

# New England HOME

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&  
Islands

## Summer *Classic*

Elegance and ease, refined



# A Beautiful *Tribute*

On Martha's Vineyard, architect Patrick Ahearn and designer Leslie Fine help their client honor the memory of his late wife.

*Text by* ALYSSA BIRD | *Photography by* MICHAEL J. LEE

*Styled by* JULIA HEFFELFINGER



In a corner of the living room, a swivel chair is upholstered in an Osborne & Little fabric, the drinks table is from Dunes and Duchess, and the rug is from Lee Jofa. **FACING PAGE:** Architect Patrick Ahearn designed a shingled structure inspired by eighteenth-century captains' homes, while the garage recalls a carriage house; the home is sited to one side of the property in an effort to maintain sight lines from the street to the harbor.



**ABOVE:** Located on the third floor and affording some of the best views in the house, the crow's nest is a multifunctional space that serves as a secondary office, a room for overflow guests, and an entertaining space thanks to a teak wet bar. **LEFT:** The star light fixture illuminating the staircase is Chapman & Myers for Visual Comfort & Co. **FACING PAGE:** An archway connects the cobblestone parking court to the entry courtyard.



Once in a while a project comes along that's so much more than a series of permits and plans, materials and furnishings. It started off like many others: a couple decides to build their dream summer retreat on Martha's Vineyard. "The island has been a second home to my family since the 1970s, when my dad, a real estate developer, built a house for us there," explains homeowner Peter DeFeo. "We still use the family residence outside Edgartown, but in 2018, my wife, Dara [Frigoletto], and I began searching for a property of our own in town."

“Dara loved to cook, so the two of us worked on about twenty different versions of the kitchen, squeezing storage into every inch.”

—*Architect Patrick Ahearn*

**RIGHT:** An informal dining area off the living room contains a built-in banquette topped with a cushion upholstered in a Pindler fabric, a Dunes and Duchess dining table, and chairs from M-Geough. **BELOW:** A nautical-themed powder room features teak and holly paneling, sailboat wallpaper from Schumacher, and a porthole mirror from Shiplights.



When this harborfront lot—which contained a boathouse with guest quarters and an outdoor dining pavilion—became available, they jumped on it. The previous owner had worked with architect Patrick Ahearn to tear down the majority of the existing structure and transform the rest of it into the boathouse. “They also devised a plan for a

main residence but never actually built the home,” explains DeFeo.

The couple enlisted Ahearn to continue the project, along with construction firm Colonial Reproductions, and used the existing plans as a jumping-off point.

“Patrick excels at blending the architectural

character of the neighborhood, which is rooted in whaling history, with how people want to live today,” continues DeFeo. “Dara and Patrick reworked the interior plan to suit our needs, construction began, and then in 2021 we brought on interior designer Leslie Fine, whom Dara had met two decades prior while she was running a small



**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The cabinetry in the butler's pantry is painted Benjamin Moore Van Deusen Blue, while the countertops are granite. Stone Lighting fixtures illuminate the mudroom. **FACING PAGE:** In the kitchen, pendants from Hudson Valley Lighting hang over the island. The countertops are quartz, and the window valance fabric is from Kravet.

design business of her own. Unfortunately, cancer intervened a few months later, and we ended up losing Dara in June of 2023.”

After what had been a lengthy pause, DeFeo eventually decided to resume the project in accordance with his wife's wishes. “We had become close friends with the team, and I could tell they were extremely dedicated to bringing Dara's vision to life,” he says. “Our dream was always to create a comfortable, functional, and elegant gathering place for friends and family.”

To that end, the 4,300-square-foot three-bedroom residence—inspired by an eighteenth-century captain's house that has been added to over time—is geared toward entertaining, both inside and out.

“Dara loved to cook, so the two of us worked on about twenty different versions of the kitchen, squeezing storage into every inch,” says Ahearn.

And as their builder and next-door neighbor, Colonial Reproductions' Norman Rankow, attests, “Dara knew what she wanted and put a lot of effort into the details and making everything work. She was a force of nature.”

These days, the kitchen is a popular place to gather, as it flows into the living room and out to the covered porch beyond. “There are so many different areas to enjoy, including the porch, the second-floor deck, the dining pavilion, the boathouse deck, and the dock,” says Ahearn. “Not to mention what we call the crow's nest on the third floor, which has a



Interior designer Leslie Fine kept things relaxed yet sophisticated, imbuing the rooms with shades of blue that recall the water and sky.



In one of the guest rooms, a window seat featuring a Sister Parish fabric is joined by a valance of an Osborne & Little fabric and sconces from Hudson Valley Lighting. **FACING PAGE:** The client requested a traditional wood-clad library and office. The pair of chairs, their upholstery, and the curtain fabric are all from Kravet.

The residence is built into a slope, resulting in a street-facing exposure that feels modest and cottage-like and a harbor-facing facade that's taller with more glazing for capturing views. **FACING PAGE:** The existing dining pavilion—which is situated between the main house and the boathouse and features a fireplace and grilling area—received a refresh with new custom cabinetry, granite countertops, and fixtures from Fourteenth Colony Lighting; the table and chairs are from Serena & Lily.



bar, a billiards table, and phenomenal views.”

Throughout the residence, Fine kept things relaxed yet sophisticated, imbuing the rooms with texture, subtle patterns, and shades of blue that recall the water and sky.

“Dara and I had talked more about function and layout than specific materials, but I had a good sense of what she was looking for,” says Fine, who also incorporated artwork the couple had collected.

In the end, says DeFeo, “It feels like home.”

I’ll always regret that Dara never got to see the final product, but achieving our shared goal is one of the most fulfilling things I’ve ever done.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Patrick Ahearn Architect

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Leslie Fine Interiors

**BUILDER:** Colonial Reproductions

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Donaroma’s

