



Storied Charm

A RICHLY IMAGINED HISTORY CUES THE DESIGN OF A NEW SHINGLE-STYLE COTTAGE BRIMMING WITH PERIOD DETAIL ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD.

Writer: Mara Boo | Photographer: Michael Partenio | Field editor: Stacy Kunstel

PRETTY PALETTE

A neutral scheme sets the stage for color- or texture-rich furnishings.



SETTING THE TONE The intimate proportions of the front entry, *opposite*, establish its cottage essence, while a deft fusion of moldings and trim pieces, along with panels, insets, and higher-than-typical wainscoting, introduce the fine architectural detail that defines the house.

THOUGHTFUL INTEGRATION "We treated the staircase, *right*, as part of the whole millwork ensemble," architect Patrick Ahearn says, "as opposed to covering it in plaster." The stair treads, like floors through the house, are antique pine.



Patrick Ahearn takes a novel approach to designing houses. "I like to write the story of a house before we even start its design," the Boston-based architect says. So when clients—empty nesters approaching retirement—asked him to build a weekend getaway on Martha's Vineyard, Ahearn plotted the tale of "a romantic country cottage in the woods that someone fell upon and lovingly restored. With a barn."

Inspired by the site his clients had chosen in an early-20th-century enclave of distinguished Shingle-style houses, Ahearn says, "I imagined the cottage as a companion piece to the more grand structures nearby—an outbuilding, perhaps, or a smaller home built at the same time." His narrative included a happy ending, of course, where visitors, naturally assuming the cottage had been restored, would marvel over the preservation of its many charms, fooled into thinking it was circa 1900 rather than brand-new.

True to the story line, the new house effortlessly bridges past and present. While its double-gambrel, cedar-clad exterior upholds a classic New England architectural tradition, its interior offers an element of surprise. "As you approach the house it seems very intimate in scale. But once you're through the front door the whole house opens up," Ahearn says. "There's a much greater volume than you'd expect," he adds, speaking specifically of the dramatic 1½-story living/dining room and the upper-level balcony that overlooks it. Equally unexpected is the easy traffic flow among rooms and the home's thoroughly modern focus on indoor-outdoor living and entertaining.

Yet the house exudes a cozy, nostalgic warmth, conveyed largely through richly detailed wainscoting, paneling, and beaded board, which climbs walls and crowns ceilings throughout. To further reinforce the idea

FIREPLACE FOCAL POINT

In the living room, the fit-stone fireplace draws the eye and lends contrasting line, texture, and earthy color to the space.



COMPOSED VIEWS Sight lines extend from the richly detailed dining area through the open balcony above, *this photo*.

LAYERS OF TEXTURE Beaded board stretches 8 feet high in the living room, *opposite*, leaving no doubt about the room's cottage-style pedigree. An exaggerated band of multilayer millwork wraps around the soaring space.





ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

A classic farmhouse-style sink and nickel hardware, *left*, amplify the kitchen's country character, as do the clean-edge profiles of the granite countertops. A door around the corner opens to the home's service entrance and mudroom.

SIMPLE ELEGANCE Glass-front cabinets and honed-granite countertops, *opposite*, emphasize simplicity. A plate rail accents the hood over the retro-look range, a favorite of Ahearn's because of its high back and its center dial resembling a vintage clock.

of an aged structure, Ahearn employed what he terms his "kit of parts": stock molding and trim pieces layered one upon the other in an artistic array of depths, heights, and widths. "Everything is fairly chunky in that way, which gives the house a very nice level of fit and finish," he says. "The architecture speaks for itself. You don't need to rely on decorating or wallcoverings to enrich its flavor."

Antique timber beams reclaimed from a Connecticut barn appear to be structural but are purely decorative, lending additional patina. Fireplaces, too, are crafted from reclaimed materials, and cabinets nestle into niches alongside windows and fireplaces, recalling cupboards from a simpler time, even as they camouflage state-of-the-art electronics.

Indeed, period detail is the hallmark. Even the antique-pine floors are pegged with cut nails, grounding each room in chestnut-stained accuracy. "Again, it's part of the story," Ahearn says. "It's another way to make sure someone

walking into this house would never know in a million years it was brand-new. Renovated, maybe, but not brand-new."

And that is key. Far from being a slave to authenticity, the cottage borrows the best from period architectural detail and discards the rest. The country kitchen, for example, is clad in beaded board, yet the stainless-steel range feels right at home. And the island is detailed with furniture-style legs to give the impression of a repurposed family heirloom, albeit one with a prep sink. "In a big way, that push and pull is also an important part of the story," Ahearn says.

The cottage's climax is realized after stepping through a trio of French doors to the backyard. There, just beyond the pool, is a carriage house—a character nearly as important to Ahearn's story as the cottage itself. Meant to replicate the barn he envisioned at the outset, the carriage house provides automobile storage, pool house facilities, and charming guest quarters above. "Rather than having the

AUTHENTIC ELEMENTS

Reclaimed barn beams keep the kitchen casual and play off the antique pine floors.





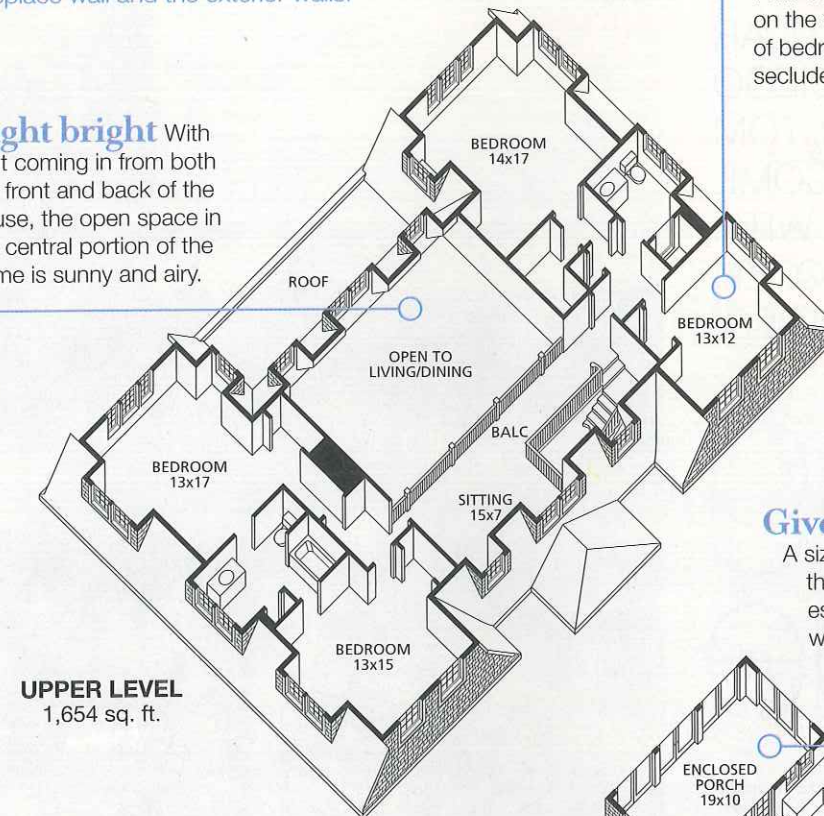
Harmony of design

The finishes used in the house give tonal cues to the furnishings, interior designer Elizabeth Hague says: "The dining table is in a walnut finish that's slightly darker than the pine floors; in the living room, the iron-and-limestone coffee table picks up the colors of the stone in the fireplace wall and the exterior walls."

Private rooms

With the master bedroom on the main floor, two sets of bedrooms offer guests secluded retreats.

Light bright With light coming in from both the front and back of the house, the open space in the central portion of the home is sunny and airy.

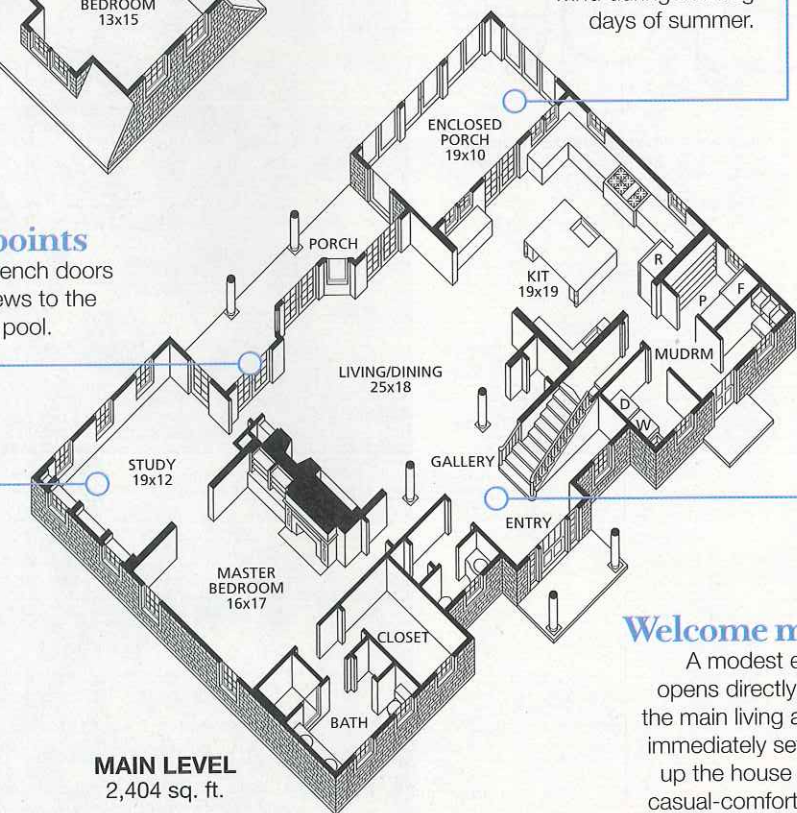


Give me shelter

A sizable porch just off the kitchen offers an escape from heat or wind during the dog days of summer.

View points

Sets of French doors enable views to the backyard pool.



Three-way play

The study opens to the back porch and the main living space, as well as to the master bedroom.

Welcome mat

A modest entry opens directly into the main living area, immediately setting up the house as a casual-comfortable vacation home.

garage attached to the house in a suburban mind-set, I wanted to pretend it was an outbuilding for the stables that might once have been here, and so it needed to be freestanding," he says. "We designed it so that it looks as though the pool house was added on later, even though it was all done at once."

Reflecting upon his approach to design, Ahearn says, "The style and spirit of this house had to be indicative of what we were trying to accomplish in the story. It had to be read in the architecture."

Architect **Patrick Ahearn** Interior designer **Linda Lewis, Elizabeth Hague, Inc.**
RESOURCES ON PAGE 112

DOWN TO THE DETAILS The main-floor master suite, *above*, allows for one-level living and showcases the home's rich, bright millwork craft, which plays into the home's country house spirit. **AGED TO PERFECTION** A pool house with guest quarters, *right*, appears to be an addition to the barn-style garage wing just out of sight; exterior materials echo those of the main house.

