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THE CURVILINEAR bead-board ceiling in the entry hall provides over a mile of furnishings, including an antique Nantucket storage bench with fish-tail arms and a tiny convex mirror set in a dramatic wooden sunburst frame.

NANTUCKET

Nautical

A FAMILY'S DREAM RETREAT BECOMES REALITY WITH THE TEAM EFFORT OF DEVELOPER, ARCHITECT, BUILDER, AND INTERIOR DESIGNER

Written by Estelle Bond Guralnick

Photography by Michael J. Lee

Development by The Meadow Group

Architecture by Nantucket Architecture Group

Construction by J. Brown Builder Inc.

Interior Design by Carter & Company



INTERIOR DESIGNER MICHAEL CARTER WAS mystified when, four years ago, he got a terse voice message about a project on Nantucket. The caller was Steve Meadow, but details were sketchy, and Carter couldn't fathom whether Meadow was client, architect, or builder. As it turned out, he's none of the above. Meadow is a high-end "turnkey" residential developer whose clients, a Brookline, Massachusetts, couple with three children (they now have four offspring, ages 2 to 9), had commissioned him to find the perfect oceanfront property, then hire and manage the architect, builder, landscaper, and interior designer who would create for them a self-contained vacation compound that would both accommodate their nuclear family and easily adapt to dozens of guests.

"Lucky for me," says Carter, whose firm, Carter & Company, is in Boston, "Meadow had researched our office, liked my work, and heard that I was easy to deal with. The clients interviewed me, saw my portfolio, and it was a go." What ensued brought an unexpected benefit for him, he says: "I had a unique, up-close opportunity to learn the ropes of building a first-rate house from a master who became both a mentor and friend."



In 2005, on a cold wintry day, Meadow, the maestro, assembled his team of talent for its first meeting on the barren 4-acre island site destined to become a welcoming family retreat for generations to come. "From inception to move-in day in July 2007, we all worked together seamlessly," says architectural designer Steve Theroux of the Nantucket Architecture Group. "There were no egos, no power plays. Josh Brown is a terrific builder, and Carter & Company are fabulous decorators. Steve Meadow gets the credit. He brought us all to the table and enabled us to get the best possible results."

At ease on a bluff, the rambling Shingle-style house is

deliberately massed to look smaller than its actual 15,000 square feet. There is no hint of the seven bedrooms within, nor of the separate guest quarters and resort-style amenities such as swimming pool with cabana, tennis and sports court, private beach, gym, spa, and home theater. "Basically," says Carter, "it's all about togetherness for family and friends, with no need to go elsewhere for recreation."

No detail in building and landscaping was too small for Meadow's attention. When the owners requested a playhouse for their children, Meadow flew to a New Jersey tree farm for specimens that would shade the structure in a naturalized way. He sourced



A GLIMPSE OF the graceful staircase (FACING PAGE) in the main hall reveals the sculpture of a horse's head that tops the newel post. Broad strokes of tonal furniture and accessories balanced by the strong verticality of the stone-faced fireplace create contrast in the great room (ABOVE), where pops of blue

reference the oceanside setting. Reclaimed antique barn beams and pine flooring add a sense of history to the newly built house. Granite slabs set into the sloping lawn act as front steps (LEFT) to the rambling Shingle-style house, which is purposely massed to look smaller than it actually is.

THE KITCHEN FEATURES AN oversize 10-foot-square island topped with teak. The backsplash of blue ceramic subway tiles is laid out in a herringbone pattern above the cooktop.



native New England stone, antique barn beams and floorboards in varying widths and lengths, and the teak that Carter suggested for the countertop on the kitchen island. Blueberry and blackberry bushes were planted for easy picking. "From safety features to ease of living, we all worked to provide the best for the family," says Meadow.

During the two-year building process, Carter consulted on architectural details (the Shaker-like curve of the three-story staircase, the single shelf of the stone fireplace facade) while translating the homeowners' furnishings vision into reality.

"Preppy predictability is not their thing," he says. "No lighthouses, seagull prints, Lilly Pulitzer pinks and greens."

Instead, Carter was inspired by the beautiful natural setting, from the tones of sand and bleached driftwood to the Atlantic Ocean's range of lighthearted aquamarine to deep teal blues. The clients also appreciated the New England tradition of mixing old things with new in furnishings and building materials. "They like antique timbers, reclaimed wood flooring, bead board, wainscoting, native stone, sea grass, raffia," says Carter.

Top priority was given to comfort, expressed with serene sophistication. "Whenever I brought the wife a selection of edited fabrics to pick from, I'd always applaud her choices," Carter says. "She's intelligent, practical, and self-assured. Inevitably, she'd zero in on my private preferences, too." The husband concentrated on ensuring a state-of-the-art media system for the entire house, but he also requested fabrics pleasant to the touch, such as woven chenille rather than nubby tweed. Ultimately, Carter's plan kept room arrangements airy but not sparse, comfortable but not crowded, artful but not pretentious.

Move-in day was the "turkey" moment of truth, and the crunch

was on and the tension was palpable. Carter literally pushed workers out the back door as the family pulled into the driveway. Meadow greeted everyone and ushered them through the front door. The children immediately rushed upstairs to their bedrooms, which Carter had set up with their favorite toys. The ultimate reward for the design/build team was the look on the faces of the clients. Years of dusty construction sites, building and design plans, and fabric storyboards had become just a memory. "Their expressions said it all," says Carter, "but they voiced it, too. They said the house was a breath of fresh air, the home of their dreams." ■

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DESIGN DECISIONS *Beachcombing*

Like a shiny shell washed up on the sand next to an encrusted barnacle, the mix of new and old in this beach house reflects the varied textures and subtle colors of the ocean. Interior designer Michael Carter cites natural, sculptural forms as inspiration for his choices. In the master bedroom, for example, the bed is a reproduction of an early New England four-poster. The headboard (above), upholstered in heavy-gauge striped linen, features exposed tacks that emphasize the curvilinear shape. Above the bed, a convex mirror from a Beacon Hill antiques shop adds sparkle. The lamp base, a pyramid of curves, is contemporary Italian white ceramic, its smooth surface a foil for the raffia shade. Sea glass, a nautilus shell, an old bottle, and a float add to the textural mix. In the guesthouse foyer (left), a set of mirrors framed in grass cloth plays off the appealing imperfections of a gnarly piece of driftwood and antique painted candlesticks.