

RESTAURANTS ARE TRYING TO REOPEN, BUT CAN BARS POSSIBLY SURVIVE? By Jackson Cannon

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YOUR HOME

Designed for Summer

BRIGHT IDEAS AND SUN-SOAKED INSPIRATION FROM THE OCEAN STATE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, AND THE ROCKY COAST OF MAINE.

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TO KEEP THEIR
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EASY RECIPES TO
MAKE THE MOST OF
BERRY SEASON



Better With Age

A century-old Rhode Island cottage gets a slow-moving makeover with materials that match its origins. **BY MARNI ELYSE KATZ**



Left: Architect Nate McBride designed a bluestone patio for the south side of the Rhode Island house, which looks to Stonington across Little Narragansett Bay. Interior designer Kari McCabe favors outdoor furniture by Munder Skiles for its 1940s styling. "It looks vintage, but it isn't," she says. **Above:** In the living room, the armchair is upholstered in a John Robshaw fabric with Indian-inspired patterning and the sofa is upholstered in a cozy chenille.

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WHEN LOUISE DYE THINKS of summer, she thinks of Rhode Island. Dye, who lives in Manhattan with her husband, Alex, grew up going to the Ocean State on family vacations. After years of staying with friends and renting, the couple looked for their own place in Watch Hill. This property, built in 1900, stood out. "It felt enchanted," Louise says. "I felt immediately possessive of it; I didn't want anyone tearing it down."

The couple met their soon-to-be architect and designer, Nate McBride and Kari McCabe, through friends, and quickly bonded over a shared interest in old summer houses on the shores of New England. McBride and McCabe (who are married), agreed that the integrity of the cottage should be preserved. "It takes a special client to be inspired to live in a summer shack," McBride says. "They have a wonderfully romantic sensibility."

The cottage, which overlooks Little Narragansett Bay, needed some work. It had changed hands

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Above: Schumacher's iconic print "Lemon Garden," designed by Josef Frank, was the starting point for the "long" porch. A contemporary print for the bench cushion keeps the ensemble from feeling fusty. The floor is painted Benjamin Moore "Nantucket Fog" and the coffee table came from The Antique and Artisan Gallery in Stamford.

few times in 120 years and felt virtually untouched. "We were lucky to find Nate, who understood the aesthetic of taking a quirky place and making it into a functional house without losing its character," Alex says.

The team upgraded the roof with cedar shakes and renovated the bathrooms, the conditions of which lingered between "old-fashioned" and "squalid." They also gutted the kitchen, rebuilt a ramshackle enclosed porch, and added a screened porch and stone patio for more space and connectivity to the outdoors. "The lay-

RESOURCES

Architect: McBride Architects, mcbride-architects.com

Interior Designer: Kari McCabe Inc., karimccabe.com

Contractor: Gary M. Vacca Building Contractor Inc., vaccabuilding.com

out was very internal," McBride says. "That's not what you want for a summer house."

The guiding principle was that all spaces, be they remodeled or new, look and feel as though they were part of the original house. "Our design goal was to make it feel like no architect had been there," McBride says. "No trace of ego or individual; just a reiteration of the original spirit."

The mandate to look original posed a particular challenge in the kitchen. By embracing and mixing utilitarian materials—specifically ones that showed their age quickly, and are not usually



Disparate materials in the kitchen give the house a sense of history.

used side-by-side—McBride made the design look ad hoc, as though the kitchen had been patched together over time. The countertops next to the range are patinated zinc and the wall behind it is made from randomly placed flat planks. The countertops surrounding the enormous porcelain sink, which they salvaged from the original kitchen, are fir. "It's relentless uniformity that creates the dead quality of the suburban kitchen," McBride says. "These disparate materials give the house a sense of history."

If not swimming, riding bikes, gardening, or doing other outdoor activities, the couple and their two twentysomething children, who visit often, hang out on what they call the "long" porch. The room was essentially rebuilt when the windows were replaced and French doors facing the cove were added. The floor, repainted a faded blue/green, and most of the ceiling, however, were salvaged. McCabe designed built-in benches—the home's most popular spots—to anchor the long, skinny space at either end. Rattan pieces foraged from flea markets, plus mid-century modern metal mesh chairs, give it the desired "handed down



from a great aunt vibe," McCabe says. A portrait of Louise's mother as a young woman, painted by a cousin, enhances the effect.

The dark wood-paneled living room with original fireplace, which Louise thinks is made out of stones from a long-gone local quarry, is where the family spends chilly evenings and downtime during the shoulder seasons. Architecturally, the room was left untouched, but McCabe worked her magic there with a soft, striped dhurrie rug, an overstuffed upholstered armchair, more rattan and wicker, and simple linen curtains that blow in the sea breeze. "This is the perfect old house," she says. ■

Send comments to magazine@globe.com.

Above, left: The front door is painted Benjamin Moore "Geranium," a fresh take on the red shade it sported when the couple purchased the home. **Above, right:** McBride installed a linoleum floor in the kitchen for an old-fashioned feel. Freestanding appliances rather than built-in ones contribute to the days-gone-by aesthetic.