

SCALED-DOWN REDESIGN

The new design extended the footprint of the kitchen, reconfigured the windows, and added a cathedral ceiling with beams to offer more volume and better flow within the single-story space.

SV Design pivots on an overhaul of a Marblehead home during the pandemic.

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Back in autumn 2019, it all seemed so straightforward. Elizabeth Godfrey’s twin daughters had recently ventured off to boarding school and, with half as many people living together day to day, she and her husband sold their capacious home in Beverly and lined up a smaller, Shingle-style house in Marblehead. The Godfreys contacted Shelby Littlefield, interior designer at the Beverly-based firm SV Design, and set about collaborating on a renovation of their scaled-down dwelling.

Then Covid crash-landed in spring 2020. With the family reconvening under the same roof for the foreseeable future, the plan that Littlefield and the Godfreys had nearly finalized suddenly had to change. “We had just downsized to half the space—how were we going to make it feel big and like everybody has room?” Godfrey says. “And that’s where Shelby and her team came in.”

The renovation underwent a recalibration, imbuing certain rooms with a new degree of flexibility and making even more out of every square foot. A small room outfitted with an upright piano, mirrors, and bar became a multipurpose area for music rehearsals, ballet practice, or stealing time for a glass of wine and a book. “It became not only the music room, but a place where someone can sit, close the door, and have a bit of privacy,” Littlefield says. A downstairs guest room features a Murphy bed and bedside drawers to accommodate overnight visitors, while still readily folding away to become a remote-work office space or a place for ballroom dance lessons.

The kitchen is the home’s pièce de résistance as well as a place where Littlefield had particular “free rein,” Godfrey says. The design extended the footprint of the kitchen, made an awkward angled corner a full 90 degrees, reconfigured the windows, and added a cathedral ceiling with exposed beams to offer more volume and better flow. The patterns in the quartzite countertops and backsplash provide a subtle coastal influence against the kitchen’s understated color palette. Meanwhile, Godfrey says the drawers and cabinetry afford even more storage than the larger kitchen in her previous home.

Nearly the entire interior of the home was subject to a significant overhaul to meet the family’s everyday needs and aesthetic tastes. The living room features a



Left, The living room features a new gas fireplace, an extended mantel, and graceful wainscoting.

Below, The patterns in the quartzite countertops and backsplash provide a subtle coastal influence against the kitchen’s understated color palette.

Bottom right, A bold, graffiti-inspired design blocks the stairs descending to the home’s lower level.

new gas fireplace, an extended mantel, and graceful wainscoting. Renovations of the bathrooms meant introducing marble and shiplap, and the master bedroom was reflowed and includes a new vestibule, walk-in closet, and reconfigured windows. (“It seems like a bigger room even though it’s actually a smaller room,” Godfrey says.) Refinished oak floors and versatile cove lighting appear throughout the house. To Godfrey’s amazement, Littlefield even figured out a way to transform a hallway into a mudroom.

Though downsizing meant streamlining their art collection, the interior’s neutral colors and clean



Shown here and right, A small room outfitted with an upright piano, mirrors, and bar became a multipurpose area for music rehearsals, ballet practice, or stealing time for a glass of wine and a book.



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approach were selected to complement the pieces that made the cut, including a pair of Andrew Wyeth paintings. The two barn doors in the home, however, are actually sliding canvases. The first, featuring a design printed by a local graphic art company, closes off the laundry room with an image that looks like a submarine's torpedo room, Godfrey says. The second, hand-painted by Salem-based artist Mike Grimaldi, is a bold, graffiti-inspired design that took 16 hours to complete and blocks the stairs descending to the home's lower level.

While renovating the home during the doldrums of quarantine had its benefits, the project didn't lack for delays. "Your patience was constantly tested," Littlefield says—especially when, in the final stages of the project, they discovered the American-style range they had selected didn't fit the final aesthetic of the kitchen. Procuring a smaller, French-style range through ordinary means would have taken months. "Somehow," Littlefield says, "I was able to persuade the manufacturer to sell us the floor model and build new base panels."

Now, ever since the Godfreys moved into the home around Thanksgiving 2020, their faith in Littlefield has been rewarded; later this year, they're planning to work together on further space-maximizing renovations to the living room. "Shelby bore the brunt of all the negative issues that surrounded trying to gut a house during a pandemic, basically, and she dealt with them for us," Godfrey says. "Everything was exactly the way we wanted it, even through a pandemic." ■

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Renovations of the bathrooms meant introducing marble and tile and built-in cabinetry. Right, The primary bedroom's walk-in closet is painted pink.

