

HIGH PROFILE

Polhemus Savery DaSilva delivers a singular house for a singular spot in the heart of Chatham.

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This PSD-designed and -built home greets Chatham's Main Street with a distinctive façade influenced by both farmhouse and Shingle Style elements. A horizontal porch and large roof overhangs balance its large, vertical projecting bay.



One of the wife's favorite activities is doing puzzles in the shelter of an Asian-inspired pergola, which is covered in canvas and sectional screens in-season.

Chatham's Main Street is an iconic stretch of road on Cape Cod. It's where year-round quaintness and charm collide with the hustle and bustle of seasonal tourism. Residents walk it, visitors drive it, everyone knows it. It's the pulse of Chatham—and one of the town's most beloved and oft-traveled features.

Building a home on such a road is a highly visible endeavor, one that a Minnesota couple embraced nearly four years ago. "We've been summering on the Cape, almost always in Chatham, for about 20 years now, getting together with extended family in the area," the husband explains. "Eventually we talked it over with our two [grown] daughters and decided it was time to build our own place."

They wanted a lot with a decent-sized yard near town, and snagged the last piece of a subdivided motel property. To bring their dream of a family-centric Cape retreat to fruition, they turned to Cape Cod-based Polhemus Savery DaSilva (PSD), an integrated architecture and construction firm responsible for an ever-growing collection of residential gems on the Cape and beyond. Knowing many decisions would be made remotely, the owners appreciated PSD's ability to handle both the design and the build. Plus, working with Chatham's strict historic codes is one of the firm's specialties.

Design Principal John DaSilva quickly addressed the project's initial hurdle: with the corner lot's edge on Main Street but official address on the side street, where should the home face? Ultimately, everyone agreed that putting its best foot forward toward the public domain was the right decision. "We didn't feel it was appropriate to build a house with its back turned on such a wonderful context as Main Street," notes DaSilva.

Working with the owners' likes, and also taking into account the street's eclectic mix of home styles, PSD sprinkled a little bit of farmhouse inspiration into the high-profile design composition. Describes DaSilva: "The front is reminiscent of a farmhouse built in the early 20th century, but as you move around to the side, the character transforms into a rambling Shingle Style with multiple gables, and a scale and compositional approach more common in coastal New England architecture."

In typical PSD fashion, the house nods to history but still represents the here and now. The owners wanted a dose of wow factor for passersby, and DaSilva delivered with slightly exaggerated details that make the envelope's overall impression both welcoming and endearing. Everything is traditional, but with a twist: the front entry's fanlight, column and balustrade millwork is flattened

while the shutters are over-scaled V-groove board instead of louvered.

"It was intended to be playful," the architect admits of his abstractions. "The effect is more casual, more fun and more friendly." In fact, the home's façade is very much an optical illusion: the front door is skewed to the left, while the first-floor windows to the right of the front door look through to the garage. The owners consider the side door, topped with a placard of the home's name, their primary entrance.

In light of their large, extended family, the owners wanted to maximize the constricted lot's square footage, ensuring plenty of bedrooms and bathrooms for all. PSD worked some architectural magic to eke out 3,800 square feet of living space. The kitchen and dining room are open to one another, while the adjoining living room (painted a bold red—"We like color; there are no white walls in the house," notes the wife) is a favorite spot for TV and games. The dining table starts at 10 feet and expands with six leaves for a crowd; the kitchen island is also purposefully large to accommodate five stools.

Evidence of the owners' devotion to family time is everywhere, from the pickle ball court to the firepit. Even the home's moniker—Le Château de Famille, a play on their Minnesota home's name, Le Château Caché (the hidden house)—was chosen via a naming contest. Their family crest, invented by the husband, is commemorated in a custom weathervane designed by PSD.

Having their grandchildren play badminton on the lawn and seeing all of their extended family during holiday barbecues are the new norm, and the owners are thrilled with their realized vision. "We spend a lot of time outside, we walk every day, and we even get to watch the Fourth of July parade go right by," they relate.

"The house feels like it's on the Cape but doesn't look like every other house on the Cape," the pair continue. "And that's exactly what we wanted." **H**



OPPOSITE PAGE: Architect John DaSilva positioned the front door to one side of the entry porch to make room for the home's two-car garage. **ABOVE:** Nestled in the rear of the house with views of the back yard, the living room satisfies the owners' preference for color and prioritization of family-oriented comfort.



LEFT: A central pediment punctuates the front porch, where purposefully flattened millwork is a playful nod to traditional decorative elements. **CENTER:** Built-ins like this corner window seat lend character to the newly built home. **RIGHT:** Desiring privacy, the owners requested a master suite set apart from the rest of the second floor. Interior windows set high along the suite's dedicated stairwell bring natural light into the master closet.