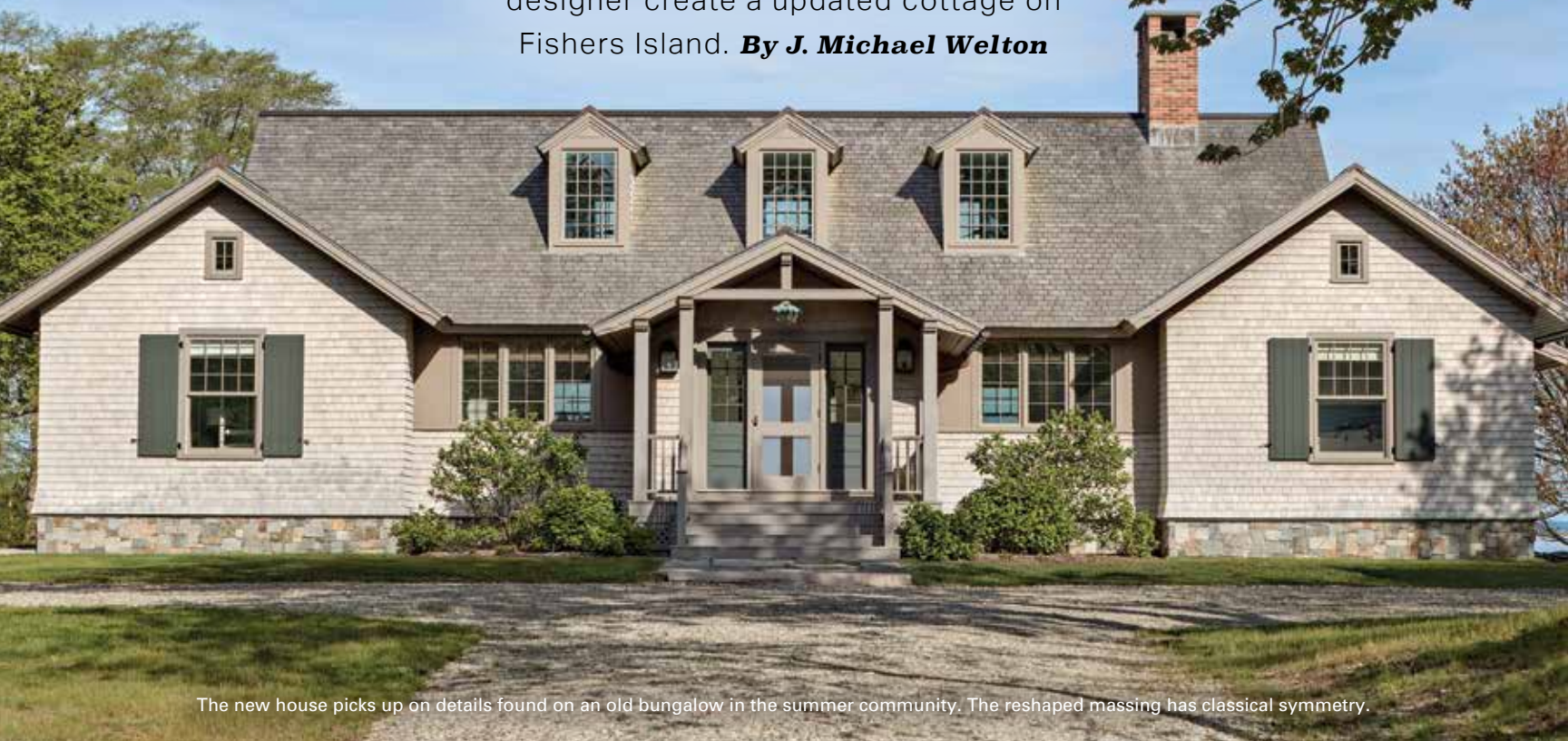


# Cued Up

Looking to the past, an architect and an interior designer create a updated cottage on Fishers Island. **By J. Michael Welton**



The new house picks up on details found on an old bungalow in the summer community. The reshaped massing has classical symmetry.

**O**UTSIDE, inspiration for Sound Cottage came from the flavor of an island summer community. Inside, a seaside painting by noted artist Frederick Judd Waugh informed the color palette.

Jacob Albert, co-founder of Boston's Albert Righter Tittmann Architects, took cues from the vernacular architecture of earlier summer homes on Fishers Island, which is at the eastern end of Long

Island in New York. He chose to echo an example that is bungalow-like, with decorative rafters and a post-and-beam porch. "I tried to pick up on that, but still, this is a modern house for today's living," Albert says.

Interior designer Dorsey Miller looked to the periwinkle blues and white tones of Waugh's maritime painting—and stitched them brightly across the interiors of the single-story home. The

house is owned by her aunt, who's also an interior designer, and Miller's former employer.

"We wanted it to be light and fun and summery," Dorsey Miller says. "My aunt handed me the reins. But it was fun to work together with someone I was related to, and had worked for."

The cottage is sited on the water, on a three-and-a-half-acre lot where an "upside-down" house once stood.

**Right** The main living space rises to the roof ridge. Dormers bring in plenty of light, despite a full-width porch. **Below** The nicely proportioned kitchen is beachy with white paint, Carrara marble, and accents of watery blue. **Bottom** A neutral color palette is relieved by pops of blue and white, all suggested by a seaside painting.



That is, the living quarters had been on the second floor, for views of the sound, with bedrooms below. But these clients, who had lived in the house for several years, missed having a direct connection between the main living spaces and the land. They resolved to start over.

“The question was how to get the good views and still be on the land,” Albert says. “We raised the level of the land and built a one-story house. It’s now almost at the same elevation as the upper floor of the two-story house had been.”

To capture that view, the builders brought in truckloads of fill, orchestrating a good relationship of house to water. “You go down from the living room to a covered porch, to a deck, to a

grassy plateau—and then to the original grade,” Albert says. “It all seems very natural. No one visiting now would have any idea that all of these changes were made to the grade.”

Where the former driveway had run parallel to the old house, Albert laid out a new driveway that meanders around and finally turns to approach the new cottage on axis, which the symmetry of the house seemed to demand. “The symmetry is formal, but the language of the house is informal.”

Because the 2,500-square-foot home is one room wide, you can see all the way through the house. All the main rooms have at least two exposures, and some have three, with windows open to views, breezes, and sunlight. Natural



**Above** An informal wainscot of painted beadboard contributes to the island flavor of the cottage. The wallpaper is by Quadrille. Coleen and Co. sconces and fittings are by Waterworks. **Right** (from top) A tufted bench upholstered in pink is a counterpoint to the bedroom's blue-and-white palette; the headboard fabric is from Raoul Textiles. • A leafy pendant fixture in the bath is new. • In the guest room, the table is from Oomph.



light pours through a series of upper-level dormers—into the combined living/dining/kitchen at the center of the house. Bedrooms are in side wings.

A long porch faces the water. “That’s where a lot of living is done in the summer,” Albert says. “When you have a porch that goes all the way across on the water side, you run the risk of making the living spaces dark. But those roof dormers bring in plenty of light,” he says.

In the living area, the ceiling follows the roof slope, to a high ridge in the center. A painted wood wainscoting that incorporates built-in bookshelves wraps around the room and establishes an intimate scale. “You don’t have the feeling of a cavernous space,” Albert says.

Miller and her aunt worked hard to create a light and summery series of

spaces for entertaining—and for easy living. This is a seasonal house, after all. It may be insulated and heated for year-round living, but its prime time is during the warmer months.

Thus the pops of blues and whites in almost every room. “The kitchen is light and bright with Carrara marble countertops and a glass-tile backsplash,” Miller says. “All the fixtures are New England fresh—and there’s a lot of Quadrille Fabrics and Raoul Textiles.”

The exterior is clad in white-cedar shingles treated with bleaching oil; the roof is Alaskan yellow cedar. Shutters are big and operable. “They close them when they go away in the fall,” Albert says.

That’s probably the most wistful time of the year at Sound Cottage. ◉

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**Left** A living–dining porch runs the width of the rear facade, facing the sound. **Below** The house is clad in white-cedar shingles. Sofa and chairs are Kingsley Bate, with Perennials fabric. Batik pillows by Quadrille; monstera-leaf pillows custom hand-blocked by local artist Jen Clayson. **Bottom** The porch is on the rear elevation. Roof dormers on both front and back of the house admit light into the main room.

