

*On a beloved island off the coast  
of Connecticut, one woman  
re-creates the summer pleasures  
of her childhood.*

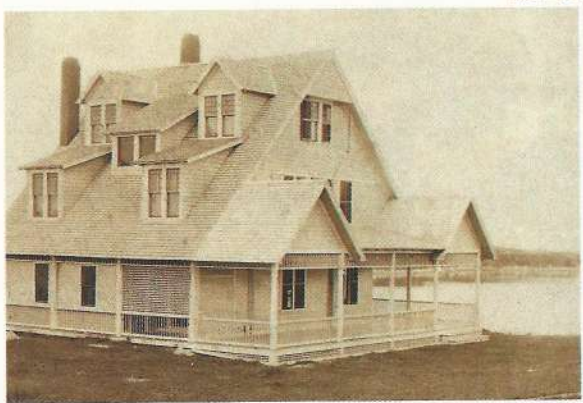
# rewinding the clock

TEXT BY SAXON HENRY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN M. HALL | STYLING BY BETSY MARX



The first glimpse of a firefly in an inky summer sky. A sailboat's rigging tapping rhythmically against its mast. The thwack of a tennis ball meeting a swinging racket. Any one of these sights or sounds could evoke fond reminiscences for a New Englander who spent her youth around East Coast waters. When the woman, Helen, and her husband, Frank, decided to search for a second home, she naturally returned to the stretch of land she loved as a child.

The cottage she chose, just a beach pebble's throw from the house her parents once owned, became theirs after she cajoled her husband into the purchase. "I had always loved this spot,"



Helen says of the property's water access. "I kept saying, 'Come on, Frank: location, location, location!' When he finally gave in, he had the dock built almost instantly. Then, he absolutely loved it!"

Dating to the late 1800s, the cottage badly needed an update. Helen wanted to return the home to its intended character. Using a historical photograph as her guide, she hired David Beckwith

**A**rts and Crafts detailing and dormers amplify the Victorian cottage's charm. The wraparound porch is the owners' favorite room during warm months. In the master bedroom (top), wicker chairs and a window seat beckon Helen with her paint and brushes.





**B**lue accents and lots of white beaded board give the eat-in kitchen informal flair. A table and wicker chairs, painted watery blue, supply the room with a place to linger over breakfast and the view.







**H**elen, daughter Polly, and their pups return from the dock. Below: Sunny wallpaper makes the mudroom a welcoming place to drop beach paraphernalia after a day in the sun.

of BD Design for the task. "I studied [the picture] closely, along with other photos of these hybrid shingle-style homes with Victorian features," says David. "We added a middle dormer to the water side where there were only two, but we were careful not to alter the house in a way that would have compromised the architectural integrity."

With the structural changes complete, Helen called on interior designer







Sarah Smith to help her create interiors that integrate her playful spirit with the relaxed island style. "This house is fun because it doesn't have to be perfect," Helen says. "Frank and I love animals, children, the water, and casual living, and that is what this house is all about."

The island's natural beauty influenced many design decisions. Valances in the main rooms leave the expansive water views unobstructed, and sheer treatments dress many of the bedroom windows. "I encouraged Helen to choose fabrics that would blow in the breeze and not block the amazing light that shimmers in from the water when the sun is bright," Sarah says.



An enviable collection of vintage furniture came with the house, and Helen wanted to integrate the items into the design scheme. Sarah refreshed tattered chairs and sofas with cheerful fabrics. Wood pieces gained coats of pale blue and white paint. And to further the feeling of a classic cottage, Sarah scattered wicker inside and outdoors on

**T**he living room's antique love seat (left), now painted a minty green, came with the house. Colors pulled from its cheerful floral-striped upholstery show up on side chairs. Top: In the foyer, hooked rugs and seashells set the tone for casual beach house living.



**F**rom the palest blush to hot magenta, Helen's favorite color permeates the dining room. The dining table's formal lines take on cottage appeal with a glossy white finish. Casual seating stretches along the bay window.





*Soft-blue wallpaper aptly named "Beneath the Waves" swaths the peaceful third-floor bedroom. Antique quilts comfort guests on cool nights.*







A bureau left by the previous owners received a coat of blue to match the summer sky. Below: A raised platform brings the vintage tub level with the view.

the inviting wraparound porch, with its ample shady niches for relaxed reading or conversation.

Reflecting on her relationship with this New England isle, Helen says, "So many of the adults who now own homes grew up in the summers here. The place is so special, I think, because it has escaped too much change over the years." 🌸

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