

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Cape
&
Islands

At Last!

SUMMER LIVING AT ITS BEST



"It's a house of parts that seem to have a casual relationship" is how architect Jacob Albert describes the rambling coastal home. The house minimizes its carbon footprint with solar power and a geothermal heating and cooling system. **FACING PAGE:** Overhangs nearly three feet deep, seen here outside the main bedroom, help reduce cooling demand by shading windows from the high summer sun.



The *ULTIMATE* Upcycle

A multigenerational home embraces reuse in a promise for the next generation.

Text by DEBRA JUDGE SILBER

Photography by GREG PREMURU

Most of us equate recycling with sorting bottles and breaking down boxes. But architect Jacob Albert's clients took the practice to a higher level when they realized a timeworn summer cottage sat squarely in the way of their planned coastal home.



FAR LEFT: The front door's cheerful orangey-red color sets the tone for the casual interior. **ABOVE:** It reappears in the living room in *Morning Still Life*, a painting by Lillia Frantin, which inspired the addition of bright greens and blues to the palette. Designer Heather Wells kept the vibe casual by incorporating vintage furnishings, such as this wicker-block sofa designed by John Hutton for Donghia.

Rather than add the lumber, bricks, and roofing of the old building to the waste stream, they incorporated the onetime boathouse into their new home, preserving its rustic charm along with the materials used to build it. "You could consider the whole boathouse a recycled building," Albert notes.

While literally embodying the past, the 8,000-square-foot cedar-shingled

home also embraces the future on both a personal and planetary level. With grandchildren on the horizon, Albert's clients needed a house large enough to accommodate their growing extended family. But out of concern for the environment, they wanted to minimize their home's carbon footprint by reducing its use of fossil fuels.

Albert and colleague Eric Rochon met

that challenge by designing a home with a double-wall assembly that prevents heat loss by confining mechanical elements to the interior, allowing uninterrupted insulation—both open-cell spray foam and blown-in cellulose—in the outer wall. Twenty 200-foot-deep geothermal wells provide heating and cooling, with the home's electrical use offset by solar panels mounted on its

“They really wanted it to be user-friendly,
COLORFUL, cheerful, but very *LOW-KEY*.”

—Interior designer Heather Wells



The dark hue (Benjamin Moore Old Navy) of the TV room creates a cozy sanctuary off the bright and lively living room. The custom chair is upholstered in Langham by Jim Thompson Fabrics.



garage and ocean-facing dormers. The structure's size might have worked against energy conservation, but builder Peter Rosbeck points to the amount of roof area available for solar and the client's commitment as determining factors. "I do feel strongly you can make larger homes sustainable provided you take the right steps to do so," he says.

The home's placement was restricted, though that's not immediately obvious to the casual observer. "We were hemmed in on every side," explains Albert, referring to the setbacks, easements, and myriad constraints that dictated where the house could sit. Its low profile and gambrel roof express

the home's twenty-six-foot height restrictions. Both also served Albert's aesthetic goal. "We wanted to minimize the visual impact of what needed to be a pretty big house," he says, explaining how the home's meandering habit allowed him to position its eight bedrooms so that they could be grouped into a variety of family suites.

Interior designer Heather Wells amped up the family friendliness with the easygoing, lived-in comfort of vintage furniture and rugs, and lively colors like Fine Paints of Europe's Poppy, which debuts at the front door and makes cameo appearances throughout the house. "They really wanted it to be user-friendly, colorful,

ABOVE: Marvin's Ultimate Lift and Slide Doors disappear into the wall between the kitchen and an adjacent screened porch, allowing for breakfast with a view. **RIGHT:** The bright color of the front door is repeated on the counter stools; vintage hickory chairs with rope backs bring warmth to the table. Lighting from The Urban Electric Co. and a backsplash of glistening subway tile from Waterworks add some shine.



cheerful, but very low-key,” she says.

No part of the house fits that description better than the recycled cottage. Self-contained, with its own kitchen, living area, bedroom, and screened porch, it remains uninsulated, joined to one of the first-floor guest rooms via an exterior door that closes it off in winter. Knowing her clients’ affection for its rusticity, Wells changed only the upholstery on the existing furniture. Before emptying the cottage in order to move it (it was temporarily relocated so that the framing for the new house could be built), she and designer Marianthi Thomas painstakingly documented its interior.

“We photographed everything in place—every knickknack, every book,” recalls Thomas. “It was tedious but well worth it because the clients really loved this space, and they felt it was their job to keep it just the way it was.” Everything was put back in its rightful spot when the final home was finished, even the cottage, proving that reduce, reuse, recycle can, indeed, be remarkable.

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

“The clients really *LOVED* this space, and they felt it was *THEIR JOB* to keep it just the way *IT WAS*.”

—Interior designer
Marianthi Thomas

ARCHITECTURE: Jacob Albert and Eric Rochon, ART Architects

INTERIOR DESIGN: Heather Wells and Marianthi Thomas, Heather Wells

BUILDER: Peter Rosbeck, Rosbeck Builders

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Kris Horiuchi, Horiuchi & Solien Landscape Architects



The 100-year-old cottage on the site was moved to make way for construction of the new house, then attached to one end and furnished exactly as it had been—sans insulation, and with nothing but a glass-and-wood garage door separating it from its rebuilt screened porch. “We thought it would really spoil it to winterize it,” the architect says.