

# Maine Home

## +DESIGN

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The Interior Design  
Issue



# Maine Home +DESIGN

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by Debra Spark /// Photography Jeff Roberts





The dining room (opposite) features a French chandelier from Hurlbutt Designs and an English drawleaf trestle table, which expands to 12 feet. The cane-back chairs, made in Italy, have been weathered to look antique. A dhurrie rug from Hurlbutt Designs is on the floor. The painting is by Henry Isaacs. The old wood beams above are inspired by the house that previously stood on the property.

A view of the shingle-style house shows the two slate-covered gambrel roofs and the railing of a rooftop porch that is accessed by an interior spiral staircase.

“We returned summer after summer,” E.B. White writes of a beloved Maine lakeside retreat where he was taken as a child. In his later adulthood, he famously moved to Maine from New York City. Good-bye to all that. How many Maine second or retirement homes begin their lives similarly, as a happy childhood memory that an adult longs to repossess? Not all, surely, but a lot. Any of a number of things may happen to make the wish a reality. For most, it’s safe to say an intermediary step is not a stay in Hong Kong, but it was for one Canadian couple. While stationed in Hong Kong, they met an American couple also living abroad and formed a friendship. Stateside, the Canadians began renting a seaside Kennebunk home from the American wife. When that house and its land came on the market, the Canadian couple made an offer.

The property was unusual, located on a small Kennebunk peninsula arranged like a country lane with houses bordering each side of the road, one set facing due west, the other due east. Architect Paul Gosselin of Salmon Falls Architecture in Biddeford says that quite a few people on the lane have houses on both sides of the road. They have their “sunrise house” and their “sunset house,” perhaps in the form of a main house on one side of the road and a guesthouse on the other. The Canadian couple purchased the main house on the eastern side of the road. The cottage on the western side would stay with their friend. The Canadian couple was interested in restoring. A number of houses on the peninsula had been renovated, many by Gosselin, but for various reasons this proved impractical. Instead, with the help of Gosselin and builder Tim Spang of Kennebunkport’s

Spang Builders, the couple demolished the original house and built a new house with both sunrise and sunset views. In keeping with the neighborhood aesthetic (as well as Salmon Falls’ design specialty), the house is shingle style and, per FEMA regulations, built on concrete piers so water can wash under the house in the case of a catastrophic storm.

Being inside the house feels like being in a boat: there is water all around. For privacy, all the bedrooms face the ocean to the east. But the western side (which is also the street side) has windows oriented to the water as well. A screened porch, an owner’s bedroom balcony, and a unique roof deck (nestled between two slate-tiled gambrel roofs) offer even more ways to enjoy the view.

The homeowners like to entertain, so the house was designed with an open plan downstairs, multiple en-suite bedrooms, and distinct outdoor living spaces. The previous home’s interior made ample use of pine, so when the house was torn down, the builder salvaged the old wood to reuse in an upstairs office and downstairs library. “We wanted those rooms old and cozy,” says Louise Hurlbutt, owner of Hurlbutt Designs in Kennebunk. The new owners wanted to incorporate old beams as well, so the Spang team, Hurlbutt, and co-designer Annie Talmage, also of Hurlbutt Designs, researched early American homes for ideas about how to use old beams across the ceilings and at the perimeter of the dining room/living room/kitchen ceiling.

The incorporation of old wood drove other aspects of the interior design, since Hurlbutt and Talmage aimed to make things look Old World. For instance, instead of the white subway tiles and white paint you might see in a new upscale kitchen, they



The bathroom vanities and kitchen cabinets (above) were designed and executed by Dina Lennon and Sylco Cabinetry in East Waterboro. Since the homeowners are Canadian, the ship depicted in the backsplash is Canadian. The pendant lamps were originally navy, but when they arrived they looked too heavy, so the designers opted for the airier clear glass seen here. The silver silk granite for the kitchen island is from Blue Rock of Maine in Westbrook. A spiral staircase by York Spiral Stair leads to the homeowners' bedroom.

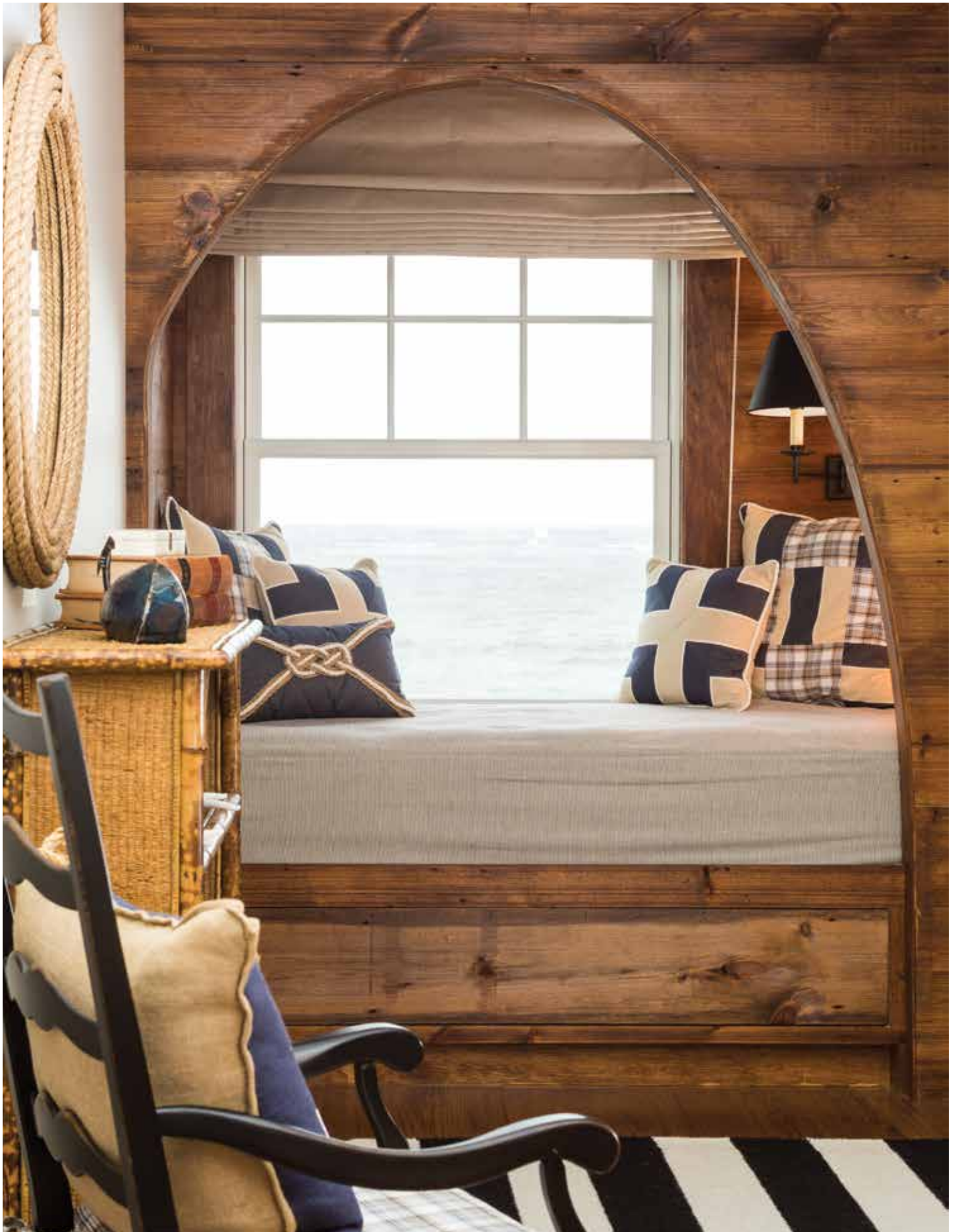
Made with reclaimed wood, this alcove (opposite) works as a reading nook or sleeping quarters for a child. Intended to look like a ship's berth, it is covered with pillows from Eastern Accents, available at Hurlbutt Designs. This corner of the room also has a bamboo bookshelf and a nautical rope mirror.

used gray crackle tiles and a beige-gray paint for the walls. The designers chose pieces that made the house feel like it might have been built up over generations. The goal was also to keep things calm, given that there is already, in Hurlbutt's words, "a different painting" out each window every day. The house is seaside- and nautical-themed without overdoing it. Neutrals are accented with blue and white in one room. Beach tones dominate another room. The house is filled with items that suggest the sea, old clipper ships, or treasures that might have come over the ocean on a shipping vessel, like lamps wrapped in rope, an antique bamboo bookcase, blue and white ginger jars, a ship's hatch table, and a porthole mirror.

To accommodate guests, there are many bedrooms, and each has its own special feel. One particularly peaceful bedroom has a tan and pale seaweed palette, with Swedish headboards with hand-carved finials and European bedspreads that look like an elegant version of vintage chenille coverings. Another room has a faux-bamboo headboard and salmon-colored accent pillows and a salmon and tan-green rug. A print of a seahorse hangs above the bed. Looking out the window, Hurlbutt notes that the tide pools in the rocks below change color, and the house has a way of responding to those changes, as its own colors alter as the sun passes over the roof. Another

bedroom has an adult bed and a child-size bed hidden in an alcove made of reclaimed wood. The nook, with its window, cubbyholes, and reading sconce, suggests a ship's berth. As for all the rooms in the house, items are sourced from a number of vendors, and indeed a number of countries, so things don't look overly "matchy." In the dining room, a French chandelier hangs over a hand-hewn English table made of cherry wood that is coupled with distressed chairs from Italy that Talmage picked because they looked old. Assorted custom pillows throughout the house are made with fabrics from English designer William Yeoward. The sofas and easy chairs in the living room were custom-ordered from a company in North Carolina.

Because the interior designers, builder, and architect were all collaborating from early on, interesting detailing was possible. For instance, the interior window framing in the screened porch matches the teak furniture. The vertical elements of the library bookcases are sufficiently wide to accommodate the old ship's wall lamps picked for the room. The room's lamps and porthole lights come from a company that actually outfits ships. Additionally, Spang Builders sourced all the stainless-steel hardware used on the decorative lattice panels and the roof deck to carry the nautical theme through to the exterior finishes. The pocket doors between the dining room and library









The library is made of wood reclaimed from the house that previously stood on the property. The shelves are full of the kind of items—coral and old glass bottles—that sea captains might have brought home from their adventures. The coffee table is a ship's hatch table. Two antique carpenter stools stand by it. The pillow fabrics are all William Yeoward.

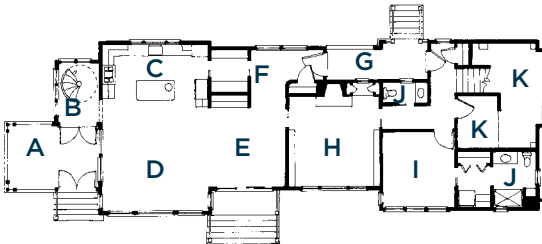




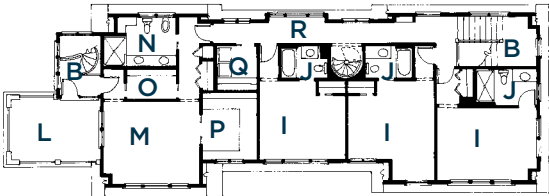
A corner of the house (opposite) shows the homeowners' bedroom balcony with some scalloped detailing.

Nautical needlepoint pillows sit on twin beds with Swedish headboards (above). The bedspreads are influenced by the look of chenille covers of the mid-1900s. The giclées of sea life that hang above the beds are from Biddeford artist Mimi Gregoire Carpenter.

### FIRST FLOOR



### SECOND FLOOR



- |                         |                             |                           |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Screened Porch | <b>G</b> Entry Porch        | <b>M</b> Owners' Bedroom  |
| <b>B</b> Stairs         | <b>H</b> Study              | <b>N</b> Owners' Bathroom |
| <b>C</b> Kitchen        | <b>I</b> Bedrooms           | <b>O</b> Walk in Closet   |
| <b>D</b> Living Room    | <b>J</b> Bathrooms          | <b>P</b> Office           |
| <b>E</b> Dining Room    | <b>K</b> Storage/Mechanical | <b>Q</b> Laundry          |
| <b>F</b> Entry Hall     | <b>L</b> Deck               | <b>R</b> Gallery Hall     |



The homeowners' bathroom with a mix of Azul Cielo and Carrara marble for the floor and shower interior. The custom vanity with mirror is from Sylco Cabinetry. The ceramic knobs are from Te-ma.



(Above, clockwise from top left) A lamp made from an old ship's block and tackle. The designers found it in the gift shop of the Nott House, a historic Kennebunkport Greek Revival house open for tours. A detail of a four-poster bed with China Seas fabric on the pillows. An antique dresser with an antique mirror made from an old window. The turned column lamp is from Hurlbutt Designs. A downstairs powder room with navy and white grasscloth from Ralph Lauren for the walls. Sylco Cabinetry is responsible for the cabinetry, including this vanity top, which is made of hickory stained to look like cherry. Kitchen designer Dina Lennon used the same wood for the kitchen-area bar.



are white on one side and faux painted to match the library's wood on the other.

"I told Louise that she 'Hurlbutted' our house," says the husband of the Canadian couple. He knew her work from her Kennebunk store and also from having seen friends' homes. From the start, he liked her sense of style but also her manner. "Louise is a tremendous doer. Once it is decided where a project is going, she gets it done. She is amazingly efficient." Typically, Hurlbutt would put together proposed furniture, fixtures, and appliances for the couple to choose from. Over time she got an increasingly better sense of their tastes and was able to present to them largely what they liked. "I'll give you an example of one thing she did, and I didn't even ask for," says the husband. "I am a lawyer, and she took the trouble to

find old casebooks from Maine and put them in our library, so I can read about old Maine law."

Now, the husband adds, "I'd be comfortable telling anyone to get their house Hurlbutted." He laughs at turning Hurlbutt's name into a verb. Hurlbutt-Talmaging a house is even sillier sounding. Yet there is no real synonym for the neologism. It means, simply, that a house designed by the Hurlbutt team is refined and comfortable, handsome and relaxed, a place to which one wants to return, season after season. **MH+D**

*For more information, see Resources on page 134.*



A bedroom (above) with a chinoiserie print from Thibaut on the pillows. The headboard is a mahogany faux bamboo, and the dresser is an antique that was painted off-white.

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