

CONVERSATIONS WITH 12 CAPE COD CUSTOM HOME BUILDERS

# CAPE COD HOME

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# restoring a classic

A century ago, this classic Provincetown home overlooking Cape Cod Bay was a distinctive residence in the historic Cape Cod seaport. The structure's rich nautical heritage dates back to its construction by a late nineteenth-century sea captain. With the help of architect Chris Brown, AIA, of b Architecture Studio in Melrose and the builders of North Eastham's Cape Associates, Inc., the structure was recently transformed into one Cape Cod couple's elegant, 3,300-square-foot-dream home.

When homeowners El and Ro purchased the residence, they viewed its apartment-styled floor plan—part of a 1970s remodel—as out of sync with the home's historic character. Brown's reimagining of the home allowed two second-floor bedrooms to remain intact, while he added a fabulous new master bedroom and bathroom with spectacular views. "We carved in a private balcony," he says, "that transitions the outdoor space into their bedroom and the master bath, bringing in sea-side breezes and beautiful views of Cape Cod Bay."



*A Provincetown Home Gets a Bold New Lease on Life*





The construction crew completely renovated the first floor, transforming the space from three apartments, all in various states of disrepair, to a spacious full-service kitchen, an elegant dining room, and a cozy sitting room. “The house was redone in the 90s, but not in the beautiful Cape style that we love,” says El, one of the homeowners. “We purchased the home in order to convert it back to the beautiful single-family house it once was.”

“We based the design around the home’s historic street view,” says Brown. Before making any changes, though, the architectural/building team met with the Provincetown Historical Commission to ensure that the historic elements on the front-facing, street side of the home—primarily encompassing the window sizes and placements—were preserved.

“We felt that the exterior of the home did not match the rest of the street when we first bought the house,” says El. The aluminum siding on the

The house has been many things during its decades on a street in Provincetown’s historic seaport: the home of a ship’s captain, a row house with several apartments, and finally a splendid seaside home for a single family.



street side of the house, for example, stuck out in a residential neighborhood loaded with the classic weathered-shingles of many old Cape homes. For their home, El and Ro decided to replace the jarring aluminum with wooden shingles and then chose shutters with whale cutouts painted bright blue for extra pop. “We wanted something to distinguish the house for pedestrians as they walk by,” says Brown. “Adding the whales made it more unique.”

For Brown, the design of the home’s interior was shaped by his clients’ individual needs. “We began by listening to what El and Ro wanted: primarily, many different spaces within the home that each have a purpose. They wanted places for just the two of them, places for children and grandchildren, and areas for quiet entertainment with family and friends.”

The entire first floor has been transformed by opening up spaces to Provincetown’s famous light. New windows in bedrooms and bathrooms let in cool seaside breezes.



A spacious kitchen decorated in subtle earth tones and natural finishes provides a peaceful oasis for cooking and entertaining on busy summer weekends.



With six adult children and many grandchildren, friends, and neighbors, El and Ro wanted to use their space as efficiently as possible. “Chris made sure the living room was big enough to accommodate all our friends and family, while still being cozy enough for Ro and I to relax on our own,” El says. “This room is a quiet place for El and Ro,” Brown adds. “We decided not to add a TV, and found an antique wood stove to make the space more special.” The room’s easy access to the second-floor deck makes it an ideal spot to relax in while savoring incredible ocean views.

The living room’s focal point—a mural-decorated barn door—inspired many of Brown’s design choices throughout the home. “The bright, cheery colors of the mural informed the color palate for the house,” says Brown. “El and Ro wanted blues and greens to reflect the sky and ocean light.”

The spacious kitchen also allows the family to entertain with ease. “We love to cook,” says El, “so Chris designed a large kitchen, a roomy pantry, and additional space for an extra refrigerator in the back hallway for when friends visit.”

A unique set of stairs at the center of the house—right as one walks in from the driveway—is a stunning focal point for the home. A work of art in their own right, the stairs are constructed with antique cladding salvaged from old Boston Harbor oak pylons.





Brown sourced the pylons from Antique Lumber of Chelsea, a company that specializes in finding rare woods. “El and Ro wanted a driftwood look,” says Brown. “This antique harbor oak cladding is about as close as you can get.” Some of the pylons were also milled to create a decorative accent for the ceiling in the kitchen, and the rest form the unique horizontal bands found in the staircase.

“One tall floor-to-ceiling piece (on the stairs) took three or four people to move,” Brown says. “Ensuring that these pieces fit seamlessly between the floor and ceiling was also a major part of the stairs’ design.” For a finishing touch of cheer, Brown chose bright, welcoming colors for the adjacent stair wall, adding a whimsical touch to one of the home’s most traveled spaces.

The home’s exterior features were also carefully considered. The only original deck off the second floor sitting room was insufficient for the couple to truly appreciate the magnificent ocean views. “We treated the decks like rooms of the



interior,” says Brown. “Outdoor spaces provide extra landing points, sitting points, and cooking points. These are very active spaces, so we needed to ensure the circulation between indoors and out would be smooth; We didn’t want the kids bumping into one another on the way in or out.”

Brown created symmetry between exterior and interior spaces by showcasing the ocean light. “We worked with the natural light when we chose the placement for the windows; double windows and French doors let in light and help ventilation,” says Brown. Although the house’s beach-facing windows frame classic Cape views, the surrounding environment has a more urban feel, with neighbors’ homes only feet away. Brown maintained El and Ro’s privacy by placing most of the windows on the

sea-view side, using the decks to create even more of a sense of openness. “The home is in tight quarters,” says Brown, “but we kept the views and interiors focused on the water to create that private, cozy feel.”

“Our satisfaction with the project is that it reflects El and Ro’s needs,” says Brown. “You walk in the door and immediately know it’s their home.” El adds, “Chris is first and foremost a gifted architect; beyond that, his resources and contacts helped bring our dream to life.”

*For more information, visit [barchstudio.com](http://barchstudio.com) or [capeassociates.com](http://capeassociates.com).*

*Charlotte Roth is a freelance writer for Cape Cod HOME.*

A coastal color palette, classic summer resort-style furnishings, warmly-hued hardwood floors, and creative decorative touches throughout add to the home’s unique seaside charm.

