

# COTTAGE REDUX

THE CLASSIC NEW ENGLAND FISHING SHACK IS REIMAGINED ON THIS PICTURESQUE POINT ALONG BUZZARDS BAY



By **KELLY VENCILL SANCHEZ**  
Photographs by **ANNIE SCHLECHTER**  
Styling by **SASHA EMERSON**



The walls and ceilings throughout are painted Chantilly Lace by Benjamin Moore. The dining table and chairs are custom. Opposite: The contemporary home is clad in cedar.



**L**ONG BEFORE SHE BUILT A PLACE OF HER OWN there, a serene corner of Cape Cod felt like home for one frequent beachgoer. Since college, she had summured at a former roommate's house near Bourne, Massachusetts, where neighbors turned into friends, and the community became familiar in the way that favorite places do. "I've always loved this particular location on the point," she says, "but I never thought I'd have the means or the opportunity to own something here."

That all changed when she found a secluded property overlooking Buzzards Bay. The lot wasn't large—less than 9,000 square feet—and the house on the site gave new meaning to the word "ramshackle," but there were stunning water views. It was perfect for a small, laid-back retreat. Although the area is home to turn-of-the-century cottages or Cape Cod-style dwellings, the owner envisioned something different.

Working with Charles Orr and Thomas McNeill of Hutcher Architects, she decided to raze the existing tumbledown structure and come up with a modern play on a New England fishing shack. They placed the entrance beneath the main floor (zoning restrictions call for any new construction to be at least 12 feet above the floodplain), a move that made room for a dramatic entrance sequence. "The large exterior entryway is like a covered porch," McNeill explains. "It draws you up into the center of the house and reintroduces you to that amazing view." The plan also allowed the architects to make creative use of the spaces underneath the

house. On one side is the garage, and on the other, an outdoor living room that can be enclosed with sliding and swinging doors crafted of slatted panels. Notes Orr, "It's not just functional in the sense of providing livable space, it's also storm protection—water can flow right on through in the event of a surge." And though its modern lines set it apart, the house's cedar cladding ensures that it will assume the same silvery patina as its older neighbors.

Next, they set out to optimize views of the water in the interior rooms. The design's anchor is an open living/dining area with a cathedral ceiling and a series of double-hung windows that holds the line between contemporary and traditional. Every room is filled with natural light—even the master bath, where a free-standing tub occupies a corner outfitted with a bank of windows.

For the furnishings, the owner called in an old friend, New York- and L.A.-based designer Sasha Emerson, to put her spin on the modern beach cottage. Because the two had collaborated previously, Emerson knew what her client wanted: clean, unfussy rooms sprinkled with antiques, architecturally interesting vintage fixtures, and a smattering of color. "She wanted everything to be about the water and the site and the windows," Emerson explains. "She craved Shaker simplicity—whites, grays, blues, reclaimed wood, modern furniture shapes, no beach kitsch."

Emerson painted the walls and ceilings white to provide a complement to the white-oak floors, which she stained to evoke weathered driftwood. Meanwhile, vibrant elements like a woven red-leather headboard, saffron-striped umbrella wall art, and

The barstools in the kitchen are by HD Buttercup, and the globe lighting is by Pelle. Opposite, from left: The coffee table is from Cisco Brothers; the wing chairs are from Room and Board. The entry stairs are stained oak.



The master bedroom's headboard is by Poltrona Frau through Cappellini, and the signal flag artwork is by Emily Manalo Ruiz. Opposite, clockwise from top, left: The Duravit soaking tub in the master bath; a sunny Buzzards Bay view; bunk room bedding from Pottery Barn Teen



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photos of brightly hued Scandinavian beach shacks keep things lively. “I have a kind of quirky process,” says Emerson. “I might come back from the flea market with 15 doorknobs wrapped in a towel and say, ‘How can we integrate them?’” Here, the designer ended up using a set of European white porcelain knobs with a Delft Blue design as hardware for several doors.

Old and new cohabit comfortably. Pulled up to the leathered black granite kitchen counter (a finish that closes the stone’s pores to make it more stain resistant) are contemporary metal-and-wood stools based on a popular 1930s design. And around the dining table, which features a reclaimed-wood top and cast iron legs, are custom chairs by Emerson. “They’re American walnut with navy blue seat belt webbing,” she says.

Most memorable for the designer, however, was the beauty of the home’s spectacular view. “I was so unprepared for it,” she says. “To walk into the central room and see that bank of windows and the bay, and then to see it at sunset—I said, ‘Are you kidding me?’ It’s airy and light and fun, like a fresh breeze.”

On her frequent visits to the Cape, the owner hosts family and friends, and the familiar stretch of shoreline moves her as much today as it did on her first vacation here. “My breath catches in my throat every time I drive over the hill and see the water and this little cluster of houses,” she says. “It never gets old.” **For more information, see Sources, page 110.**

*Kelly Vencill Sanchez writes about home design and horses from her home base in Southern California.*

