

THIS PHOTO | A favorite subject of local artists, the historic Annisquam Lighthouse is just down the beach from the Baxters' home. OPPOSITE | Angling the exterior profile ever so slightly below the master bedroom windows adds a graceful detail while providing a bit more room and a deeper overhang on the porch.

in love with the view



When you luck out and find the location of your dreams, all you have to do is build around it.

Sometimes you don't know what you've got until it's gone. World travelers and empty nesters Carol and Larry Baxter had spent their lives in Massachusetts, but decided to move to Vermont in 1997 to start a new adventure.

It wasn't long before they started missing the grandchildren, children, and good friends they'd left behind. "We realized our life was really back in Massachusetts," Carol says. "We gave it a try for four years, and then we decided to move back."

The Baxters set their sights on locating a house that was either on the water or had a great view. A phone call from



THIS PHOTO | Placing mullions only on the top half of double-hung windows maximizes the ocean view at eye level. **OPPOSITE TOP** | The large bay window in the living room enhances the home's cottage style. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** | The traditional architecture gets a twist by mixing white columns and trim with natural-wood rails and adding a turret to mark the new front entry.



Finding the Right Lot

For the Baxters, home is where the view is. Locating the perfect site fuels your dream.

Decide what you want. Because Carol and Larry wanted a home by the water, they could narrow their search. Pick your top priority in a location, and begin your search there.

Get the word out. This home was just about to go on the market when the Baxters heard about it from a friend. Ask your friends, family, and coworkers to keep their eyes open.

Carol's friend helped them find a place with both. "She knew of a house in Gloucester that was about to go on the market," Carol recalls. "It needed work, but it was right on the beach. We came down from Vermont right away."

The home's needs were obvious. What had once been a quaint beach cottage looked like a plain, boxy rectangular warehouse—the result of several disjointed renovations.

Most of the wraparound porch had been enclosed, but Larry walked onto what remained outdoors. Below him lay a long strip of sandy beach, a rare find in an area full of rocky shore. Before him, the ocean stretched out to the horizon. To the right stood the white-brick tower of the Annisquam Lighthouse.

DESIGN IDEA

Use relaxed furniture and a neutral palette to keep your interior from competing with an amazing view.

"I remember standing out on that porch and looking at the view, and I figured the rest of the house was irrelevant," Larry recalls. "It was beautiful. I knew we had to live here."

Knowing a full renovation was in order, they called architect Thaddeus



THIS PHOTO | While a new home often warrants new furniture, these homeowners liked the pieces they had. "I wanted to make our things work in this house," Carol Baxter says. The dining room table is a favorite vintage piece. The French antique cabinet stores china. **OPPOSITE** | Custom built-ins flanking the den's fireplace give the Baxters extra storage and display space for artwork picked up on their travels.



Siemasko of Siemasko + Verbridge. Siemasko came up with a design that took full advantage of the view and retained the feel of the neighborhood. They gutted the entire house and removed all signs of the previously muddled additions.

Getting It Right

"The area used to be a summer colony of houses built in the early 1900s," Siemasko says. "We viewed our job as bringing back the home's character. They wanted a cottage-style, summery look but with a fresh, modern feel."

Siemasko credits the Shingle-style exterior for the home's casual, welcoming feel. The new entryway is housed in the turret, the only addition to the original footprint.

The front door is the home's original, discovered stashed under the back porch. While having a discussion about finding doors that weren't too new-looking, the Baxters came across the old door. "That was a great find," Carol says.

To the right of the front door, the new wraparound porch invites guests to take in the view. "They bought this house for the view," Siemasko says, "and we take every opportunity to guide people to the water, inside and out."

The sweeping bay window in the living room is a favorite vantage point for gazing at waves or watching the summer-long parade of boats make its way toward Annisquam Harbor. Choosing the right windows was a priority for the Baxters, and Carol likes how the bay window complements the home's overall look. "Windows can make or break a house," she says. "We didn't want a big expanse of glass like a picture window or sliding doors. Those were too modern for this era home."

Make It Yours

Traditional-style furniture, warm wood tones, and fun punches of color infuse the Baxters' dining room with a casually elegant flair. Borrow their classic look with these products.



Colored-glass vases. A simple flower arrangement in a Como vase (left to right, in olive, lime, and emerald) adds sleek curves and bright jewel tones to your table. Crate & Barrel; 800/996-9960; www.crateandbarrel.com

\$15-\$25



Antique-look cabinet. Although it's new, this Kitchen Pie Safe (#833-863) evokes the rustic charm of an old-world antique. Lexington Furniture by Lexington Home Brands; 800/539-4636; www.lexington.com

\$2,240



Polished-wood table. Graceful legs and a four-column pedestal give this custom cherrywood table (#508-300, shown in Charleston finish) its lovely, distinctive shape. Harden Furniture, Inc.; 315/245-1000; www.harden.com

\$4,732

The spacious lower porch makes the perfect place for entertaining grandchildren in the summer. Architect Thaddeus Siemasko carefully designed the porch so it did not obstruct the view from the living room windows.





Designing a Cook's Kitchen

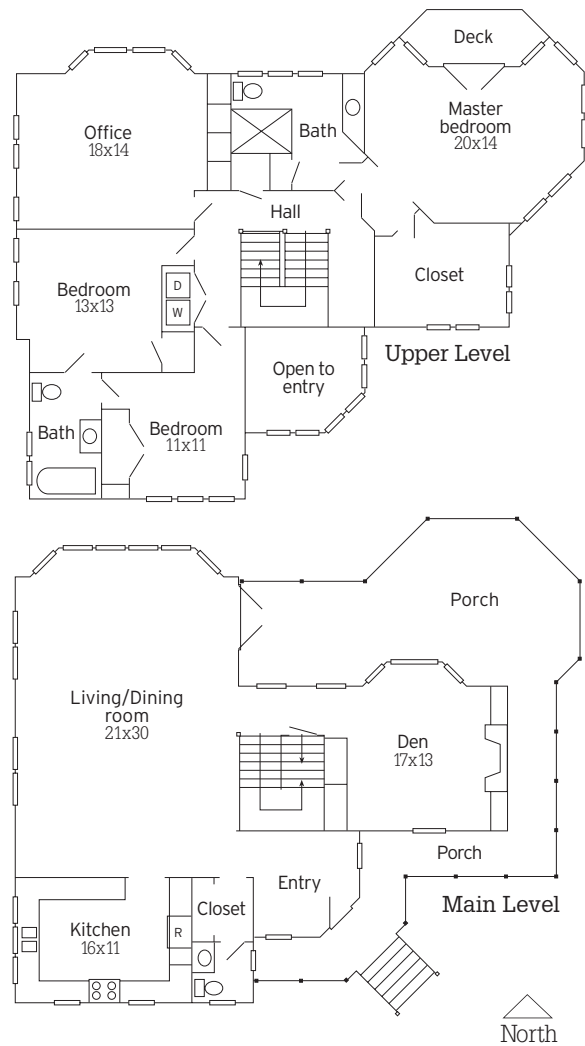
Preferring formal-style entertaining, Carol and Larry Baxter decided to separate their kitchen from the dining room with a wall. "I know the trend is toward open kitchens, but to me, the kitchen is where you cook, and I like to cook by myself," Carol says. Architect Thaddeus Siemasko likes this kitchen for its efficiency. "I like designing kitchens that are a little smaller and are all about the task of cooking rather than making a statement," he says. But in this attractive room, function leads to style.

5 ideas that work

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| 1 | Everything is within reach. At 16x11 feet, the kitchen leaves enough room to maneuver easily, but it's still small enough to be convenient. | 4 | A portable cart goes where it's needed. Rather than an island, Carol chose the stainless-steel cart, which she wheels around the kitchen while cooking. The wheels on the cart lock, and a piece of butcher block sits on top for cutting. Carol can load up the cart to take food out to the porch. |
| 2 | More wall space allows for more storage. Shelves hold cookbooks, pottery, and pantry items. More wall space also means more counter space. | 5 | Open shelving keeps everything in view. "A lot of new kitchens have appliance garages where they hide everything away," Carol says. "But I like having everything where I can see it and reach it." Open shelves also give this kitchen a spacious, airy feeling even though it's enclosed. |
| 3 | The dining area is separate. "When I'm making dinner I like to say, 'OK, go sit in the other room, and I'll be right out,'" Carol says. She can cook in peace, then bring the food out to serve. | | |



THIS PHOTO | Custom cabinets flanking the refrigerator provide display space for Carol's cookbooks and favorite pieces of Italian pottery. Glass-front pantries make it easy to find what she needs when cooking. **OPPOSITE** | The professional-grade range features four large gas burners and a grill where Carol likes to cook steaks. Heat lamps under the range hood keep side dishes placed on the flip-down racks warm.



ABOUT THIS HOME

SQUARE FEET: 3,500
BEDROOMS: 3
BATHROOMS: 2½

FOOTPRINT: 48'x57'
LOCATION: Gloucester, MA
EST. COST: \$230/sq. ft.

- 1 A soaring, open front entry gives guests a warm welcome into the home. The original entry deposited visitors directly into the kitchen.
- 2 An oversized bay window, wraparound porch, and upper-level deck make the most of the great view. "We take every opportunity to guide people to the water, inside and out," the architect says.
- 3 The cozy den provides a comfy, indoor spot to curl up and relax when the porch gets too cold. Its smaller bay window looks at the ocean over the porch, which was designed to capture the view.

The Finish Line

Siemasko stuck with simple and clean interior architecture. Hints of Arts and Crafts style in the woodwork, stair railings, and porch pillars enhance the cottage feel.

The Baxters hired local cabinetmaker Dean Richards to build the cabinets in the kitchen and the master bath, as well as the walnut-veneer bookshelves and entertainment console in the den. "I had him design the entertainment center so I can open a door in the back [accessed from the stairway] instead of dealing with all those cords and wires from the front," Larry says.

The den's original stone fireplace, modified with a gas insert, provides a cozy spot to relax after a day spent out on the porch. "When it's dark, and we can't be outside anymore, we head into the den and sit in front of the fireplace," Carol says.

Looking out at the ocean, the Baxters are glad to be back in Gloucester in a house they love. "We're really pleased with how the house turned out," Carol says. "The house evolved along the way. That's when things turn out the best." *

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THIS PHOTO | French doors open the master bedroom to a smaller, upper-level porch. A mask from Bali, one of the couple's mementos from their world travels, adorns the wall above the doors. **OPPOSITE** | The guest bath boasts a claw-foot tub reused from the original house. Carrara marble flooring adds an elegant touch.