WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

Tour a Coastal Maine Three-Generation Family Home That Was Years in the Making

Despite its close proximity to water, its interiors are downright cozy

By Robert Rorke
Photography by Darren Setlow
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When Leah Lippmann, an architect and senior interior designer at Knickerbocker Group, began renovating a waterfront home overlooking Maine's Casco Bay, she had the mansions of Bar Harbor in mind. "They built these beautiful Shingle-style houses on the water," she says. "They were in railroad, coal, magnates of some sort. They had a lot of money and that's where they spent it."

The setting, with a private beach and enough landscaping to ensure privacy, was perfect. "When I initially set foot on the property, I was like, this landscape is unbelievable," she says. But the house, she adds, was not "deserving of where it was located. It needed to be elevated to the landscape. It needed that history, it needed that richness." The interiors were decidedly pedestrian. "The cabinetry, it was low-end," she says. "Particleboard, not great finishes. It was basically a drywall chalet mansion. Very basic."

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The owners, Janice and Lee, wanted a summer home where their three children and three grandchildren could visit. Janice had wanted a coastal home for years and Lee, a retired oilman, bought this one as a present. "He surprised me for my birthday, May 27, 2016," Janice says. "My husband had an iPad in a box, wrapped. And it said *Push Play*. It was the realtor's video. And it said, 'Welcome to your new home.'"

"She must have played it a thousand times," says Lee.

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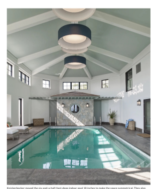
The turret had already been renovated when Janice shot up in bed one night in her Texas home and realized that what she really wanted was a catwalk outside the structure as well as doors leading up to it. Inspired by a nearby lighthouse, Knickerbocker's construction team, led by project foreman Jared Prentiss, installed a wraparound catwalk that offers stunning ocean views. Marvin Window supplied the new doors. The custom pillows and lampshade are covered with Schumacher's Citrus Garden fabric. Knickerbocker Group designed and installed the bronze compass rose inlaid in the walnut plank floor as well as the floral upholstered chair with fabrics by Duralee. The green side table is by Century Furniture. The rattan chairs were found in a local shop.

The team at Knickerbocker Group took four years to complete renovations on the 12,000-square-foot house. "We gutted it down to the studs," Lippmann says. "The only [thing] that was great about this house was that it had good bones. We designed and added everything else. There wasn't anything we didn't replace."

The logical starting point was the porch, originally an eight-foot-wide strip that barely allowed people to pass each other. "We designed a veranda," Lippmann says. With a new copper roof, rafters, cedar shingles, cedar decking, and a mahogany railing, the porch became the kind of inviting outdoor space Janice and Lee could use all the time.

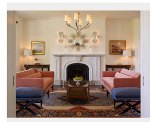
"We pretty much live on that porch," says Janice. "I grew up with a big porch as a child. And I just wanted that porch because if it's pouring down rain, the [grand]kids can still play. They can jump rope. It's big enough that they can even ride their tricycles on it."



Knickerbocker moved the six-and-a-half-foot-deep indoor pool 18 inches to make the space symmetrical. They also built two walkways on either side to accommodate seating and added light fixtures by Urban Electric and Barbican.

Lippmann also built a balcony over the veranda and a bunk room over the garage to add much-needed bedrooms for those visiting family members. The floors throughout the house were ripped up and replaced with walnut boards. A so-called three-season porch, closer to the woods on the property, was another add-on. And way upstairs, an attic space was turned into a plush playroom.

Smaller rooms on the house's lower level were demolished to create a large recreational area where Janice and Lee could show off their bar, which was fashioned from one of Lee's mahogany Sebago Lake boats. "The boys like to play bartender down there," Janice says. What's on tap? "We're pretty much wine drinkers ourselves. We're Louisiana people. We lived there for quite a while. A good Bloody Mary goes a long way down there on a Sunday morning."



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Lippmann took a formal approach to designing the living room. Two Ferrell Mittman sofas, upholstered in coral velvet by Schumacher, face each other on either side of a Ferrell Mittman Brighton coffee table. The sofas are juxtaposed with a pair of pompadour ottomans by Baker Furniture. The sconces on either side of the fireplace are by Vaughan Designs. The Atlanta antique shop Parc Monceau supplied the mahogany Regency console tables that flank the fireplace. Above it hangs a silver leaf mirror from the Carvers' Guild.

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Lippmann employed local and international vendors to give the house its glorious upgrade, ordering paint from the U.K. manufacturer Farrow & Ball, rugs from Mougalian in nearby Portland, Maine, and lighting from The Urban Electric Co. in Charleston. She also canvassed local antiques stores. Part of the renovation went on while Janice and Lee were living in the house, but Janice says it never felt inconvenient. "One thing with Knickerbocker, they always respected that we had a short amount of time because we were just coming up for the summer," she says. "They scheduled work around any people we had coming or anything we had going on."

Janice and Lee go to the house in early spring to escape the heat at their permanent residence in Texas. The visitors will start arriving and the games will begin. "We play Wiffle ball on the lawn. Horseshoes. Badminton," she says. Guests come away with souvenirs from the private beach. "Our beach is full of sea glass. We bought little jars so all of [our visitors could] go sea glass hunting. That's their going-away gift. The house has so many wonderful aspects… Of all the places we lived, I think [we] got this one right."

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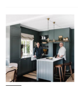

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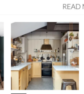

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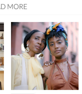

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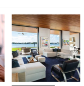

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