



imagination captured

TURNING ONE COUPLE'S DREAM OF A SEASIDE CAPE COD HOME INTO REALITY

BY KATE BEVELOOK • PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK

Completed recently by Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders, this home features many captivating details including a tower, classic shingles, endless windows and water views on two sides.

"We strive for timeless work...of our own age but beloved by any."

JOHN DADIVA
DESIGNER/OWNER

CAPE COD HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PLACE that evokes feelings that reside deep in the imagination. Many of these feelings are sensory: the long of salt spray in the air, the sound of the ocean gently lapping on a calm day, and the deep blue of a clear sky meeting the silver blue of the sea. Others come from more-made traditions: a summer vacation involving a family from the fathers of work and school, long days at the beach and simple evening meals of fresh corn and a few lobsters thrown in a pot, special time spent with grandparents and creating memories about with them. All these elements come together around a seaside cottage, which holds a desire of both heart and mind to experience nature by the ocean in a comfortable, relaxed and sociable way.

"Almost a child's relationship to a house—charming, whimsical and toward a second home," says John Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders (PSD). "You hold an image of it in your mind and you long for it, you want to live there right? You dream about it."



A seaside home yearned for in the imagination is what the firm set out to design for a property called Cabot's Corner in Chatham.

The home avoided to evoke that subtle, dreamy quality while giving a real family the space, light and functionality of a new home. Cabot's Corner is tucked into an enclave of charming homes, some old and some new, atop a modest knoll with lively views of the water on two sides.

Defining the elements of this dream place, and then turning the dream into reality, was the task PSD took on as architect and builder for the project, which was completed in 2013. Dadiva led design principal, working alongside his wife, Sharon Dadiva, the firm's interior designer.



A classic-shingle-style house

The first major design decision was to use the classic shingle style most reminiscent of late 19th-century New England seaside living.

John Dadiva says the shingle style popular of the late 19th century (circa 1850-1910) is the true study of American architecture. He says that all buildings constructed previously used designs and methods adapted from Europe. Prominent architects of the day took classic American colonial designs and reinterpreted them with eclectic influences from the English Arts and Crafts movement or French Norman castles. "One key characteristic is that the houses were tucked in color shingles, which are wrapped in the design and structure is a unified whole," Dadiva says. "The result was both minimalist and maximalist."

"The house's gambrel roof—an umbrella gambrel in this case, with a third dormer at the same level—was just important to the shingle-style cottage feel, but it also maintains second-floor headroom," he permits more headroom in the second floor within the same height," says Dadiva. "It also has a more genteel appearance than a straight gable roof." On the front side, the gambrel above the entrance porch and tower on the back one can



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clearly use the full gambrel instead. Generous dormers punctuate the gambrel roof on both sides, allowing for larger bedrooms, more light, and more views to the ocean.

The design diverges from tradition in a few key areas. The original seaside retreat had steep stairs and many porches to provide relief from summer's heat in an era before air conditioning. Today, views and light are much more important to homeowners. "Traditional shingle-style homes were more inward-

focused," Dadiva says. "Their interiors were darker." The house retains the charm of the style, including a porch and steep roof overhangs, but it is updated with large and abundant windows for an outward focus on the views.

Indeed, the owners of Cabot's Corner—a couple with three young children—were drawn to this design because it was bright, and the open floor plan made it great for entertaining. "We never open the doors to the patio, and people go

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in and out," the homeowner says. "There are great smells coming from the grill and kids racing around in circles. It is a family-friendly place, a kid-friendly place, a great place to have people over."

In addition, many traditional shingle-style houses resemble, but have PSD was working with a compact site, so the design needed to evolve rather than copy the genre. For example, the entry door and porch needed to be minimal in footprint, but large in impact. "The result was an unexpected interpretation of a traditional shingle-style porch, which still gives you a sense of a porch, but adds character but in a minimal space," Dadiva says of the straightforward porch opening at the front door. Such attention to detail and charm distinguishes the entryway by announcing its presence and creating a welcoming feeling.

A final touch on the front facade, which adds to the happy, dreamy cottage appearance, is the tall shutters. "They are, like the house as a whole, a blend of coastal architecture but not over-the-top," Dadiva says. "Just enough to put that image in your mind, but not so much as to block it out."

Sunny disposition

The second major element of the house's design involved maximum attention to how natural daylight plays on the site. The house is oriented to the southeast, so that light pours through the home from front to back. The kitchen is open to the living area to capture that good southern light that also opens to the east and west for daytime sun. "In the dining room the morning sun is beautiful," the homeowner says. "After breakfast we like to sit there and do puzzles because everything is so much clearer, the colors are brighter. It is such a happy place to be."

Unexpected touches, such as small side windows on the dormers, enhance the cottage charm, but also extend the length of time the rooms get sun. "These windows expand the time the room gets direct light, make the rooms feel bigger and brighter, plus reduce glare," Dadiva explains. "Light from one direction can feel harsh. Mixed light from the west, east and south provides warmer, gentler light all day."

Ocean breezes and views

Since the house is on a corner lot with its best water views off one corner, the occupant owner was the perfect choice to add shingle-style



charm and best capture views and breezes. The lower level of the tower is an open porch with outdoor seating, and the upper level is incorporated into the master bedroom as a sitting area featuring the most dramatic views on the site.

Asked how the family uses the occasional porch, the homeowner laughs. "We tend to get to it in late afternoon on the porch," she says. "The kids range from toddlers on up, and food goes everywhere. But we can generally have the place down, so we're. Plus the animals are so lovely here."

The homeowner calls the view from the master bedroom magical. "Every night we close the blinds to keep out early light, and when we get up and open them, it's like, 'Wow!'" From there we can see the fireworks on the Fourth of July, and we can watch the storms come in over the water."

The garden area and terrace are on the side of the house that faces the ocean. On the street side the features are nicely protected by a berm with mature plantings, but



they still have full views through the southern corner toward the water. French doors amplify the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, and a round window adds a rounded touch.

The choice of windows enhances a very deliberate cottage look. Windows composed of four panes of glass divided by ornate muntins like the narrow strips that divide each pane of glass in a traditional south allow for open views but maintain the character of traditional multi-pane windows. "The thoughtfulness of the muntins elevates your expectations of style," Dadiva says. "Overcast muntins make the house look smaller. Looking at the house from the road, you don't expect the house to be that big."

Cottage informality

With the emphasis on capturing water views and sunlight, the house's interior spaces are warmer with subtle, natural touches. Fabrics and finishes are natural to meet subtle white still being in the sense of place. This work, such

as the v-groove paneling in the living room, continues the informal cottage theme, while providing interest and detail.

happiness—pure relaxation. I grew up in North Carolina, so this was new to me, the concept of summers on Cape Cod, but I see now that for us, for our kids, having that truly special."

Dadiva says that the goal for every project the firm takes on, "We try to shape the architecture to tap into that feeling, to create something that is an unexpected image of a New England seaside cottage. People who live there don't see that kind of relationship with it," he says. "We strive for timeless work of our own age but beloved by any."

A resident of East Sandwich, where she lives with her husband and three children, Kate Bevelook is a freelance writer and a former executive director of the Sandwich Chamber of Commerce.

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