



## EDITOR'S CHOICE

Our editor's choice award goes to Mark Hutker and James Moffatt of Hutker Architects for the home they designed on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Deeply rooted to the traditions and style of its place, the house is one of the greatest examples of regional architecture we've seen in a long time. This is architecture the way we like it—flush with design elements worth replicating in houses of all sizes, budgets, and locales.



# Architecture

## the Way We Like It

BY KATIE HUTCHISON

We asked architect Katie Hutchison to explore a house where traditional craftsmanship and modern innovation offer a fresh take on regional design

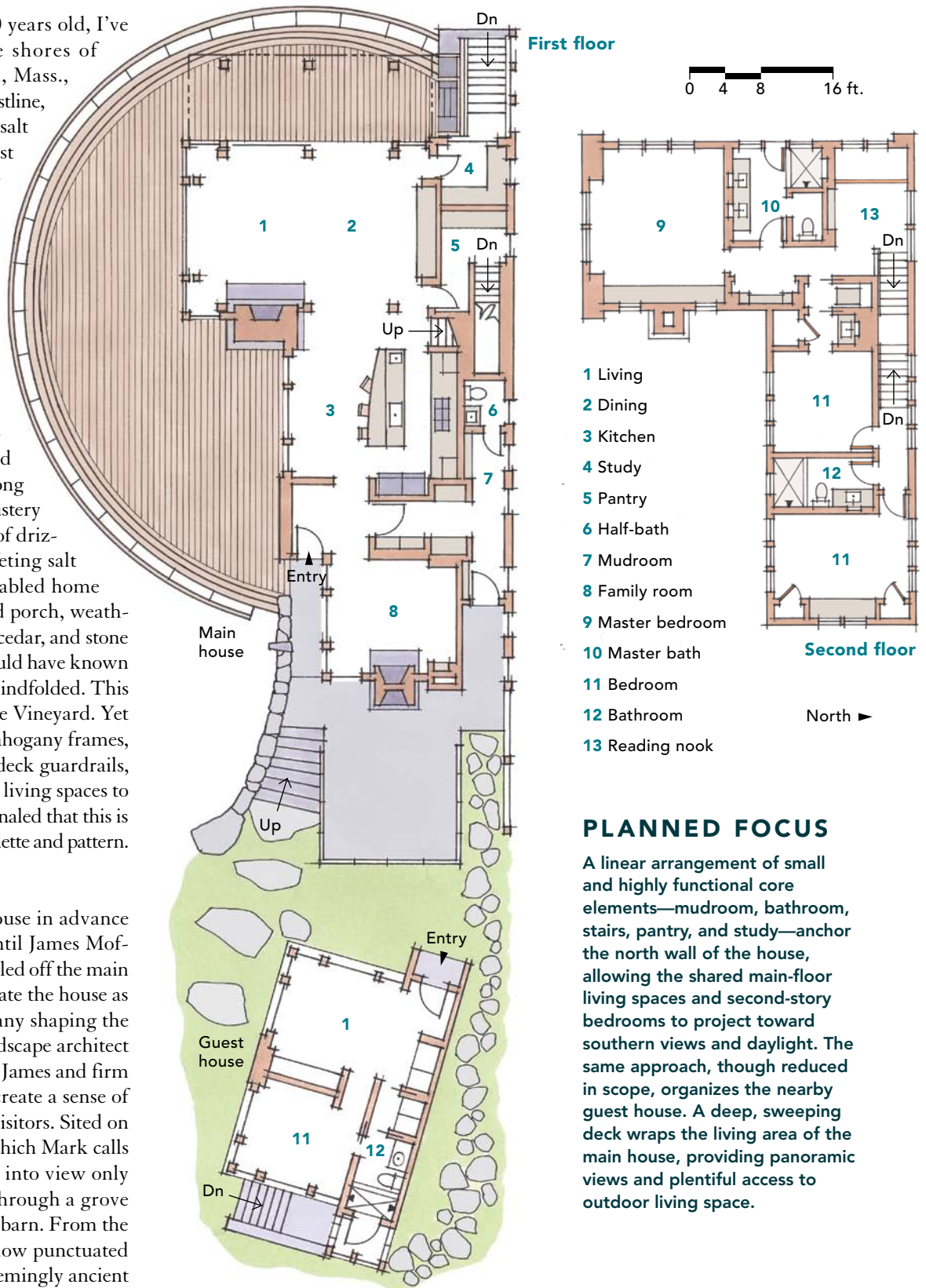
Since I was about 10 years old, I've been combing the shores of Martha's Vineyard, Mass., hiking its craggy coastline, and meandering among its salt marshes and meadows—first as a “summer dink” (as residents described us), then as the spouse of a Vineyarder, and briefly as a resident myself, when I worked for Hutker Architects. In that time, the Vineyard became as familiar to me as family.

I was reminded of the island's beautiful simplicities and intricacies as I stood on the deck of this home along Edgartown's harbor on a blustery January day between bouts of drizzle. Turning from the buffeting salt air, I glanced back at the gabled home with its simple, shed-roofed porch, weathered barn boards, swaths of cedar, and stone chimneys, and realized I would have known where I was had I arrived blindfolded. This home clearly belonged to the Vineyard. Yet large expanses of glass in mahogany frames, curved stainless-steel-mesh deck guardrails, and views clear through the living spaces to the far side of the kitchen signaled that this is a new take on a customary palette and pattern.

### Rooted to place

I had seen images of the house in advance of my visit, but it wasn't until James Moffatt, the project architect, pulled off the main road that I began to appreciate the house as just one element among many shaping the long, narrow property. Landscape architect Kris Horiuchi worked with James and firm principal Mark Hutker to create a sense of discovery for approaching visitors. Sited on a distant knoll, the house, which Mark calls “the Nest,” comes partially into view only after visitors have wound through a grove of pitch pines and around a barn. From the shell driveway, a new meadow punctuated by a scrub oak opens to a seemingly ancient stone outcropping and incredibly detailed stone walls built by mason Lew French. A path directs visitors around a pool garden, a hot tub, and a guest house, leading to a patio and the home's covered entrance.

The Nest is a quintessential example of what Mark calls the “new regional vernac-



### PLANNED FOCUS

A linear arrangement of small and highly functional core elements—mudroom, bathroom, stairs, pantry, and study—anchor the north wall of the house, allowing the shared main-floor living spaces and second-story bedrooms to project toward southern views and daylight. The same approach, though reduced in scope, organizes the nearby bedroom. A deep, sweeping deck wraps the living area of the main house, providing panoramic views and plentiful access to outdoor living space.

### SPECS

- Bedrooms:** 3 **Bathrooms:** 2½ **Size:** 2699 sq. ft. **Completed:** 2010
- Location:** Martha's Vineyard, Mass. **Builder:** Gary Maynard, holmesholebuilders.com
- Architect:** Mark Hutker and James Moffatt, hutkerarchitects.com
- Interior designer:** Havilande Whitcomb, hwdesignllc.com
- Landscape architect:** Kris Horiuchi, Horiuchi & Solien Landscape Architects

**Pinwheeling spaces.** The deck and all of the interior living spaces are anchored by the massive stone fireplace in the living room. These spaces remain open to each other to provide the contemporary living environment the homeowner was seeking. In the foreground, a custom-made table topped with bluestone sits between chairs by A. Rudin and beneath an Alison Berger Five-Crystal Sphere pendant chandelier.



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alisonbergerglassworks.com

**COFFEE TABLE**  
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benjaminmoore.com

**BACKSPLASH**  
walkerzanger.com

**BUTTERNUT FLOORS, WALLS & CEILINGS**  
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ular,” which he describes as both “a way of thinking about how to start a project and an ethic guiding you forward.” The Nest is regional in part because it’s rooted to the materials, natural forces, geography, and building practices of its place—very much like a bird’s nest. Mark explains this analogy: “A nest is made of indigenous components that the constructors of the nest found locally and used their ancestral knowledge of construction to build.” Mark and the rest of the project team shared the nest concept to ensure the construction of a home that fit into its natural and built environment.

### Forms, language, and craft

When you drive around Martha’s Vineyard, you can’t help but notice the traditional, cedar-shingled vernacular forms that dot it, both inland and along its edges. The

homes and buildings are generally gabled, often with only 1½ stories, and they often sport shed dormers, masonry chimneys and foundations, and one-story porches. Large houses join small cottages, barns, and out-buildings to shape the spaces between and to create a textured built environment that is utterly New England. It was important to the homeowner that his house reflect a similar arrangement of modestly scaled forms in conversation with each other, the landscape, and the greater island vernacular.

With that idea in mind, Mark and James adhered to a simple palette of materials. Recycled barn boards, chosen for the silvery-gray tone that’s ubiquitous along the New England coast, side the core portions of the house inside and out. Cedar shingles cloak the exterior walls elsewhere and much of the roof. A zinc standing-seam lower roof shel-

ters core elements, and by contributing to a variety of textures and colors, it helps “break the scale of the home down,” according to James. Natural cedar was used as exterior trim. Bluestone from the patio travels inside onto countertops and the dining-room table. Butternut harvested from diseased or dead trees wraps other interior walls and most of the floors and ceilings.

The woodwork provides a warm, linear backdrop for glass light fixtures by Alison Berger Glassworks and, in the stair, hand-wrought white-bronze handrails made by local blacksmith Whit Hanschka. Hand-hammering the white bronze “humanized that often really cold material,” says Mark.

Mahogany-and-glass doors and generous door-height windows define much of the southern and western first floor, maximiz-



**Custom yet classic.** The bulk of the kitchen is nestled into a nook toward the north side of the house. Bluestone countertops sit on cabinets painted in Benjamin Moore Navy Masterpiece blue. Using colors reflected in the landscape helps ensure timeless interiors.

ing what seem to be endless views to the southern horizon. A 17-ft.-wide door made of mahogany and glass contains an 8½-ft.-wide lift-and-slide leaf that opens the dining and living space to the wraparound deck.

Stonemason Lew French's living-room fireplace anchors the home to the knoll in the tradition of the island's many stone chimneys. "What was so exciting to me about the design was all the glass in the building, so it made the central fireplace even more important as a mass," says Lew. Mark conceived of that fireplace as the heart of the home, connecting the kitchen, dining area, living area, and deck. Because it's experienced in the round, Lew says, "it's a sculptural piece."

### New and lasting

Though Mark and his team wanted the home to feel like it had always been there and



**Master mason.** Lew French is the craftsman behind all of the home's stonework. Using granite from old New England foundations and recycled fieldstone, Lew carefully selects and places each stone, rarely cutting or altering that rock. (For more on Lew and his work, see p. 106.)



### DESIGN VIDEO

For an inside look at this home and those behind its design, visit [FineHomebuilding.com/houses](http://FineHomebuilding.com/houses).



**A deck detail to admire.** The main outdoor living space, the deck, is designed to preserve the view of the harbor. Locating the railing at the bottom of a series of step seats lowers its overall height—while still meeting code—in order to provide people on the deck and inside with an unobstructed view to the south.

that it would stand the test of time aesthetically, they also wanted it to be responsive to the lifestyles, material innovation, and technology of our time. With a nod to contemporary living patterns, the floor plan features an open L-shaped shared living space. It also provides easy access to the outside. The interior colors—drawn from those of the sea, the shore, and the surrounding flora—help one space to flow into the next, creating a sense of spaciousness.

Back-of-the-house spaces in the core—including the mudroom, half-bath, basement stair, kitchen built-in wall, and pantry—occupy a strip on the north side of the house where access to views and abundant daylight aren't necessary. A unique split stair on the rear of the house saves desirable front-of-the-house space that would otherwise have been wasted by a conventional switchback stair. Multipurpose spaces, such as the nook at the top of the stairs outside the master suite, make the most of modest square footage.

The home's attitude toward outdoor living may be one of its more modern marvels. The combination of the deck to the south, the porch to the west, and a fireplace patio to the east roughly doubles the shared living space. Taking full advantage of a 270° water view, the deck's curved edge follows the nearby conservation land's boundary. In a stroke of design brilliance, the team mounted the guardrail at the bottom of a series of step



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**Sheltered.** Just off the dining room, a porch offers sitting space to watch views of the setting sun to the west. In the outdoor dining area, meals are lit by large Beacon pendant lights by Teka Illumination that are suspended from a barn-board-covered vaulted ceiling.

seats to keep people safely contained while allowing those in the home and on the deck an unfettered view over the guardrail.

The fireplace patio, nestled between the main house and the guest house, offers outdoor living that's sheltered from the prevailing southwesterly breezes by the main house and by a glass guardrail set atop a Corten-steel retaining border. The glass preserves the view, and along with the Corten steel, bridges the gap between the home's traditional and contemporary aesthetics.

### Unique collaboration

In this home, an approach that combines the best new, regional, and vernacular elements

yields an island residence that resonates with its place and time. As an architect with more than 20 years of residential design experience, I've learned to appreciate that the best projects are products of the best clients. Mark says, "We had a homeowner who trusted our vision of his home. Everybody upped their game because of his trust in us." It shows. The result is a home that collaborates with its site to be at once integral to it, a product of it, and a new manifestation of it. □

Katie Hutchison is a residential architect based in Warren, R.I. (katiehutchison.com.) Photos by Rob Yagid, except where noted.

# LIVING OUTDOORS

Three defined outdoor spaces—a deck, a porch, and a patio—expand the home and make it a more pleasing place to be. Scaled and detailed to fit a living room outdoors, the double-sided fireplace shown below punctuates the east end of the house and the bluestone patio between it and the guest house.

