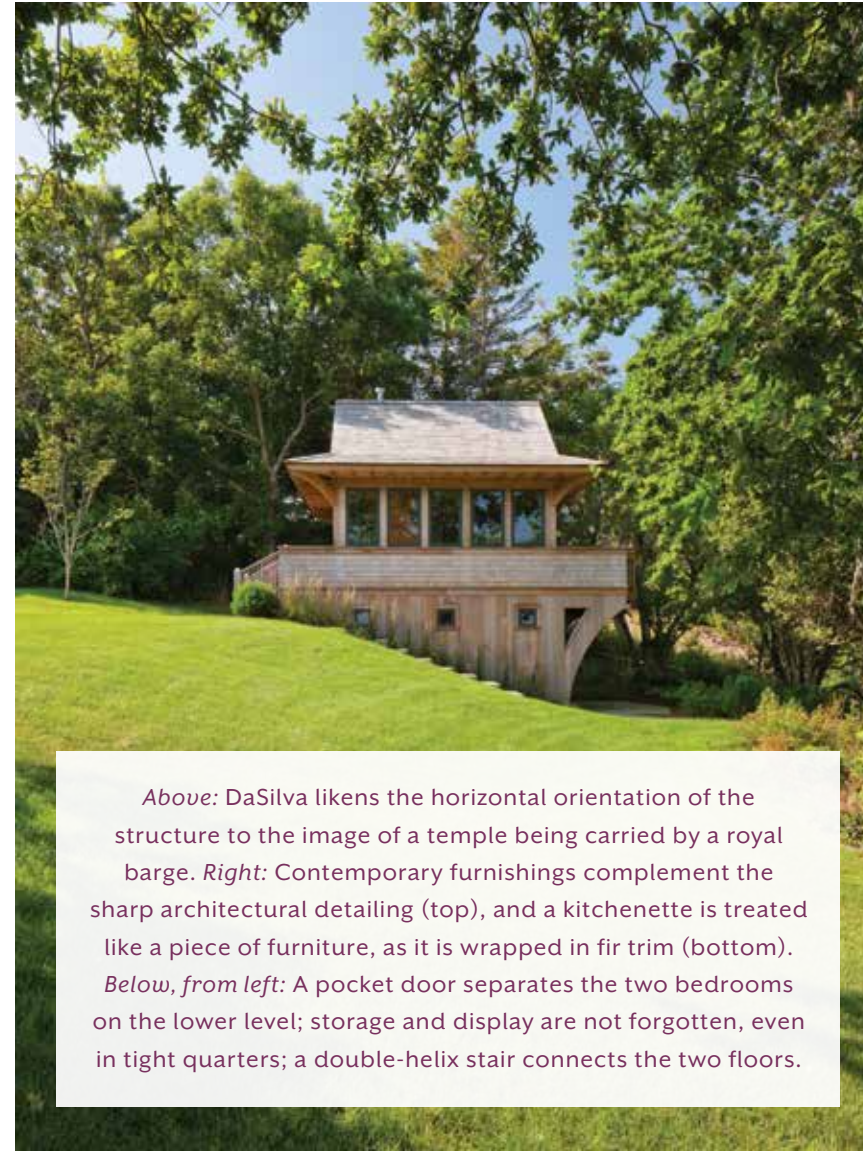
tatami mat pattern of the entry porch handrails, or a New England summer camp cabin, with its cedar-clad exterior and roof overhang with exposed rafter tails. From a side view, the horizontal orientation resembles a tugboat, with an overhanging barge-like deck that directs one's attention toward the coastal bank. Looking up from down the hill, the surrounding forestation gives it the feeling of being a tree house.

"Even though it's small, it's emphatic with its presence," DaSilva says. "It implies scale and presence beyond its very limited square footage."



Inside, bedrooms and living areas are designed like the interior of a boat, with tight yet accommodating spaces that utilize built-in cubbies for storage. DaSilva says the interior, finished in a vertical-grain Douglas fir, can also be read as a jewel box, "a place where you put special things—in this case, people."

Haley Cote is the assistant editor for *Cape Cod Life Publications*.



Above: DaSilva likens the horizontal orientation of the structure to the image of a temple being carried by a royal barge. Right: Contemporary furnishings complement the sharp architectural detailing (top), and a kitchenette is treated like a piece of furniture, as it is wrapped in fir trim (bottom). Below, from left: A pocket door separates the two bedrooms on the lower level; storage and display are not forgotten, even in tight quarters; a double-helix stair connects the two floors.

