

Jazz at Back Bay Grill

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Fine Art Photography

MaineHOME+ DESIGN

August 2008

A Seaside Beauty
Restored on
Goose Rocks Beach

**Camden
Creative**
A Midcoast Marvel



Lake House Landscape
Lush Design in the Northern Woods

Land of

An austere seaside beauty is restored on Goose Rocks Beach

Kennebunkport's Goose Rocks Beach is a rare three-mile stretch of multiple white-sand crescents. Each curve of the beach feels like its own private sanctuary, an encapsulated microcosm of summer. Salt scents the breeze, along with a touch of sea rose, and gulls float in the light wind, coasting in place before swooping down to snatch bits of bread tossed by a child.

This is the land of leisure.

In the early 1880s, goes neighborhood lore, a few local farmers built a row of humble summer cottages right on the edge of Goose Rocks Beach that later came to be known as the "Three Sisters." When a devastating forest fire swept through Kennebunk and Kennebunkport in 1947, it destroyed countless homes—but not the three cottages. Last year, one lucky sister got an extensive facelift.

On a stretch of the coast where even a postage-stamp-size lot is coveted, the cottage's slim profile makes the modest property feel spacious. "It can be fairly cheek by jowl along the beach," says architect Stephen Blatt of Stephen Blatt Architects in Portland. "But the profile of this home is so captivating that there appears to be no one else around. There is an undecorated singularity to it."

Blatt remembers the original cottage as "stark" and "extraordinary simple," before he settles on the perfect adjective: *austere*. His renovation design has enhanced that Yankee

Edward Hopper would be proud: Based on shoreland regulations, the home was raised onto pilings during its renovation. The move only served to accentuate the house's dramatic, slender lines and imbue it with the somber quality of a home painted by the American artist Hopper.

REMARKABLE
by Joshua Bodwell
Photography Trent Bell



Leisure



REMARKABLE

austerity. “Preserving the view of the home from the road was crucial to the homeowner,” says Blatt. While the house was raised three feet to conform with zoning regulations, the move only added to the dwelling’s regal appearance.

Blatt’s intentional use of only a few fine materials keeps attention focused on the home’s exterior lines and the ocean view beyond. Already aging toward gray, the weathered cedar shingles resemble the jumble of granite piled in the front yard to keep the tides at bay. The white trim blends into the porch’s bright-white beadboard ceiling and pairs beautifully with the 550 square feet of ipê decking, made of an extremely dense Brazilian hardwood that takes on a lustrous, silvery patina as it ages.

Inside, the home’s small footprint—just 1,650 square feet—feels cozy and practical. The kitchen is inviting, and the main living spaces, such as the living/dining room and master bedroom, showcase the home’s *raison d’être*: the beach. Everything—from design to layout to furnishing to color—feels just right. “We try to make all of our buildings—whether they are homes, offices, or schools—feel legible,” says Blatt, “by which I mean, they feel *right* and they *tell* you how to use them...they lead you through.”

With wide-pine floors and extensive horizontal wood boarding on the walls, the interior is seaside-cottage-meets-farmhouse. Interior designer Patricia Fortunato, of Falmouth’s Simply Home, brought a reserved but creative touch to the

project. “I started with the soft, natural palette,” says Fortunato, who then added details such as sand-colored granite kitchen counters to echo the beach, which were balanced with sturdy, farm-inspired light fixtures over the sink.

Perhaps Fortunato’s most inspired addition involved softening the home’s only remotely modern feature: a large

triangle of windows on the third floor. “That shape in this setting prompted me to research sails,” says Fortunato, who then designed and fashioned elaborate curtains from sailcloth. “With the nautical theme in mind, it just made sense,” she says. “The sails bring the contemporary window shape back to the beach.”

“That attic is now like the gem at the end of the climb,” says Blatt. “But a huge amount of this project’s success

lies with the contractor; the quality of the work throughout the home is fastidious.”

With offices just down the road from the cottage, Shoreline Builders calls Goose Rocks Beach its backyard. The family-run business has been tackling projects up and down the Southern Maine coastline since 1989. “I joke that we’re rebuilding this whole beach one house at a time,” says Jonathan Trudo, son of the company’s founder, Fred Trudo. While the elder Trudo started in the business at age 17, his children did not get such a late start. “I was on the roof with him at 2 years old,” laughs Jonathan.

Over the past two decades, Shoreline has remodeled several

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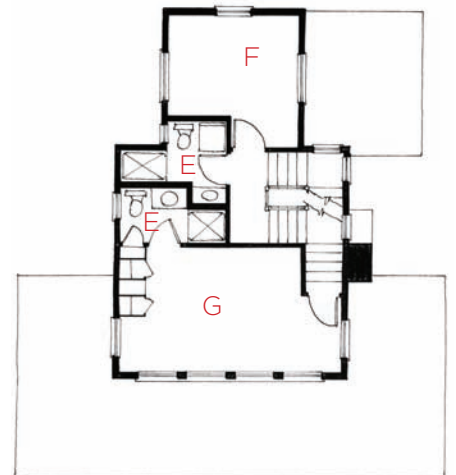
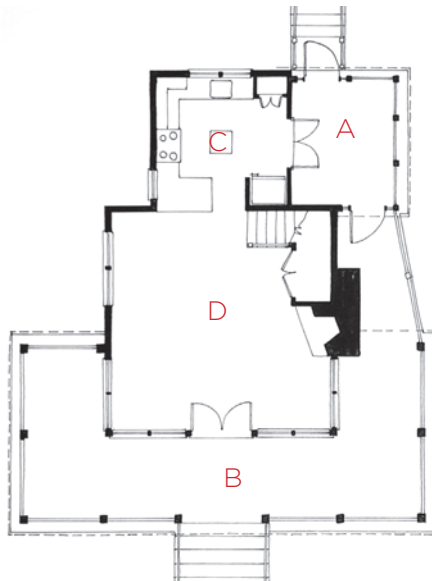


Breathtaking from bed: The master suite feels as though it is practically hanging over the beach (opposite). Wrapping behind the bed, Shoreline refinished the home's original hardwood doors and reimagined them as a unique built-in headboard.

Patricia Fortunato of Falmouth's Simply Home tastefully balanced the home's interior between bright seaside cottage and rustic farmhouse. The kitchen's granite counters echo the beach while the simple white cabinetry, wide trim, and light fixtures say farmhouse (left).

The living room is all about the beach, from the Fortunato-designed lighthouse newel post to the light, summery fabrics used for the chairs (above). "I chose simple fabric shades that would blend into the living room walls and not be distracting," says Fortunato, "because you don't want anything to distract from that view."

REMARKABLE



REMARKABLE

Goose Rocks homes more than once. Years ago, Jonathan executed foundation and roof work on this same cottage for a previous owner.

While the home's interior shares the restraint of the exterior, the craftsmanship raises the level of sophistication. The details—such as the hidden television cabinet over the fireplace and the lighthouse newel post designed by Fortunato—have been executed with a fine touch, yet all have a timeless solidity to them.

Outside, the silky ipê decking required extra care and patience when Shoreline Builders installed it, but the luxurious results speak from themselves.

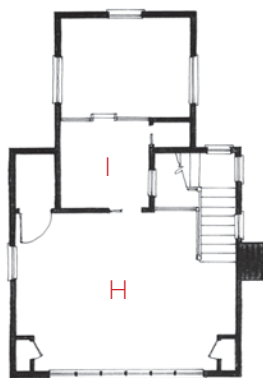
From the porch, a sliver of Timber Island can be seen rising up on the left. To the right, the view encompasses Cape Porpoise and the Kennebunkport coastline. The only thing straight ahead is the blue, undulating expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. The waves are ceaseless, each one washing away life's anxieties as you stare out from an Adirondack chair on the porch. When an unexpected summer fog blows in and obscures the picture, you can still hear the waves lapping at the shore and the intermittent drone of the Goat Island Light horn carrying across the water. And summer gathers in the air. **MH+D**

See Resources for more information.

Before its restoration, this cottage was once referred to by neighbors as the “Campbell Soup House” because it was painted half red and half white. Today, the home is a perfect balance of elegant yet humble (this page).

The second-floor children's bedroom features vaulted ceilings that are open to the third-floor loft (opposite, top).

In the peak: The third floor is dominated by a dormer full of windows (opposite, bottom). Fortunato's clever sailcloth curtains give a wink to the home's nautical setting. “This room is all about the ocean,” says the interior designer.



- A Screened Porch
- B Porch
- C Kitchen
- D Living/Dining Room
- E Bathroom
- F Bedroom
- G Master Bedroom
- H Attic Living Room
- I Loft

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