

A New England *Twist*

An oceanside new build on Boston's North Shore is a fresh take on the area's traditional architecture and design.

BY MARNI ELYSE KATZ





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Above: Starting from scratch enabled the designers to reimagine the home's layout, taking full advantage of water views. Right: A pool overlooking the ocean offers a serene escape.

An oceanside property calls for a dwelling with water views. The North Shore home that architect Thad Siemasko's clients, a couple with an older daughter, purchased had sub-par vistas, scant outdoor access, and less-than-expansive interiors. Through a thoughtful discovery process early in the design phase, the SV Design principal determined that the existing home could not be effectively modified to make the most of the site.

"In homes on the water, we typically line up the main rooms to the view, locating stairs, mudroom, laundry, and rooms used at night behind them," Siemasko says. "This house didn't lend itself to that layout, so we decided to take it down and start over."

The new, approximately 7,725-square-foot home sits neatly along the coastline, nestled

in a clearing among mature trees that provide privacy from the road. "A series of lines run parallel to the water," Siemasko says. "There is a layering—the home, a meadow, a sea wall, the beach—with the landscape becoming more refined as it gets closer to the building."

In terms of architecture, Siemasko combined contemporary elements with traditional forms and materials. Upon approach, two gable roof forms greet you. A flat-roofed stair tower protrudes slightly—a striking illuminated column at night—and a perpendicular, flat-roofed wing—the dining room—stretches out across the brick entry court. "The dining room, stair, and stone backdrop wall are lit up at night, making guests feel very welcomed," the architect says.

The exteriors informed the interiors. "You don't want it to be a surprise when you walk in," Siemasko says. Accordingly, Shelby Littlefield, the firm's interior designer and senior project manager, devised a natural material palette. "The owners wanted a calm, peaceful feeling from the moment you walk





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in the door," Littlefield says. "We used a selection of natural materials, including a mix of metals and soft wood tones that work well with their pottery collection."

Entry is through double glass doors. The exterior stone facade pierces the glass, continuing into the front entry hall, uniting indoors and outdoors. The gracious, light-filled space runs from the front to the back of the home, offering ocean views and easy access to the back patio. "You can see right through the glass for an immediate connection to the ocean," Littlefield says.

The space is a superb receiving area during cocktail parties and also connects the main home with the guest quarters at the right. To the left, a corridor leads past the open staircase, which boasts a steel frame that echoes the home's black steel

windows and white oak treads that match the floors.

Just past the stairs is the den. The wood-paneled room features a fireplace with a beveled limestone surround based on a design the homeowners saw in their travels. "It's a pretty detail but simple enough to show off the material," Littlefield says. "In this home, the materials are the focus."

Beyond the den, multiple seating areas flow one into the next. A family room with a fireplace flanked by recessed oak shelves that show off the owners' pottery collection is open to the flop room. Here, four comfy armchairs create a conversation area that overlooks the water and connects to the sunroom. French doors lead to the patio, too. "Various small groupings work well for entertaining now and will serve multiple generations in the future," Littlefield explains.

Above: Upon entry, guests are greeted by immediate water views through the back of the home. Right: A family room with comfy seating offers one of several conversation areas for entertaining.



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Left: Beyond the dining room is the den fireplace with a beveled limestone surround, which was inspired by the homeowners' travels.

Above: A mix of organic materials and colors give the kitchen a soft, but sophisticated, look.

While the dramatic dining room is a glassy box at the front of the home, the kitchen anchors its core. Moody organic materials—clear poplar with a driftwood stain, a faux, antiqued nickel finish, and natural quartzite countertops—lend a sophisticated look more like a living space than an antiseptic work area. “The kitchen best represents our mix of materials concept,” Littlefield says. “It ties to other elements in the home, but in a soft, patinated way.”

Still, the kitchen is set up for serious cooking. Everything is well within reach for food prep around the center island, from the 36-inch Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf range to the undermount sink pleasantly positioned under a window. A pantry tucked behind the kitchen includes a 30-inch Sub-Zero refrigerator, while the bar boasts a Sub-Zero beverage center.

The generously sized living room is open to

the kitchen, so guests can participate in meal prep or simply lounge nearby. French doors open to a screened porch with a fireplace that caps the end of the home, while three pairs of French doors lead outside, where a bluestone patio floats in the lush lawn edged with native grasses and hydrangeas. Off the side is a simple pool and low-slung pool house that Littlefield describes as a modern take on a traditional pergola.

Looking back at the home from the beach, it cuts a more contemporary figure. “Flat-roofed projections lend a contemporary feel to the more traditional gable roof form,” Siemasko says. The flat roof limits the massing; gable roofs would have made the building quite large. Littlefield sums up the hybrid approach: “The home feels familiar in form and materials but is refreshing compared to the typical New England coastal aesthetic,” she says.