

# Cape Cod

Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Magazine™

## 35 WAYS to have **FUN** in the **SUN**

- Hit the beach
- Bike the rail trail
- Ride the dinner train
- Sail away and more!

## Grilling 101

Easy yet delicious flame-cooked meals — lobster, stuffed pork, even pizza!

**Plus:** Wash ashore  
on Washburn Island



# Cottage Living, Cape Style



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Simplicity and age-friendly living make this home a dream for its year-round residents.

After 30 years of summering on the Cape, the homeowners of this intimate cottage decided it was time to make Falmouth their permanent home. They owned the land—now it was time to build a home in which they could “age in place.” Not only would the home have to be beautiful, it had to accommodate them physically as the years went on, and provide ample private space for visiting family. Having experience with assisted living facility designs, Falmouth-based architect Andrew Borgese, founder and principal of Integrata Architecture and Planning, had plenty of ideas to turn their dream into reality.

BY LAUREL KORNHISER



Designed with ageless living in mind, this Falmouth home's unique "cottage" look is anything but on its minimalist interior and its great room (above)—the destination of the home.

### Core Building

"When I met with the homeowners, I sat down with them and really got to know them. I wanted to know if they liked sun in the morning when they woke up or if they preferred to enjoy a sunset, what they liked to do in their free time, what they enjoyed. The best designs come from collaboration and I knew that to give them the house that was perfect for them, I had to get to know them," says Borgese.

The unique cottage design centers around the home's elevator, the core of the house and a specific request from the homeowners. Just steps inside the entry, the elevator awaits, decorously, unobtrusively. On both levels of



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the home, rooms surround the central elevator, with doors connecting room to room in a flowing, circular movement encased in square walls. A quick ride or several gracious steps up the wrapping stairway, and one arrives at what Borgese calls the “destination” of the house: the great room, where the couple are afforded glimpses of Cleveland Light and sunsets over Buzzards Bay in the distance.

Of course, elements to assist the couple, who wish to remain anonymous, as they age were taken into account with every design detail. Borgese knew that three-foot wide doors, blocking for future grab bars, and hallway chair rails wide enough to provide a solid hand grip would help.

“I really wanted to create an efficient floor plan,” says Borgese. To economize, he minimized hallways and circular areas. “Rooms are right off each other,” he says. Any spare space was given to the great room. A great room left under-defined or un-delineated would have felt out of place in this tightly designed home, so Borgese paid extra attention to the details—trim, built-ins, base moldings and lighting—giving the room the character that many great rooms lack. “Simple things break a room into manageable pieces,” he says, “so that your eye and your mind can absorb the pieces of the room.” Entry is through a graceful 10-foot wide arch, meant, Borgese says, to celebrate “the arrival or returning home to a safe, comfortable haven.”

Such a room needs a focal point, and for this one, it is the fireplace, flanked by two pilasters and faced with Caesarstone, a nonporous, engineered product made up largely of waste quartz. This same material carries over bookshelves built below the sills, and is found on kitchen and island countertops. Above the fireplace hangs a five-color abstract lithograph by Sam Francis. This piece of artwork adds a



splash of striking color in a home rich with warm earth tones.

“The architecture is not meant to be the focus of this room. The owners’ lives are being expressed here, and the architecture is designed to support that in as subliminal a way as possible and never to compete with it,” says Borgese, who also kept the homeowners’ art collection a prime mover in the design of the home. So many of these voluminous open rooms lack wall space, leaving homeowners wondering where to hang their pictures. Not so in this home, where there is ample space for the etchings, paintings, prints, photos, and African sculptures accumulated over a lifetime.



(top) Caesarstone-covered bookshelves below the windows don’t block the bay views while housing a collection of orchids and art books. (left) The warm kitchen also features Caesarstone on its countertops and island.

Vaulted ceilings and a wall of windows keep the great room light and open, serving as a simple backdrop to the homeowners’ art collection.

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## Rooms for Filling

While the couple lives upstairs—their master bedroom and bath, an office, and their kitchen arcing around the great room—the wife pursues her new hobby, stained glass work, in a first floor studio. The studio, with a doorway leading to a patio and yard, also serves as a gardening room and features recycled vinyl flooring for easy cleaning and comfort during long periods standing while working on projects.

Other than the studio, the rest of the ground floor is dedicated to the numerous visitors the couple entertains throughout the year. A private kitchen, dining room, living room and two bedrooms make the ground floor a home-within-a-home, helping to maintain both the guests' and homeowners' privacy.

Celebrating the Danish heritage of the wife, who moved to the U.S. when she was in her forties, both the ground floor and upper floor are filled with modernist furnishings. Furnishings by Gustav Stickley, who got his start in upstate New York, where the couple had long resided, are quite appropriate, as the architect was an early advocate of open floorplans.

Stickley, like others in the Arts and Crafts movement, also believed a home should fit in with its locale, and this Falmouth home does just that, says Borgese, incorporating vernacular elements such as shingles, redwood siding, and several gables. The roof changes outside mean ceiling changes in the great room. "The roof steps down, the windows step down, the landscape slopes down," says Borgese. "You can't design a house from the outside or inside. Everything needs to be addressed holistically." 🌿

### Integrata Architecture and Planning

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