

Here & There

DESIGN DISCOVERIES FROM THE CAPE & ISLANDS

COMPACT COTTAGE

Thoughtful details allow this Cape home to make maximum use of minimal space.

BY BOB CURLEY



Outdoor areas like this sunny deck off the kitchen effectively double the 800-square-foot Cape Cod home's living area from May to September.

There's a temptation when building a house with a million-dollar view to install floor-to-ceiling windows, but this vacation home in a small Cape Cod town demonstrates that what you don't see can be just as important as what you do—and that how you're seen by others matters, too.

Working within the confines of a narrow lot across a road from the water, architect Chris Brown of b Architecture Studio chose to pepper the front of the compact vacation home with eight picture and double-hung windows,



the latter beginning around chair-rail height. Combined with raising the elevation of the home three feet, the setup effectively edits out the view of the road while permitting sweeping views of the harbor.

Moreover, the use of more traditional windows combined with clapboard shingles and a restrained design aesthetic allows the house—

ABOVE: Twelve handblown tinted-glass orbs that resemble oyster shells and change color with the natural light shimmer above the kitchen island. A side door leads to the trellis-covered deck. **LEFT:** Architect Chris Brown raised the home's elevation, enhancing the view of the harbor and reducing the view of the road.



The designers managed to include a tiny but functional cabana-inspired “mudroom,” complete with a feeding station for the family dog below the bench. A ladder leads to a sunlit loft providing additional living and storage space.

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ABOVE: The neutral walls, open trusses, nickel-gap ceiling, and sparse furnishings like this Knoll dining table keep distractions from the views to a minimum. **LEFT:** Inspired by the space-saving designs found in boat cabins, the built-in sofa—covered in a fade-resistant Sunbrella fabric—has plenty of space underneath for storing linens and other household necessities.



which is quite contemporary on the inside—to blend seamlessly with its neighbors. “There’s this timelessness of a cottage on the Cape that fits completely, but the house still has some great modern features in it,” Brown says.

Inside, the window design serves a different function, allowing for the installation of built-in storage along exterior walls and under custom sofas in the living and dining areas. The extra storage maximizes efficiency in a home that barely tops 800 square feet.

It’s not apparent from the street, but the house is T-shaped with a pair of bedrooms placed in the wings. The layout accommodates twelve-foot ceilings in the main living areas while permitting the bedrooms to have their own tall ceilings despite a loft that perches between the two rooms.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: In the primary bedroom, a coral-colored headboard nestles cozily into a wall of storage cabinets with bedside cutouts that serve as nightstands. A handsome woodgrain vanity coexists happily with a more coastal-comfortable shower clad in sea-glass-like tiles. The Urban Electric Co. sconces and globe light on the shared night table in the guest room are covered in soft leather.

That loft space, accessed via a ladder, lends a tiny-house vibe to the interior, but there's a remarkable amount of living space packed into (and outside of) the home, aided by an interior design that unites the sparseness of Scandinavian elements with a warm color palette. Eleven Interiors principal Michael Ferzoco's decision to dangle a dozen glass oyster shell-esque lights above the kitchen island is an obvious nod to the nautical setting, but the rest of the home, with its blues, corals,





Landscape architect Greg Lombardi's clever use of elevation creates distinctive dining and entertaining areas in a compact backyard, which also includes a full outdoor kitchen and two storage sheds.

and sandy browns, merely hints at its surroundings.

To preserve a sense of space, the house is virtually devoid of freestanding furniture, and the few pieces chosen feature narrow, open legs. The

net effect, says Ferzoco, is a seaside home that could be on any shore, even somewhere in Europe in the middle of the last century, not just Cape Cod in the 2020s.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE: b Architecture Studio
INTERIOR DESIGN: Eleven Interiors
BUILDER: Cape Associates
LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Gregory Lombardi Design