

WHOLE HOUSE RENOVATION

Captain's Quarters

An updated sea captain's home
sails into this century.

By Laurie Higgins
Photography by Christian Scully



DESIGN/BUILD: McPhee Associates of Cape Cod



Left: The kitchen was expanded using space taken from a half bath.

Below: A set of stairs was added to the living room to provide a second access point to the second floor.

Starting Light

That was back in 1994. They knew the house would eventually need to be renovated, but at first they just made some cosmetic changes. In 2008, the stunning wraparound front porch began to fall off. The Ragans hired McPhee Associates of Cape Cod to renovate it.

Builder Rob McPhee kept the original stone foundation on the porch, replaced the concrete slab flooring and added new columns. A white bead board ceiling enhanced the romantic period charm and the porch became a favorite gathering place for family and friends.



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Katie Ragan and her husband, John, were sure of two things when they started shopping for a summer home: they wanted it to be located in Harwich Port, Mass., and they wanted a water view. But after seeing an antique captain's home built circa 1840, they were instantly smitten and purchased the Harwich Port property within the hour, despite its landlocked views.



Left: Reclaimed antique pine flooring is one of the owner's favorite features in the newly remodeled home, seen here with a classic compass rose painted at the foot of the bar.

Renovation overhaul

Three years ago, when their oldest son put his foot through a floorboard, the Ragans knew the time had come to do a full house renovation, so they hired McPhee Associates once again. "The footprint is the same, but we gutted the whole house and rebuilt it from the inside out," says McPhee.

As part of the renovation, a new dormer was added and the roof was replaced in several places. McPhee raised ceilings, replaced walls, and installed new windows, flooring and crown molding. He also straightened the central staircase to the second floor and added a second staircase between the living room and the teenaged children's den. Only the original fireplace was left in place. "The chimney stayed but we had to add on to it and make it a little taller because the old chimney from the roofline was just shot," McPhee says. "So the interior chimney is original, but we put new flashing on and new brick meant to look like old brick."

Standout features

One of Ragan's favorite features of the renovation is the reclaimed antique pine floors in the living room, dining room and kitchen. A compass rose is painted on the flooring in front of the new bar in the dining room. "There were two smaller sliders in the dining room, so we took those out and put one big slider in that leads to an outdoor kitchen and courtyard area," McPhee says. The courtyard is bluestone with cobblestone edging. A new stone fire pit is located in the center of the grassy backyard where the family now spends a lot of their time.

In the interior kitchen, every effort was made to create a sense of period. The bricks from the dining room fireplace are exposed and have been whitewashed. Storage is a combination of cabinetry and old-fashioned-style shelving. An existing piece of furniture was given a new top to become a dining island that matches the granite countertops.

A tile mosaic over the stove features a map of Cape Cod. A Boos Block butcher block adds an extra work space in the now spacious kitchen that was previously a small kitchen and bath.



Left: The top of the central staircase affords a glimpse of three rooms at once: the sons' bedroom with nautical wallpaper, a guest room outfitted with twin beds (right) and the dining room with an informal sitting area (straight ahead). Below: Nautical touches accent the downstairs bath. Bottom: For that "old Cape Cod look," the master bedroom has board-and-batten wall paneling and a circular window that resembles a porthole.



Upgraded sleeping quarters

Guest rooms, both under and at the top of the central staircase, were given makeovers with fresh paint and carpeting. The sons' bedroom features fun nautical details and built-in dressers for extra storage and a finished look. As a place for the sons to relax with friends and each other, McPhee built a dormer with a raised ceiling height.

The master suite is off a separate, enclosed hallway filled with new storage space. "In the master bedroom, we raised the ceiling a bit and made it a tray ceiling," McPhee says. "We added a round

window over the bed so that it looks like a porthole in a ship. Board and batten on the walls created the old Cape Cod look."

The exterior of the house was re-shingled and Ragan chose new shutters with vintage appeal. Exterior plantings include traditional climbing roses and hydrangeas. Wide grassy swaths of lawn contribute to the total effect. "I wanted it to look like a captain's home, which is what it once was," Ragan says. "But now everything is more open and more usable. I wanted to keep it simple and comfy. That's the way both of my homes are." ▲



Perfect for entertaining, the backyard features an outdoor living area replete with a patio, fire pit and multiple seating arrangements, all in a secluded setting.

in the details



The bar in the dining room is topped with a concrete surface sourced from Main Street at Botellos.



Traditional wood-louver shutters and hardware were purchased from New England Shutter Mills in Lawrence, Mass.



Boos butcher block kitchen island was purchased from Main Street at Botellos.