

Shingle Minded



Photo: Bruce Buck

Everything Old is New Again

When Michael Barbis parked his boat in a slip in Rowayton, Connecticut, he became smitten with the area. The 1947 Cape that Michael Barbis bought hardly fulfilled his dream of a seaside cottage, however. So he threw a demolition party and razed the Cape. Local architect Stuart Disston helped Mike realize his vision. With four distinct rooflines, multiple porches, and fanciful towers, Michael's new, rambling house was built in the 19th-century Shingle style, which began in seaside resorts in the Northeast.

The stone wall was built low and topped with a picket fence to enable the owner to sit on his front porch and wave to his neighbors. The stones, taken from a Connecticut river, match the look of the stones once used for ballast by area oyster boats.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Captain's Table

Throughout the interior Mike and the architect worked to create the feel of a 100-year-old finely crafted home, while making the small rooms seem larger. They used Douglas fir for the floors, wainscoting on the ceilings, and marble countertops and nickel fixtures in the bathrooms—all of which would have been used at the turn of the century.

An informal eating area off the family room is set in a bay topped with porthole windows, which is actually the base of an octagonal tower. A built-in bookcase displays pottery. The pedestal table and Windsor chairs, all from [Ethan Allen](#), have a vintage look that fits the house.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Stowed Away

Concealing the fridge and dishwasher behind cabinetry panels gives the small galley kitchen a seamless look. It is open to the family room through a large pass-through (on the left). The sink, backsplash, and countertops are made from poured concrete. "It's not traditional, but I like the textured, earthy look," says the homeowner.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Into the Drink

Built into a hallway between the kitchen and the foyer is a cherry wet bar, which comes in handy when the homeowner throws parties. The glass-front upper cabinets hold glasses, while cubbyholes below them provide wine storage.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Fire and Water

The living room fireplace features a cherry mantel and a painted surround designed with nautical rope molding and a bas-relief seashell.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Seawall

The fireplace surround's marine-blue tile was sandblasted to simulate sea glass.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Shipshape

Storage solutions combined historical practice with the tricks of boatbuilders. "On a boat virtually everything—tables, beds, benches—is built in, and I wanted the house to reflect that design sense as well," Mike says. Many of the closets and cabinets built into eaves have nautical-style ring pulls, which sit flush with the doors so that no knobs jut out.

The 18-inch-thick wall between the dining and living rooms hides structural posts and holds narrow bookcases that flank the two doorways. Two pairs of doors do double duty, separating the two spaces when closed and cleverly concealing the bookcases when open.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Lookout Tower

Disston had some fun by designing two towers—a square one over the garage and an octagonal "lighthouse" tower on the side of the house nearest the water. The octagonal tower begins as a bay window at the first-floor family room and serves as the screened porch for a second-floor guest room. Three steps up from the bedroom, the porch offers wraparound views of the sea.



Photo: Bruce Buck

One If By Land

A reproduction fixture from Burlington, Vermont's [Conant Custom Brass](#) hangs from the porch ceiling.



Photo: Bruce Buck

Water and Light

The architect stuck as many porthole windows as he dared into walls and dormers. "Sure, they're whimsical," he says. "But they also let in light and accentuate the nautical theme."

A porthole window lets light into an arched vestibule on the second floor. The door leads to a curved balcony that runs across the center of the front of the house.

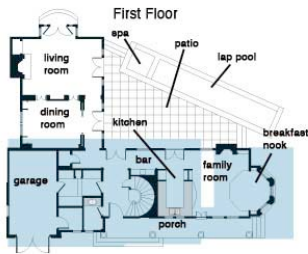


Illustration: Ian Worpole

What They Did Downstairs

Tore Down the Existing House and Garage. A rundown 1947 Cape was razed to make room for a new 3,800-square-foot, three-story, L-shaped house on the small lot.

Carved Out First-Floor Living Space. The downstairs holds a dining room, living room, and garage in one wing, and an entry foyer, kitchen, breakfast nook, and family room in the other.

Added a Patio and Lap Pool. In the triangular backyard space created by the right-angled wings of the house is a bluestone terrace, which can be accessed by French doors throughout the first floor, and a narrow lap pool and spa.

What They Did Upstairs

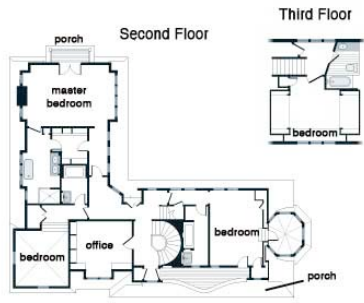


Illustration: Ian Worpole

Created Second-Floor Bedroom Suites and Home Office.

Disston's concept for the upper floors was "Mike's Weekend Inn." Two of the three bedrooms, each with its own bath, have porches. The home office is just opposite the top of the circular stairs.

Used Kids' Attic Bedroom Suite. On the third floor, Mike wanted a bedroom and bath designed specifically for his young nephews, who are frequent visitors. So there are built-in twin beds with trundles underneath and a bathroom sink decorated with sailors' signal flags that spell out "Brush your teeth."

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