

# Vision Quest

***A Chatham homeowner's vision and goals are realized by SV Design's thoughtful approach and M. Duffany's expertise.***

By Rachel Walman  
Photos by Abby Grattan



Cape Cod is often (and unsurprisingly) referred to as the setting to “get away from it all.” For one family, their home in the quaint town of Chatham has become emblematic of that special hideaway where they can truly live life to the fullest. It wasn’t a far stretch for the homeowners to decide on Chatham, either. “My office is right down the street, and my husband, Todd Trehubenko, has family history here. We visited for a long time before we bought this home six years ago,” homeowner Georgianna Oliver says. “You can instantly see that it has great bones. The former owners loved this house, and they put a lot of passion into the details—the seashells inlays here and there, the smaller doors, and even a secret passageway.”

On a recommendation from their realtor, SV Design, an architecture and interior design firm in Chatham, was brought in early on to help the homeowners’ vision of a place to retreat and entertain family and friends come to fruition. “We worked really well together,” emphasizes Oliver. “I knew what I wanted, and SV Design was able to make my ideas come to life. They identified areas where creative elements could be added and allowed for my own individual touches.” Oliver herself added the larger, eye-catching light fixtures in the dining and family rooms, of which she “treats like art.”

Renovations were completed in phases over the last three years, each one essentially lasting September to May. This allowed the family to use the house and accompanying exterior spaces during the summer season. Phase one included extensive changes to the backyard with the installation of an L-shaped pool surrounded by a beautiful concrete patio area suitable for entertaining. The entire process of completing this first phase lent itself to multiple alterations in the flow of the rear of the house and significant alterations to the landscape. “The backyard was sloped, so we filled it in and built a retaining wall to terrace the space for the pool,” recalls Peter Kimball of M. Duffany Builders.





With a clean white and grey color palette outside, the pool and upper deck areas have an almost elite resort atmosphere, made even more tranquil by a square hot tub which overflows into the deep end of the pool. Katelyn Manfredo, Senior Project Manager from SV Design, worked closely with Oliver throughout the renovation. “Georgianna loved the idea of keeping the concrete look in the basement and extending it to the pool area, which created a seamless transition within the space.”

One challenging aspect of the renovation was the location of the home. “The corner of the lot touches upon conserved land, so SV Design worked with town boards to make sure we weren’t overstepping,” Manfredo explains. “The pool is positioned at an angle to the property line to maximize space and work with the conservation land.” Schumacher Companies moved the plants that used to run around the perimeter to the patio, and new native plantings were added in the conservation area.

Maximizing space and granting attention to the smallest details didn’t only come in the form of measuring land area. Vertical boards and hidden doors were added underneath the upper deck by the pool to create a massive outdoor storage area for the family’s kayak, paddleboard, and dinghy. The team was also able to hide a trench drain inlaid within the

concrete patio that allows for splashing and overflow from the many volleyball and basketball games the pool is equipped for.

In addition to creating a poolside oasis, SV Design removed a portion of the upper deck that was generally unused and built a Juliet balcony to accommodate a grill area off the kitchen, and an extended deck for the outdoor shower. New stairs lead from the deck down to a pathway to the yard, enhancing the connection between the spaces.

“The original layout of the home did not include stair access from the upper decks to the backyard,” describes Leslie Schneeberger, Principal at SV Design. “For a home that sees many visitors, increasing ease of access from the outdoor area to the inside was a huge advantage.”

The next stages of the project involved renovating the unfinished basement and redesigning the kitchen. To begin, SV Design added multiple sliding doors in the basement leading out to the new pool patio area to create a free-flowing indoor/outdoor connection.

“There’s a bit of a cool vibe down there—a secretive, underground vibe,” says Schneeberger.

The homeowners’ clear vision for the renovation and ease of collaboration with the designers came

in handy when crafting a much-used section of the basement. “I envisioned four, twin-sized bunk beds built into the wall, but Katelyn and Leslie were able to maximize the space and fit full beds and further enhance the space with a little cutout for a night-light and charge port,” explains Oliver. Patrick Dolan of Dolan Custom Woodworks built the bunk beds.

“This particular project involved a lot of on-site conversations in addition to the schematics made ahead of time,” Manfredo says. “Georgianna was with us every step of the way and it was great to have her right there.”

A cabana bar area was also added to the basement with three sliding glass doors on all sides, funneling fresh air in on warm summer nights. “We pushed up the ceiling and added cabinets with shutter detail,” describes Manfredo. “We decided on fish hardware for the cabinetry to continue with the motif of the backsplash and lights, and it was important to Georgianna to incorporate local artisans.”

“In the basement, we added custom fish sconces by Steve Swain of the Frying Pan Gallery, the fish tile from The Tilery at Tree’s Place in Orleans in the cabana bar







area, and the late Chatham artist Steve Lyons’ art on the basement walls,” Oliver adds. “We wanted it to be fun on the lower level; the upstairs is more traditional feeling, whereas this is the space for the older kids.”

The cabana area features a dishwasher, icemaker, and refrigerator. A concrete sink with matching polished concrete countertops by Elements Concrete’s Joren Smith make the space easy to keep clean and maintain. “My goal was that everything has a lifetime guarantee,” Oliver explains. “When you have college-age children and a parade of friends, we have a lot of fun, but things can get banged up. Everything in our home is built to last.”

With a utility-grade laundry room for more heavy-duty loads, a changing room with extra storage, hooks, and cubbies, as well as a “catch-all” room for lounging apart from the central area, the basement takes on the feel of a secondary living space. “I love the flow of the first and second floors, and all the design work that was done,” describes Oliver.

Next, the kitchen was redesigned with a functional, open layout for everyday cooking and entertaining. An L-shaped island was added for the family or guests to sit and still have room to walk behind it. New

leathered quartzite countertops and textured, grass cloth wallpaper enhance the existing coffered ceiling.

“The previous kitchen had a dark, ship-like feel. That was the original charm of the home, but our goal was to brighten it up,” recalls Oliver.

The space was painted in a blue and white theme, which carries throughout the first floor and can easily be enhanced with interchangeable coastal, nautical patterns and match with the kitchen palette.

In the adjacent family room, SV Design and M. Duffany Builders replaced the fireplace stone, and deftly placed the TV speakers behind a patterned wooden panel. “We dressed up that whole space quite a bit,” admits Peter Kimball. “Transformations early on spawn new ideas. In the process of communication with all parties the scope of a project often changes. It’s the kind of thing that morphs as you go along.”

Nowadays, SV Design and Oliver discuss what other projects might be done around the house. “I think it’s an ongoing process as people realize what they like or don’t like about their home,” muses Manfredo. “Every time I see Georgianna, she always has something to tell me about the house, and she’s excited about it.



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That’s a good feeling. For me, it’s great when the clients are finally living in the space and have things to tell us about. It’s a very personal relationship; to do design well you have to learn about the people and their lifestyles. When they move in, and love what you’ve done, it’s always rewarding.” Long-term, multi-stage projects such as these require a lot from all parties involved. “There’s a lot of trust in this business,” affirms Kimball. “As a team—us at M. Duffany, SV Design, and the homeowners—we all really enjoy working with each other. The results of this collaboration have been extraordinary.”

At the end of the day, it’s all about the lived-in experience. “For me, entertaining is very easy here,” Oliver shares. “It’s great to be able to have a whole kitchen, dining room and deck right there, where we can easily entertain 20 people

for dinner. I have learned through my Chatham experiences that friendship and relaxation and spending time outside every day is so important. We really live well in this house.”

One can easily imagine walking through the front doors of this home with a bottle of wine or a charcuterie board; or making your way to the backyard with an extra towel in the glow of twilight, hearing splashes, soft music, and laughter. “There’s something very peaceful about walking into the entrance of our home,” Oliver reflects. “When you see the light colors and blue palette, and right out through the house, onto the deck...” she pauses, as if taking in the sight within her mind’s eye. “It’s just a comfortable, welcoming place for family and friends.” 🏡

*Rachel Walman is the assistant editor at Cape Cod Life Publications.*

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