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*Grilling,
Argentinean-Style,*
**ON THE
SHEEPSHOT
RIVER**

*Sowing Seeds at
a 260-Year-Old*
**FARMHOUSE IN
CAPE NEDDICK**

**PLUS, 11 STOPS
IN LIMERICK AND
CORNISH**

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SPRING AWAKENING:

**Three Landscape Designers Create Oases with Plants
(and a Bit of Pure Magic)**



Surf *And* Turf

An Edgecomb couple combine cultures to create a space that celebrates the Maine coast and Argentine hospitality—with a grill to thrill

words by **ALLISON PAIGE** photos by **MICHAEL D. WILSON**



The cedar-sided midcentury-style home, by Douglas Richmond Architects, sits right at the edge of Sheepscot River. Paula and Steve say the sound of nearby waterfalls lulls them to sleep.

opposite page, top A close look at the warm grain of the angelique wood table-top, where appetizing side dishes await.

opposite page, middle The showpiece of the outdoor dining space is the stunning 4' x 12' angelique wood table, which seats many and is supported on one side by an immense boulder. The wood was a remnant of a historic re-creation project. The bistro chairs are from IKEA.

SURF AND TURF



opposite page A built-in nook in the fieldstone hearth stores wood in a novel way. The dining area's unadorned windows allow for unimpeded water views. **above** An open-concept kitchen connects easily with the dining space and sunken living room at right, giving an easy flow to indoor entertaining. **below, right** A close look at the composite wood floating stairs that are in keeping with the home's midcentury style.

PERCHED AT THE EDGE OF SHEEPSCOT RIVER, the house of Steve Doyon and Paula Valenza in Edgecomb feels like a bit of a secret—found at the end of a winding road where a sign reads: “*La Escondida Del Mar*,” The Hidden Sea.

Paula is from Argentina, and Steve, born in Presque Isle to Maine natives (Mom from Caribou, Dad from Augusta), moved away as a youth and found his way back by happenstance. As the CEO of Novatus Energy, a renewable energy platform based in New York City, he was driving up to a company retreat when he rediscovered the charm of the midcoast.

When the New York-based couple searched for a second residence, they were surprised to find this cedar-sided midcentury-style split-level after a sea of traditional Colonials. The house, seen in profile, seems to jut over the riverbank, almost as if it is doing a balancing act.

“You almost feel like you’re on a boat because it’s right over the water,” says Steve. Eleven-foot tides rise up and water rushes from the nearby waterfalls.

The couple love to entertain and were eager to create an outdoor space where they could hold Argentine-style *asados*. An Argentine asado, or barbecue, involves grilling a variety of meats on a special





above The view from the living room, where a fieldstone fireplace adds warmth and character. At left, a few of Steve's prized guitars. **below, left** Custom mugs adorned with "Escondida del Mar," Steve and Paula's name for their home, were a gift from Paula's sister, found on Etsy. **opposite page** The boulder used to support the table, provided by Theo Congdon and carved by sculptor Lance Carlezon, is complemented by Heritage Valley flagging from J.C. Stone of Jefferson.



grill called a *parrilla*. (In fact, the word "barbecue" comes from the Spanish *barbacoa*.)

"The first time I went to Argentina, Paula introduced me to one of her brothers-in-law, he's sort of the grill master of the family," says Steve. "I'd heard about Argentine grilling, but I didn't really know what it was all about."

Asados can take many hours and are not to be hurried; socializing and savoring are precisely the point.

"The grill surface is typically wood fired, but you can also use charcoal," Steve explains. "The surface is slightly angled and the stainless steel is slightly cupped so the juices from the meat get routed out, but you don't get any flare-ups at all. By raising and lowering the surface of the grill, you control how much heat you get on the surface of the meat."

It's a long, slow process and Steve became smitten by it. "When I first saw one of these, I thought, 'Wow, I've got to have one!'" he laughs. Luckily, he found a company stateside that makes parrillas, the Pennsylvania-based, Argentine-run Gaucho Grill.

He hired contractor and landscape architect Theo Congdon of Redtwig, who assembled a team of local craftsmen to create





above The parrilla grill, unique to Argentina, is designed to accommodate many cuts of meat at once. A grill insert from Gaucho Grill was fitted into a firebrick and granite console by J.C. Stone and topped by a steel hood by Mike Tomaselli of Mid-Coast Machine Fabrication. **below, left** A deep drink basin was carved into the top of a granite boulder by sculptor Lance Carlezon. Steve recalls the first time he tried to fill it. “Holy cow!” he said. “We’re going to need a lot more ice!” **below, right** The parrilla grill handle is engraved with a bull’s head and Steve’s last name.



above An overhead shot of the table highlights the dramatic intersection of wood and granite. A simple tablescape of woven chargers and white linen complements the rustic wood and stone.

an outdoor space that combines Maine’s coastal cool with some Argentine fire and flair.

Working with preliminary plans from Knickerbocker Group and Carson Douglas Landscape Architecture, Theo’s first mission was to lower a hill by the oasis-like pool and carve out space for the terrace, staircases, and landscaping. Birch were planted, along with evergreens, rhododendron, and climbing hydrangea. A boulder wall serves a dual purpose, to shore up the area and add a dose of craggy topography.

“In terms of function, the space had to work with all the concepts of the asado and entertaining a dozen or more people,” says Theo. “What is most pleasing to me is the scale of all the elements. The house, the pool deck, and the

kitchen terrace that we built all have a scale that worked together and feels right.”

The parrilla was constructed with an insert from Gaucho Grill and surrounded by boulders, granite counters, and flagging from J. C. Stone that make it look like part of the landscape.

Subcontractor Jared Grant of Shangri-La Stoneworks in Belfast says, “In Argentina, a parrilla is typically constructed entirely out of brick. But on the Doyon parrilla, the architects blended a native Maine granite for the majority of the structure and utilized brick accents in the actual cooking space, a combination that brings the two cultures together nicely.”

Paramount to the space was a table to seat many. Neighbor Eric Graves, the president of Boothbay Harbor



above The heated, salt-water system pool looks oasis-like, bordered by lush landscaping from Redtwig.

Shipyard, had just the thing—an enormous 4-by-12 slab of angelique wood left over from a re-creation of the *Discovery*, one of the ships that carried the first English settlers to Jamestown, Virginia.

Steve had the notion to use a boulder to support the table, and Theo found just the right one on his property in Tenants Harbor. Local stone sculptor Lance Carlezon cut a niche to fit the tabletop, creating a one-of-a-kind wood-and-granite dining table. He complemented it by carving out the top of another boulder to create a deep drink basin.

String lighting held up by ship's rigging gives the area the feeling of a full-time fiesta.

“A parrilla in Maine just makes sense on every level,” says Jared. “The slow summer days and nights and relaxed Maine attitude blend perfectly with the Argentines’ notion of community and social gatherings.”

Of course, it wouldn't be a Maine celebration without our most famous crustacean. A burner by the grill was added expressly with lobster in mind—so that guests can enjoy lobster with their steak for the ultimate surf and turf. With an entertainment space that honors both of their roots, Steve and Paula's home in Edgecomb, like other parts of their life, is a balance, of North and South America, country and city, sea and shore. ■



above The outdoor entertainment space in full swing. Electrician Steve Case installed string lighting for a festive touch using stainless steel rigging by marine rigger Jay Maloney. “If you look at them from the hill above, you see that they make a shape like a parallelogram that mimics the roof of the house,” Steve notes. **below** A view from the dock at dusk, when the home's large picture windows give off an inviting glow.

