

Eye-catching window treatments set the stage for the design of each room, including here in the master bedroom, where the depth of blue and the lightly colored floral pattern in the curtains are carried throughout the space.



# CHARTING A COURSE FOR COLOR

With just the right touches, a historic sea captain's home in Barnstable is given a fresh start

By Elizabeth Hilfrank • Photography by Michael J. Lee



Is more always better? Not always, as evidenced by this reimagined old sea captain's home in Barnstable. With the right people behind the project and considerate attention to detail, what's small in size now feels abundant in charm.

When the homeowners approached interior designer Katie Rosenfeld to redecorate their summer home after she designed their main home, she was ecstatic, not only because she loves working with them, but also because of what she was given to work with. With low ceilings and tiny rooms, Rosenfeld was ready to get creative with the space. “I love decorating small spaces because they are so cozy,” says Rosenfeld. “Big spaces require so much layering to make it feel cozy, and it never feels like they’re completely done.” The plan for the redesign was not an entire redesign at all, rather more of, as Rosenfeld calls it, “a really nice cosmetic facelift.”

To provide the skeletal integrity of said facelift, the talents of local builder E.J. Jaxtimer Builder, Inc. were brought to bear. For Project Manager Jonathan Jaxtimer, it was about “giving more flow to the house structure.” The E.J. Jaxtimer crew working on this




Each room in the home has its own identity, thanks to distinct layers of soft and dynamic colors, patterns and textures, yet they are united in their pastoral-like aesthetic—one that plays to the historic nature of the home while still feeling fresh.

house was in familiar territory, as the company had previously renovated the home for another homeowner. Getting to revisit the home was fun, says Jaxtimer, but he also admits there were additional challenges with this redesign that balanced preserving the history of the home while utilizing construction materials and techniques to subtly bring the residence into the modern age.

The collaboration also extended to the unique visionaries inherent to the Boston firm of Patrick Ahearn Architect, LLC. Managing principal Michael Tartamella, AIA, headed up their involvement and brought his expertise to the simple design augmentation of the home's transformation. Changes like the widening of entrances that connect the rooms, windows that allow

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the understated, low-maintenance furniture. Rosenfeld notes, “Anyone can buy these couches,” referring to the popular catalogue finds, but it is the pops of color strewn like clues in a treasure map that connect elsewhere in the various rooms that make the home feel special. “This home now has an identity and a personality,” says Rosenfeld. “Before it wasn’t anything.”

The kitchen’s modest makeover is most evident in the new backsplash, a nod to the use of brick on the fireplace in the family room and on the floor of the mudroom. The use of brick is often deftly and subtly incorporated into many Patrick Ahearn design programs, perhaps due to the immediate historic and emotional response it can elicit in most people.

Outside, Tartamella successfully contributed to the challenge at hand with a design that reworked an old stone wall into a Bernice Wahler landscape and alongside a new pool cabana. As a family with three boys, the homeowners wanted to make the space very kid-friendly, and they called on Tartamella, who had also worked with them in the past, to make

it happen. Like the inside of the house, the backyard is tight, and Tartamella had to contend with the challenging grades of the topography. He designed the cabana to include a loft just for the boys, with a ship’s ladder leading up to it, and for the adults there’s a bar and gas fireplace inside. “Rather than expanding the house, the cabana creates an additional gathering place as it extends the living opportunities and bookends the outdoor living space,” say Tartamella. The cabana also features a Marvin bi-fold wall of French doors, which allows the outside and inside spaces to be opened up to one another.

Thanks to the freedom she was given, Rosenfeld says this project came together incredibly smoothly. “It was easy. One-two-three done,” she says. “We did the whole thing in about four months.” To Rosenfeld, who calls the homeowners her “dream clients,” this coastal home is now one that is joyful, and the new décor reflects the “happy and smiley people who live there.”

*Elizabeth Hilfrank is a freelance writer who lives in Mashpee.*

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