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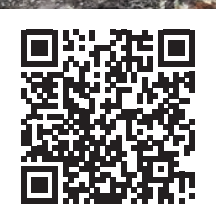


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HILARY IRONS is a writer, artist, and curator based in Portland. As the gallery and exhibitions director at the University of New England, she is aware of the creative crossover between working in the studio and in administrative roles, where one can provide creative opportunities for others in a way that broadens the boundaries of studio practice. *Showcase*, page 126



ROB FREEDMAN, a principal architect at Kennebunk River Architects, has been designing residential projects for over 35 years. He holds an architectural degree from the Boston Architectural College and is professionally licensed in Maine and New Hampshire. Originally from Marblehead, Massachusetts, Freedman resides on the seacoast, where he enjoys cycling, swimming, and hiking. *Antipodean Inland*, page 68



Specializing in residential design and construction, **JULIEN JALBERT** brings his passion for sustainable design practices to the forefront of his projects at Knickerbocker Group. His dedication to reducing our carbon footprint and aiding in natural resource management is a common thread throughout his work. Jalbert enjoys spending time in the Maine outdoors with his family. *Simple Pleasure*, page 56



SIMPLE

Keeping ornament and pattern to a minimum, Knickerbocker Group creates a serenely elegant oceanside getaway

PLEASURE

BY JORGE S. ARANGO // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF ROBERTS







Beauty of style and harmony and grace and good rhythm," wrote Plato, "depend on simplicity." This maxim is as true today as in fourth-century BCE Greece. Yet simplicity requires discipline and restraint, qualities many clients throw to the wind when building a dream home. Fortunately, the couple who commissioned Knickerbocker Group to design this nearly 11,000-square-foot midcoast ocean-side residence (including detached office and garage) possessed these essential requisites.

"What we enjoyed most about working with them is their commitment to interiors without extraneous details," says Knickerbocker Group's founder Steve Malcom. "They would sacrifice a particular aesthetic desire in order to conform to the overriding precept of clean lines."

The clients didn't want a super-modern glass box either, recalls project architect Julien Jalbert, but something that would feel like it had been there for decades. The solution? "We lent it cleaner geometries, but the 'Maine home' aesthetic was built into the design with the rooflines and materials: cedar shakes, board-and-batten, standing-seam metal roof, and ipê decking."

Since the couple purchased the residence as a summer getaway where their family and friends could relax, adds interior architecture and design practice leader Bob Francisco, when it came to the indoors, "They wanted the house very much set up for having many guests and for entertaining. So the floor plan flows, spaces speak well to each other, and there's great connectivity to the outside."

Nowadays, the sense of openness, easy flow, and outdoor connection seems a given for many. But in

The poured concrete shelf under the gas fireplace, which is from Rocky's Stove Shoppe, was a delicate piece of work, requiring a support system to hold it up until the material set and cured (opening spread).

Tidewater Millwork in Woolwich executed the custom handrail (opposite), and the bench is by Four Hands.

To the left of the fireplace (above) is a photograph by Dusseldorf, Germany-based photographer Christian Stoll. Beneath the striking pendants from Denmark shop New Works are bespoke sofas and chairs from Lancaster Custom Crafted Upholstery, a table of white oak and quartz inlays from Rowe Station Woodworks in New Gloucester, and a custom rug by Stanton through Distinctive Designs.



actuality, achieving these aims is extremely complex, and it created substantial engineering challenges for Knickerbocker Group's senior construction manager, Derek Chapman. For one thing, the central great room—containing living room, dining room, and kitchen—opens at the rear onto a 100-foot porch through 16-foot glass sliders that are flanked by banks of windows. “We had to pull off a lot of structural tricks,” explains Jalbert. “The window wall has a substantial horizontal beam at the middle to resist pressure from high winds.”

Opposite the sliders, a bridge at the second-story level connects the double-gabled volumes of the house, where most private quarters are located. Guests enter an expansive foyer and walk under this bridge to arrive at the great room. “There’s a fair amount of steel in that bridge in order to create this simple but grandiose space,” says Jalbert, “and to hold the walls and ceiling up without interior columns.”

There was also the matter of the staircase extending from the foyer to the upper floor. To execute the design of the handrail’s continuous line and graceful switchback, the team employed a CNC router. But holding up the handrail and retaining its lighter-than-air quality without resorting to a big, bulky newel depended solely on the railing’s balusters. So, Jalbert says, “We used what look like slightly thicker candlepin balusters that happen at intervals.” Unless you look closely, they imperceptibly blend in with the other, thinner balusters, creating a single expressive visual gesture.

The primary suite tub—made of precast concrete and weighing some 1,600 pounds when filled with water, let alone a person—also required the reinforcement of laminated veneer lumber (LVL) beams to keep it from crashing through the floor to the lower level. All this invisible support enables a sense of lightness and air by not chopping up interiors with view-obstructing vertical posts.

Above the dining room Ethnicraft table (above), which is surrounded by Rove Concepts chairs, is a Flock of Light chandelier by Studio Toer for Moooi. Zoulamis Fine Woodworking built the black walnut kitchen cabinetry, and the glass and blackened steel wall cabinets are by Matt Harkins. An L-shaped porch (opposite, top) hugs the entire back façade of the house and wraps around one side, and a screened dining area accommodates a custom 13-foot table from Southern Home Inc. Outdoor furnishings include pieces from Summer Classics and Harbour Outdoor. The home’s windows look out on landscaping by Back Meadow Farm (opposite, bottom).







Francisco handled the interior finishes. “The client liked the play between the organic feel of walnut and hard-edged metal cabinets,” he notes of the handsome kitchen. A similar material conversation occurs between the extensive oak flooring and the steel bar in the great room as well as the steel-framed glass front doors.

The couple worked with James Light Interiors and Annie Kiladjian of Annie K Designs on furnishing the spaces. “It was a big job, a lot for one person,” says Light. “So we collaborated.” Not surprisingly, considering the simplicity of the structure, observes Kiladjian, the clients’ vision was “the opposite of fussy; the simpler, the better.” This meant, adds Light, that “everything needed to have very clean, straight lines. So whatever happened in a space had to mean it.”

Except for minimal small-scale patterns, Kiladjian continues, the designers relied on solid textural fabrics and a palette described by Light as “neutral and tailored like an Armani suit.” The object of this tactic, observes Kiladjian, was to focus attention “more on the outside than inside. It’s a west-facing house, so it has the most remarkable views and sunsets I’ve ever seen.” Occasional departures from this unifying aesthetic are a downstairs recreation area for younger visitors, leaf-patterned upholstery on a settee in the primary suite, and a powder room that sports Piero Fornasetti’s whimsical piscine “Acquario” wallpaper.

Outdoor furniture took measured forays into graphic pattern. “The house is quite simple and monochromatic,” says Kiladjian, “so bold black-and-white stripes played well against it.”

One of the unique features of the house is a roof garden outside the primary suite. “We opted for more robust plantings here, so it would look like a meadow,” explains Jalbert. Rather than plant the roof with the usual low-growing sedums, creeping thyme, and the like, they incorporated taller plants along the L-shaped line of the window walls. From the inside, it looks like you’re on a high patch of land with nothing in your sight lines but the sea.

The water views, of course, were courtesy of Mother Nature, but with a little help from Shep Kirkland and Emily Goodwin at Boothbay-based Back Meadow Farm. As with many coastal lots in Maine, explains Goodwin, “The slope and grade of the property were challenging. Often a house can feel overshadowed by the hillside and in a hole. We tried to use plantings to soften the site.” Though they wanted low-maintenance grounds, the couple also craved mowable lawns for recreation.

To achieve this, says Kirkland, “The slope had to be terraced and retained in many areas. We designed and installed the hardscape.” Using reclaimed block granite





curbing on walkways, patio, and retaining walls, plus strategically placing boulders about the property “helped everything blend into the existing landscape and mimic the rocky coastline,” adds Goodwin.

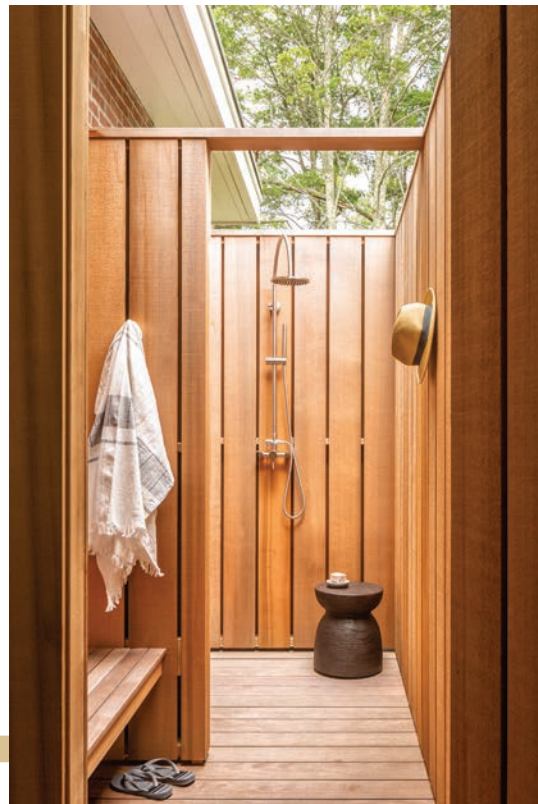
None of this could have been possible without clients who had single-minded confidence in their devotion to simplicity. “There was not a lot of hesitancy about

anything,” says Malcom. “They had a really clear picture of what they wanted.”

For the family who lives here, the result of this commitment is perhaps best expressed by a contemporary thinker who takes Plato’s admonition to its logical conclusion: the Indian author and speaker Prem Rawat. “The reward of simplicity,” he maintains, “is joy.” **MH+D**

The shingle house boasts Knickerbocker Group’s signature diamond pattern under the peaks of the two tall volumes (previous spread). The steel and glass front doors are from Iron Envy, and the standing-seam metal roof helps the contemporary building tie into the surrounding vernacular architecture.

In the primary suite (opposite, top) a Michel Droge painting and a graphic pattern on the Lancaster Custom Crafted Upholstery bring color and pattern to the room, which also features Room & Board nightstands flanking the bed from Quebec-based Huppé. The space opens to an outdoor porch (opposite, bottom) overlooking the green roof and coastal panorama, visible from Southern Home woven seating. A first-floor guestroom boasts spectacular water views (above).



(Clockwise from top left) In the family room, a sectional from TCS Custom Furniture covered in Romo fabric fills one side of the room. The wood and steel chest is from Zoulamis Fine Woodworking. An outdoor shower helps to keep sand tracking into the home at bay. Fornasetti's Acquario wallpaper from Cole & Son brightens up a powder room.

The spectacular green roof (opposite) is by Apex Green Roofs.



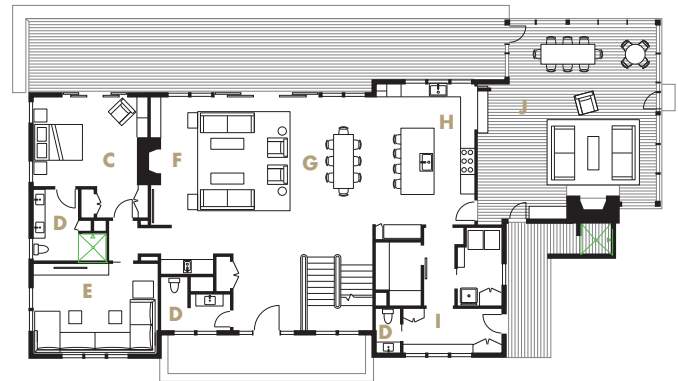
ARCHITECT: **KNICKERBOCKER GROUP**
LOCATION: **COASTAL MAINE**

A Storage	F Living Room	K Owner's Bedroom	N Garage
B Rec Room	G Dining Room	L Owner's Bathroom	O Office
C Bedrooms	H Kitchen	M Owners' Bedroom	P Lounge
D Bathrooms	I Mudroom	Covered Porch	
E Media Room	J Screened Porch		

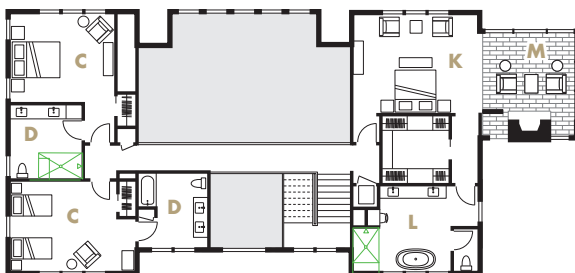
LOWER LEVEL



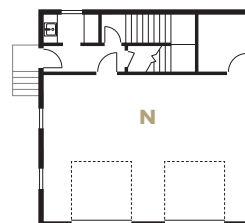
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



**CARRIAGE HOUSE
FIRST FLOOR**



**CARRIAGE HOUSE
SECOND FLOOR**

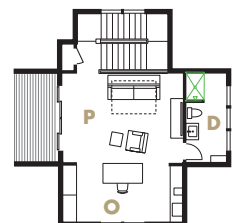


ILLUSTRATION: **TIM LOHNES**