

On the rocky shores of Newport, Rhode Island, hydrangeas hug a vacation house that was renovated by Paul Weber Architecture. One of the homeowners grew up spending summers in the house next door.

# Sentiment *and the* SEA

Personal history meets personal style  
at this coastal retreat.

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The design team added high wainscoting in the formal living room, playing to the proportions of the floor-to-ceiling windows and drawing the eye outside—with no window treatments to interrupt the view. Deep Kravet couches provide respite next to shagreen coffee tables from Creative Metal & Wood.



## Famous for its long beaches, rocky shores, and historical architecture,

Newport, Rhode Island, offers a quintessential New England summer escape. Visitors and locals alike enjoy it all from the city's famous Cliff Walk, a three-and-a-half-mile shoreline trail with stunning natural beauty and glimpses of Gilded Age mansions. Houses in the area offer marvelous ocean views, so when a rare listing came on the market, one couple jumped at the chance to make it their vacation home.

The purchase was based, in part, on nostalgia; the wife had grown up spending summers at the property next door, which the couple had also frequented with their own children. Carrying on that tradition with their grandchildren "was the genesis of the renovations," says Paul Weber, architect and principal of Paul Weber Architecture.

Though the 4,500-square-foot house was just a couple of decades old, it needed a solid refresh. The firm reshingled the house, replaced the roof, installed a plunge pool, and added new windows and sliding doors, giving "the shell of the building a whole new look," says Weber, and "a nice sense of transparency."

The couple wanted to use the house as soon as possible and knew exactly what

The homeowners' prized antique table has a starring role in the dining room, while Kravet chairs with legs stained to match the dark floors add a modern touch. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** In the entry, designer Natalie Lebeau creates a welcoming moment with a Keith Fritz Fine Furniture table. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** Because the kitchen looks out on the lawn and ocean, Lebeau kept the palette tight and bright. Visual Comfort cage pendants play up the concept of transparency.



they needed from a redesign: a fresh, clean, modern space, says Natalie Lebeau, principal at SLC Interiors. “Really, bringing the water into the house was what she wanted to do,” says Lebeau of the wife, who was “totally involved in how these spaces function and look.”

To highlight the expansive views and meet the accelerated timeline, Lebeau set the stage with a sophisticated and primarily neutral palette. She then layered varying shades of blue to enhance the seaside effect. In the living room, quiet creams and grays play nicely with gentle powdery blues that appear on upholstered benches and in a large-scale artwork. In the kitchen, which was reconfigured with new cabinetry, a generous island, and thick marble counter tops, these hues shift to lush jewel tones on seating and accessories. Set against

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the crisp white walls and cabinetry, the scheme serves to spotlight the sweeping views of the generous landscape and the ocean beyond.

The ultimate expression of these watery hues culminates in the library, where Lebeau used a glossy hydrangea blue to transform existing oak cabinetry and a new built-in bar. To keep the room grounded, Lebeau anchored it with a vintage bamboo table and hung an antique painting above the fireplace—both items were important to the client, who wanted to incorporate her large collection of antiques throughout the house.

Many of the pieces were family heirlooms with sentimental value. To give them their proper due as well as a fresh perspective, Lebeau “layered in the old pieces that had history and brought them into the modern era.”





**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Susanne Lichten Csongor, Natalie Lebeau, SLC Interiors  
**RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE:** Paul Weber, Paul Weber Architecture  
**BUILDER:** Highland Builders

she says. In the dining room, for example, a treasured table took center stage when paired with contemporary chairs and a sparkling chandelier.

For the design team and the clients alike, it turned out to be the perfect mix of furnishings for a house new to the family in

a neighborhood filled with their personal history. “It was wonderful that they had such a vast, rich collection of antiques,” says Lebeau. “It makes the home feel so much more curated, and not like everything came off the showroom floor.”

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

The transformation of the library included painting walls, trim, cabinetry, and even the ceiling Benjamin Moore Montpelier, a glossy blue. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** The southeastern-facing primary suite was painted Benjamin Moore Iced Cube Silver, a dusty blue that engages with the changing color of the sky and water in every season. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** New cabinetry in the en suite bathroom includes a marble-topped vanity.