

House Beautiful

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GLORIOUS WEEKEND LIVING

ROOMS WITH A VIEW
FROM THE MOUNTAINS
TO THE BEACH



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A photograph of a dark brown wicker chair with a curved backrest, positioned on a porch. The chair is adorned with cushions featuring vertical stripes in dark blue and white. A light-colored straw hat with a dark blue band is perched on the right side of the chair's backrest. A stack of magazines or newspapers rests on the chair's seat. The porch has a white railing, and the background is filled with lush green foliage and trees, suggesting a garden or park setting. The lighting is bright and natural, indicating daytime.

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This page: Dark wicker furniture on the back porch has cushions and back rests of bottle green-and-white stripes from Sunbrella. Opposite: In the front hall stands a 19th-century Chinese demilune table; the propped-up sailor's hat is late 18th century. The chair is English country Chippendale

A photograph of a bright, airy interior space, likely a hallway or entryway, in a Nantucket house. The room features white walls with decorative crown molding and a large, multi-paned doorway leading to a bright outdoor area with a white fence and greenery. On the left, a dark wooden table holds a lamp with a pleated shade and a blue ceramic vase. On the right, a dark wooden chair with a red seat cushion has a straw hat resting on it. A large, patterned rug covers the floor. The overall atmosphere is warm and traditional.

NEW TRADITIONS

The premise for a new Nantucket house decorated by Irvine Fleming Bell was that it look as if a grandmother had handed it down

This page and opposite above: The large, well-used family room's areas are delineated by three separate beige area rugs from Guatemala in different weaves. The sofa is upholstered in Brunschwig & Fils print Le Zebre. The club chair wears Plaid from Henry Calvin fabrics. Lounge chair and ottoman are done in Brunschwig's Lallarookh floral print. Nautical objects abound: ship models, telescopes, mounted fish. Opposite below: Keith Irvine and his assistant Felicity Wilde.





SURROUNDED BY CLIPPED privet hedges, the gray shingled house, aesthetic kin to many of its neighbors, can be glimpsed from the road through a curved white painted gate. The owners and their two dazzling daughters spend their summers in this Nantucket house. For years the family vacationed on the island and made many friends there, but they had always rented. By the end of the 1990s, wanting a more permanent second home, they found the perfect location and decided to build, choosing the Pennsylvania-based architect Lyman Perry, an experienced Nantucket designer.

Keith Irvine (my husband—to provide full disclosure) helped decorate their Connecticut house, and his firm, Irvine Fleming Bell, was brought in on this project from the start. When the couple spoke to the architects, they said they wanted something that looked as if it been passed down by one of their grandmothers. Keith adds, “The idea of a traditional East Coast shingle cottage also fitted in with the stringent architectural rules governing Nantucket.”

At the first site meeting, Keith arrived with Jason Bell, a new assistant

then and not yet a partner. Jason, along with Lyman Perry’s young partner Jeff Spockler, were essential to the success of the job, as were scores of construction workers. “The guys who worked on the job were incredible. They had such a passion for their crafts,” Jason says.

The interior architectural details are based on models found along the Atlantic seaboard. There is wainscoting of varying heights: in numerous hallways, in the vast family room and all the bedrooms, and climbing up the three-story staircase. Creamy white





Above: The living room is somewhat more formal than the family room. Cranberry-lined shelves hold Canton ware. The curtains are of Brunshwig & Fils' Paros stripe. Sofa fabric is Cowtan & Tout's Eton check. Right: The dining section of the family room includes a French country table and painted American Windsor chairs. The painted wood-and-wire chandelier is also American.

paint covers the wainscoting. Above it, a subtle beige-and-white wallpaper in an upward-climbing damask design lines stair walls and landings, sweeping up three floors in the center of the house and providing a perfect background for the family's ongoing collection of drawings and watercolors of old ships.

The family room, which includes the dining area, has an overall palette in beiges and naturals, its serene effect given snap with flashes of strong French blue. There is a good deal of comfortable overstuffed furniture and an extra-long pillow-scattered window seat. Rustic and antique pieces, many with a nautical theme, dot the room and catch the eye. A fireplace with an antique Massachusetts mantel is flanked by two small and rather romantically tucked-away book-lined passages that lead to a much smaller but more sophisticated living room. Here the trim and cabinetwork have glazed highlights. The Oushak rug has worn to a pleasing decay; the natural beige palette is bumped up by a shockingly attractive red, pink, and oyster check-covered sofa; and a raspberry-and-cream chinoiserie toile enlivens cushions and chairs. The room's function is similar to that of







a 19-century parlor—used only occasionally for guests or private chats.

The master bedroom is “the calmest room I have ever designed,” says Keith. “Like floating in a bowl of cream!” A tribute to cozy early American simplicity, the room is composed around the restrained use of Colefax & Fowler’s tried-and-true Plumbago Bouquet cot-

ton print. When Keith suggested a green toile bedroom for one of the daughters—“toile, everywhere!”—the somewhat conservative father said NO. Keith answered “Trust me,” and now it’s their favorite bedroom.

The daughters come and go and bring their coterie to the three-story main house and the two-bedroom guesthouse that can

sleep four. The elder brought ten girls from her sorority last summer, and they were all able to sleep in proper beds.

Three porches are like outside rooms, looking onto a spectacular, now mature garden. The family feels as if they have put down roots as well, and anticipate the happy occupancy of future generations. ●



Above and upper right: Bedroom curtains and some upholstery are Colefax & Fowler's Plumbago Bouquet printed cotton. Reproduction Gustavian open armchair from White on White. Contemporary American four-poster bed and blanket chest are mellowed with blue milk paint. Wallpaper is Osborne & Little's Pennelpe Piccolo stripe. Carpet by Patterson, Flynn & Martin. Right: Scalamandré's Pillement green-and-cream matching toile, both fabric and wallpaper, dominate a bedroom. For more details, see Resources.