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Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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On the
WATER FRONT

Bell Island BEAUTY

A COZY BEACH COTTAGE
IS TRANSFORMED INTO A
CHIC AND SOPHISTICATED
FULL-TIME HOME

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Just Add Water A Boffi ceiling fan draws Sound breezes into the master bedroom, where a bed from Peruvian Touch is dressed in Matouk sheets and finished with a Serena & Lily blanket. The linen-and-wool rug is from the Mitchell Denburg Collection. The Viyet chair and ottoman wear a Rogers & Goffigon fabric. See *Resources*.



A JEWEL BOX PERCHED ABOVE the azure waters of Long Island Sound sounds like the ideal weekend retreat. Now imagine it's a full-time home. Sunrise to sunset, rain or shine, the house gleams. The client hired her longtime interior designer Michael Cox and architect Richard Swann to transform her beach cottage on quirky, magical Bell Island—connected to Rowayton by a thin isthmus—into a full-time home for her and her three sons. From the outside, the renovated property looks like a traditional cottage. But inside it's another story. "You approach the house, and it's humble, snugly set into the environment," says Cox. "Then you step into the living room, and your breath is taken away by the view."

"People say that from the outside it looks like a modest house," echoes Swann. "Yet when you go in, you discover space after space, floor after floor, room after room." "I come from Ohio, so for me—living on the water—I'm on vacation every day," says the homeowner. "It's calming, even when it's horrible weather. It's like a constantly changing painting. I have kayaks and paddleboards on the dock so I can get out early." Cox had worked with the client previously—on a ski house in Montana and a farmhouse in Ohio—giving him an understanding of her sensibilities and priorities. "Michael knows my style, and he knows what I am looking for," notes the homeowner. "It's fun for me to com-

bine family paintings and antiques with glass and metal. He is great at layering. I wanted it clean and uncluttered." By the time Cox and Swann were done, what began as a renovation was a new house completed in just 14 months. The original footprint filled the maximum zoning allowed, so the only direction to go was up. The roof was raised about five feet, enabling a former crawl-around attic to become a proper third floor with two new bedrooms. The ceiling on the second floor also benefited from elevated ceilings. Almost the entire front of the house was opened with huge glass sliding doors.



Form Meets Function (FAR LEFT) In the kitchen, New York Athletic Club barstools from Hollywood at Home provide seating at the island, which is illuminated by vintage lights from Palm Beach Antique & Design Center. Cabinet hardware is through Simon's Hardware & Bath. **Soundside Dining** (ABOVE) A dining table from Balsamo Antiques is surrounded by Kirby chairs through Foley & Cox and head chairs from Lucca Antiques. A window-facing pair of rush armchairs and a leather ottoman are from Hickory Chair. **Old With New** (LEFT) A family heirloom bench gets a layered contemporary look with a maritime metal studded mirror from Liza Sherman Antiques and a white ceramic table from Mecox. See Resources.



Cozy Living In the living room, swivel chairs from Dennis Miller Associates in a blue Holland & Sherry fabric and George Smith armchairs in a Perennials fabric flank a coffee table from AFD Warehouse. A Foley & Cox Maxfield sofa, Mecox seagrass side table and a rug from Studio Four NYC complete the look. See Resources.



“I COME FROM OHIO, SO FOR ME—LIVING ON THE WATER—I’M ON VACATION EVERY DAY”

“We responded to the water views by using those lift and slide glass doors where you can practically open the whole side of the house, giving the client 12 feet of uninterrupted space to wander in and out, creating an inside-outside house,” says Swann.

The enlarged contemporary, open-plan living, dining and kitchen area serves as the focal point of the house. The garage—once a stand-alone wood shack—was woven into the house so you can step from one into the other. A cozy home office/den with built-in bookshelves framing the window was added on top of the garage, linking directly to the house’s second floor.

The design team maximized space wherever they could, using every nook and cranny for built-in storage. The expandable dining table can seat up to 14, while dining room chairs double as desk chairs. A TV pops up out of an antique console in the living room. Coffee tables have two levels, allowing for magazines and books, as well as a place to rest a cup of coffee.

A sea-glass inspired palette fills the great room, while greens and blues delve deeper in the bedrooms. An eclectic mix of family heirlooms, plus vintage and contemporary pieces reflect the client’s sophisticated appreciation of many styles and periods. Soft linens and cottons, natural woven floor coverings, luxurious wools and cashmeres all add to the embrace of the interiors. “Whether I’m coming in from the City or I have been traveling, it’s so wonderful to look forward to going home,” says the homeowner. ✨



Room To Relax (OPPOSITE PAGE) In the home office/den, a sofa from Peruvian Touch wraps around a cocktail ottoman from Richomme. Phillip Jeffries wallcovering adds texture to the built-in bookcase. The pendant light is from Urban Electric; rug is from RH. **Best Seat** (TOP) Watch the world sail by from the window bench by Artistic Upholstery in a David Sutherland canvas. Pillows are from L’aviva Home’s Burkina Collection and in a Perennials canvas weave. **Palette Pleaser** (LEFT) Handmade Moroccan floor tiles by Mosaic House in the master bathroom echo the home’s interior with hues of sand, white and blues. Waterworks hardware and accessories are the finishing touches. See Resources.