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GOVERNOR MILLS

BRIGHTENS THE
BLAINE HOUSE &
CALLS IT HOME

PLUS
WELLS MAKES
ITS CLAIM TO
CHARACTER

**A HOME FOR
ALL SEASONS**
A MAINLAND HAVEN
IN EAST BOOTHBAY

**AND A PERFECT
DINNER PARTY,
BY DESIGN**





A backyard trellis beautifully frames a view of the reflecting pool installed by Aquatic Development. The hardscape and pool were designed by Arek Galle of Beta Group.

WORDS: ALLISON PAIGE PHOTOS: DARREN SETLOW

ORIGINAL ARCHITECT
Lauren T. Dupont

DESIGNER
Elaine Murdoch

PROJECT MANAGER
Steve Berger

BUILDER
Knickerbocker Group

TILE
Old Port Specialty

A HOME FOR ALL SEASONS

Island dwellers Kate and Bob Horgan come ashore to create a mainland haven in East Boothbay

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Most of Kate Horgan's design decisions are made by instinct and intuition. "And I live my life that way, too," she declares. Kate attended the New York School of Interior Design in her 20s and began designing even earlier than that. "As a child, I think I changed my room every week, this small child moving large pieces of furniture," she says with a laugh. "My mother couldn't hang a picture; she couldn't commit, and it used to drive me crazy!" Her parents bought a 200-bed hotel on the Jersey Shore and gave her carte blanche to design the dining room while still a student—her first project. She later created Darché Designs and has had a hand in designing many homes, her own in particular.

Until fairly recently, she and her husband, Bob Horgan, were living on Hunting Island, dividing their time between a century-old stone hunting lodge—the only dwelling on the one-acre island—and their home in Boca Grande, Florida. Prior to that, they lived on Indiantown Island. But while boating and island life remain appealing, they decided the time was right to come ashore.

In Boothbay, on a wooded lane overlooking Linekin Bay, Bob discovered Summer Haven, a property by the Knickerbocker Group. The home was partially constructed and had been on the market for some time. "It was a shell with studs, rough plumbing, and electrical. It had sat unfinished for six years," says Kate. "This home had been someone's dream and it was now our job to bring this project to life again: to make this our dream."

Working with the Knickerbocker Group was a natural choice, as the Horgans had hired the full-service company to build and restore their other Maine homes. It is a rela-

opposite page, right "The foyer at Summer Haven is a porthole to the home," Kate notes. "Standing on the compass rose, one can see through the living room out to sea." The pendant lamp is from Restoration Hardware.

opposite page, far right Brass pendant lights from Visual Comfort hang above a pass-through that was fitted with a mirrored panel on either side. When closed, it reflects the water views outside as well as the dining room walls, painted Benjamin Moore's "Blue Heron."

opposite page, below The glass backsplash over the Bluestar range was painted shades of gray on the back to achieve its muted custom color. Cabinets designed by Elaine Murdoch and painted Sherwin-Williams "Bluebird Feather" enhance the Carrara marble counters and subway tiles from Morningstar Marble and Granite, Inc. The artwork is by artist and family friend, Phillipe Villard.

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tionship that spans two decades, four residences, and a shared history of trust, taste, and collaboration.

The shingle-sided home is approximately 5,400 square feet and has five bedrooms and five baths. Two fireplaces and a mix of radiant and baseboard heat allow the home to be enjoyed year-round. The home's aesthetic—which Kate calls "updated cottage"—is classic, simple, clean, and warm.

Project manager Steve Berger, now retired, headed the 2017 renovation, which included moving interior walls and installing an elevator. A veteran of the couple's other projects, he has been tasked in prior jobs with such logistics as running underwater power cables to their Hunting Island home and organizing barges full of supplies. By comparison, Summer Haven was a breeze.

"Through it all, they remained engaged with the work and the people performing it; getting to know everyone's name, offering coffee on a cold day and baked goods when there was enough to go around," Berger recalls. "I think what I've learned and love most about working with the Horgans is that they find enjoyment in both the means and the end of everything they undertake in life."

A pile of walnut wood purchased by the previous owner became flooring for the ground level as well as paneling in the dining room, which gives the space its warm glow. The long black walnut dining table seats 16 and "gets filled up regularly," says Kate. A large seascape by local painter Andrea Peters is a focal point of the room, redoubling the blue of the bay just outside the window. A pass-through to the kitchen was fitted with a mirrored panel on each side so that, when closed, even those with their backs to the windows can appreciate the water view.

"Breakfast, lunch, and dinners are spent in this space, and the atmosphere changes with each meal," says Kate. "While eating blueberry pancakes, the sparkling ocean water surrounds the room. At night, this room is cocoon-like with the dark board and batten and the deep-blue walls in contrast to the candlelit faces around the table."

A downstairs powder room is a perfect microcosm of Kate's aesthetic. Inspired





above An upstairs hall is papered in white birch print by Cole & Son. The hidden door is ajar, offering a glimpse of Bob's office. A portrait of him, by Barnaby Ruhe, hangs just outside.



by custom heron tiles she saw at Old Port Specialty Tile in Portland, she created an organic seascape theme, with a live-edge black walnut slab (by woodworker Karl Berger, Steve's son) supporting an oyster-shell sink by Boothbay potter Alison Evans. Kate even considered installing a recording of a blue heron that would sound when the door opened, but after researching heron calls ("It's a horrible, bloodcurdling sound," she notes), she decided against it. "I have an affinity for blue herons," Kate shares. "Native Americans believed that when you saw a blue heron, it meant that you were on the right path. Many times in my life when I was experiencing great conflict, a blue heron would suddenly arrive on the scene to clarify everything!"

Kate and Bob were married previously and between them have six grown children and five grandchildren. Kate loves to cook for big groups, and the spacious, well-planned kitchen allows her to do so with ease. The blue cabinets, brass pendant lamps, and Carrara marble counters were inspired by a profile of Bobby Flay's Hamptons kitchen in an issue of *Elle Decor* Kate saw long ago. "I feel like I may even have a photographic memory for color," she admits. "I can remember a color and pick it out very easily."

Knickerbocker interior designer Elaine Murdoch (CMKBD, CAPS) says, "Working with Kate is easy and fun; she is confident in her own sense of style. That confidence gives her freedom to be open to ideas from many sources. I don't recall her ever saying an immediate no to anything. She thoughtfully considers suggestions and rarely second-guesses herself."

An upstairs hall, papered in white birch trees by Cole & Son, is a wintry forest of bare branches that looks seamless with the pickled oak flooring. Press the wall at just the right spot and a door appears—open sesame!—a quirky detail from the original builder that leads to Bob's office.

Kate's design choices bring the outside in, from the lobster knocker on the front door (painted, fittingly, in Benjamin Moore's "Blue Heron") to small touches, like the twig-shaped drawer pulls throughout the house. With oak trees foresting the property

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and the waving bay to the west, the home feels one with the woods and the water.

In an upstairs guest room, an arched Palladian-style window washes the room in a beautiful light. Says Murdoch, "You can come to this room repeatedly and it'll be completely different. This room really accentuates the difference in the weather on the bay."

In a bunk room created for their grandchildren, the nickel-board wall holds another painting by Andrea Peters that joins a bear head from Target ("Can you believe it?" Kate shares delightedly). Remarkably enough, an actual bear (taxidermized but full of character) joins a stuffed raccoon on a stairwell landing, a touch of rustic whimsy in keeping with the playful nature of Kate's decor. The animals have seasonal costumes, from Fourth of July to Halloween. "My kids think I'm crazy," Kate laughs.

Outside, a reflecting pool beckons for a dip, and the fire pit and bocce court give the family plenty of opportunities to gather outdoors. A porch wraps the back of the house and ends in a gazebo that is ideal for warm-weather dining. "Summers are a revolving door of grandchildren, nieces, and nephews," says Kate. "Friends and family, blueberry pancakes, and lobster with corn chowder are the norm. We are so lucky."

And of course, there is the bay, and the expansive view that won the Horgans over, broad, blue, and beautiful in all weather.

opposite page, far left In a guest bathroom, a vessel sink from Native Trails rests on a custom cherry vanity made by the Knickerbocker Group. The hardware is from Ferguson.

opposite page, left In the light and airy guest room, a rattan desk from Maine Cottage is paired with a chair from an antiques shop in Wiscasset. The artwork at left is by Paula Ragsdale.

right An oyster shell sink by potter Alison Evans balances beautifully with the black walnut slab by woodworker Karl Berger. The heron tile found by Kate at Old Port Specialty Tile inspired the decor of the room.





below At Summer Haven, a spacious gazebo grants a spectacular view of Linekin Bay.



above The Horgans share Summer Haven with two miniature Australian shepherds, Gertie and Gracie, and until recently, with their late cat Marley, who appears in some of the photos. The cat fence was inspired by a similar design Kate saw at the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden in Boothbay and replicated by the Knickerbocker Group.

left A spacious gazebo grants a spectacular view of Linekin Bay and makes outdoor dining a pleasure. “We have a lot of grandchildren and nieces and nephews. Sometimes we eat out there and then we break into a giant bingo game,” shares Kate. The light fixture and furniture are from Restoration Hardware.



left, below Garden blooms border a rustic stone wall. Isaac N. Labbe Masonry and master stonemasons David MacFarland and Dan Ucci created the stonework throughout the property.



While their love for island life remains strong, this mainland home allows Bob and Kate to enjoy midcoast living year-round. And with their boat, *L'Escargot*, waiting for them at the dock, they don't have to give up their sea legs just yet. Although its name pays tribute to the sunniest months of the year, Summer Haven is truly a home for all seasons. ■



Writing about Summer Haven felt in some ways like eavesdropping at a family reunion. There is such a rich history of collaboration between the Horgans and the Knickerbocker Group—over 20 years and several residences. I sense that they communicate in the shorthand shared by old friends, a common vernacular built over time. This ease and familiarity comes through when you walk through the warm and inviting rooms of the home they built together.

Allison Paige is a writer based in Maine. She writes fiction and poetry and resides in Portland's East End with her husband, son, and rescue dog, Barnabus.



In the woods near the house, the Horgans put in a bocce ball court, picnic table and fire pit to extend their ability to host outdoors. Here, an easy gathering of family and friends ends with a bocce match and conversation around the fire.