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Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket

HOME DESIGN ISSUE

WILD INTERIORS

A Popponeset Island home reveals a treasure trove of artifacts

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Contem

One couple's newly rebuilt
Popponesset Island home
mixes their modern style with
unique travel treasures

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Canary

BY LAUREL KORNHISER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN CUTRONA



The New Seabury home has beautiful unobstructed views of Popponesset spit and Nantucket Harbor.

Some lucky homeowners are fortunate enough to have an incredible water view or a home filled with fine art and antiques, but Scott and Laura Taylor were able to achieve both dreams.

Avid collectors and travelers, the Taylor's sought to replace their former ranch home on Popponesset Island in New Seabury with a modern house reflecting their sensibilities. Their new home reflects the collaboration of many talented participants, not only from across disciplines, but from across the world and across time. A Japanese artisan contributed the 400-year-old door that hangs on a wall. Iraqi metalsmiths made the intricate serving tray crafted of copper, silver, and brass showcased in one bedroom. Jewish textile artists living in Iran wove the silk rug gracing the floor of the master bedroom. On the floor of the lower level walkout rest coarse wool rugs that once padded the ground for nomadic Bedouins.

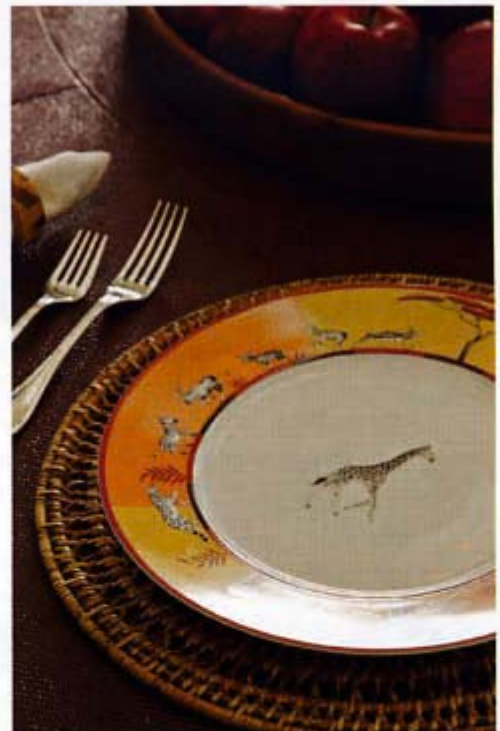
The homeowners themselves contributed their global vision, modernist aesthetic taste, and particular requirements, as well as the many artifacts from their childhoods, spent in foreign lands, and from world travels. Helping to organize the artifacts thematically and aesthetically was

interior designer Paul Lanoix, who has designed several functional pieces in the home, including the dining room table, most of the beds' headboards, and the carpet in the living room. Creating the built-ins that display many of the items along with other custom elements—from the mahogany staircase to bathroom vanities to the wine cellar—was master woodworker Paul Noyes.

The collaboration that was to define the home's design, construction, and landscaping started right from the beginning. When the Taylor's knew it was time to replace the 1960s vintage ranch they had called their second home since 1979, as it was not only cramped and dated, but it neglected to take advantage of the views of Popponesset spit and Nantucket Harbor, they looked to architect Vladimir Janovsky. They had previously worked with Janovsky, who had worked on other projects in New Seabury with builder Michael LeBlanc and his wife, landscape architect Mary LeBlanc.

Though everyone worked together from the beginning to “organize the property,” the project was not an easy one. First, the group had to determine how to create a contemporary home of 7,500 square feet on the same footprint on which a 2,200 square foot ranch had sat. Moreover, every room was to enjoy water views. To fully access the views, the architect came up with the clever cantilevered design, with bedrooms pushing out to overhang the property.

While the bedrooms are bumped out to take advantage of the views, each has its own interior visual interest and is organized around a theme. The first floor guest room is the “Americana Room,” with its displayed antique quilt, Boyd goose decoy, and Audubon prints. The “Africa Room,” just beyond a wall bearing an image of Maasai warriors protected by three shields, includes black and white photos of the continent, an African quilted rug, and Mali masks. Another room has a Mediterranean flair, while the



Above Top: This unique staircase was built by Peter Noyes, is made of mahogany and has stainless steel marine railings creating a unique look that flows with the rest of the home. Above: Hermès table settings continue the African theme even while dining.

Left: In the airy dining room, the family eats together at the spacious table designed by Paul Lanoix.

A gold-leaf Egyptian mummy watches over the table.



Below: This two-hundred-year-old Mexican carousel horse greets visitors. Above: This relaxing sitting room has a panoramic view of the water. The marine railing was used on the windows to create a unifying effect with the staircase and deck railings. The beautiful handcrafted ship's ladder leads to a twisting cupola.

master bedroom is a bit more Continental, infused with Far Eastern influences arising from a collection of miniature Japanese tea pots and Japanese quince fabric on the two armchairs.

Lanoix worked very closely with the homeowners on the placement and arrangement of their artifacts and collections. "My input was to take what they collected, make it work, and make it interesting," says Lanoix. While arresting objects are everywhere in the house, they never feel stilted or contrived. This is by design. "I always try to play things down, so the room feels comfortable though detailing and conceptualizing," adds the designer. "My job was to take a contemporary home and make it comfortable though the use of colors, interesting forms, and textures."



The property itself presented a host of obstacles. Janovsky notes that usually "architects and homeowners bring up the landscape as a cosmetic detail at the end," but in the case of the Taylor home, the landscape design was an immediate consideration. As the property comes under the jurisdiction of state and local conservation restrictions as well as the New Seabury Architectural Review Committee, the



A cluster of antique Iranian hanging oil lamps have been rewired for the modern day.

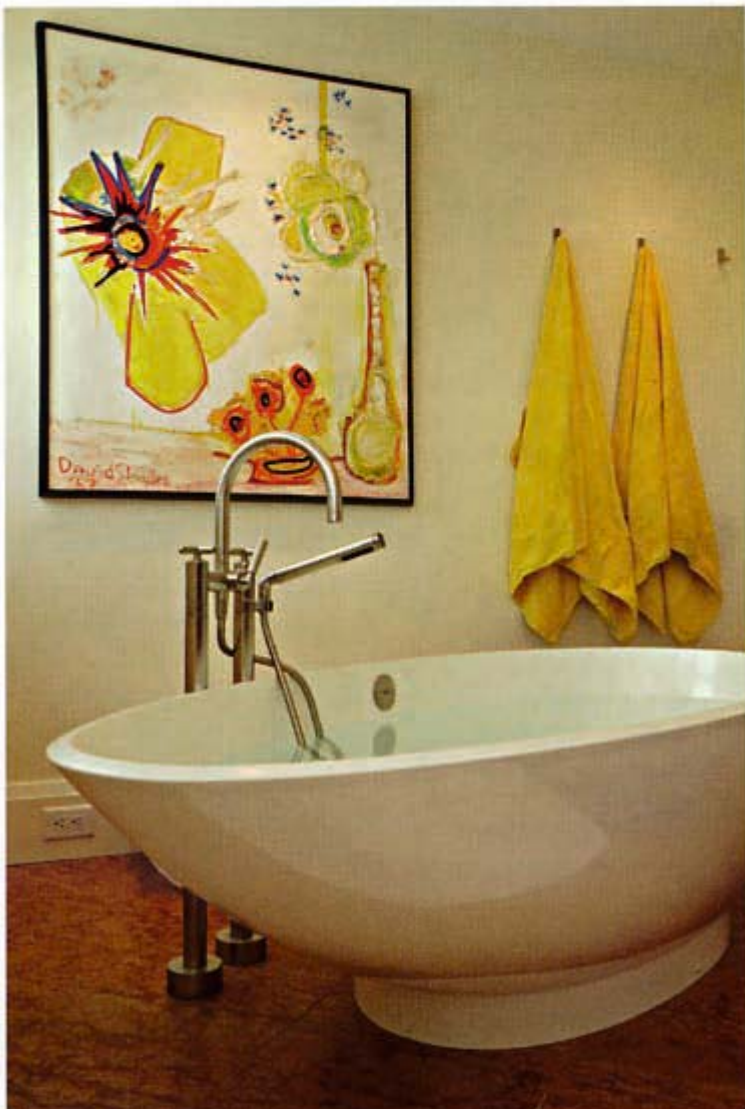
The uniquely shaped soaking tub and brightly colored art create a relaxing interior space.

designs had to undergo an extensive permitting process.

In addition to engineering considerations, Mary had to transform a property that was a barren mulched landscape with timber retaining walls into an inviting yard with room for pick-up games of soccer and the frolics of future grandchildren (the Taylor's have two sons in their early twenties). She also had to finesse the navigation from the lower-level entry up seven feet to the front patio.

"It was an enormous landscape challenge to in fit all the program requirements and make it flow with the severe grade issues," says Mary. "We had to include a built in BBQ, fire pit, privacy, room to play, plenty of parking, view corridors, year round interest and Conservation restrictions on a small property with a big elevation change." Though her first landscape sketches fit a modernist aesthetic with "sharp, clear lines," Mary soon learned that the Taylor's preferred curves and circles. Central to their plan was a front fire pit—to be visible from the dining room, where even in the cold of January when the Taylor's were down for a weekend, they and their guests could relax in warmth. The natural stone materials used—rugged Pennsylvania Elk Mountain treads, New England fieldstone, Canadian eramosa limestone for the patio, and Indiana limestone for the fire pit are in stark contrast to the sleek stainless steel handrails and lighting.

As the Taylor's desired, the fire pit is visible from the dining room, where a generous round table echoes the fire pit's



Left: The kitchen was renovated shortly before the Taylor's decided to tear down the original ranch house and rebuild. Below: In the unique landscape designed by Mary LeBlanc, astilbe, lace cap and oak leaf hydrangeas, and beach roses signal high summer. In the fall, purple smoke bush, shadblow, a Japanese maple, and grasses saturate the site in color.



LAURIE BALLETT

INTERIOR PERSPECTIVES

shape just steps outside. Designed by Lanoix and executed by Masterpiece Woodworks in Avon, MA, the table has a cast concrete base and a top surface wrapped in a rough linen-like material that has been lacquered "many, many times" and glazed several colors for an amazing depth. The effect is beguiling, as is the gold-leafed ancient Egyptian mask that watches from a nearby wall. Above the table, an anemone light fixture hangs from tentacle-like cables, this sea theme carries throughout the house in variations of sea glass, found in the retro kitchen backsplash tiles as well as in bathroom sinks and showers.

Food can either be prepared from the kitchen (newly renovated and so saved from the ranch and re-installed) or the outdoor barbecue. In the Jet Mist granite used for the outdoor kitchen, Scott imagines the stone piece washed up from the ocean and embedded with fossil prints. Another source of pride for Scott is the marine stainless steel railings and cables that line outdoor areas as well as the indoor staircase and a common room viewing area. Chosen not only because of its resistance to the elements, the railings were also selected because the cables seem to disappear. "The whole goal," says Scott, "was not to interfere with the view, to make the railing invisible."

It seems Nature herself, whether in the form of the inlets and ocean surrounding this site or blooming and leafing by design, is a conspirator in the collaboration that has made this home a place for year-round activity, as well as for contemplation of life today and of cultures long past. 🌿



Above: Black and white photos from Africa and antique Mali masks hang artfully above a writing desk. Below: The African room boasts incredible water views as well as some of the Taylor's favorite finds. An African quilt rug, antiques from the Masai Tribe, and an ornate tray made of copper, silver, and brass adorn the room.



