

# Someewhere OVER THE RAINBOW

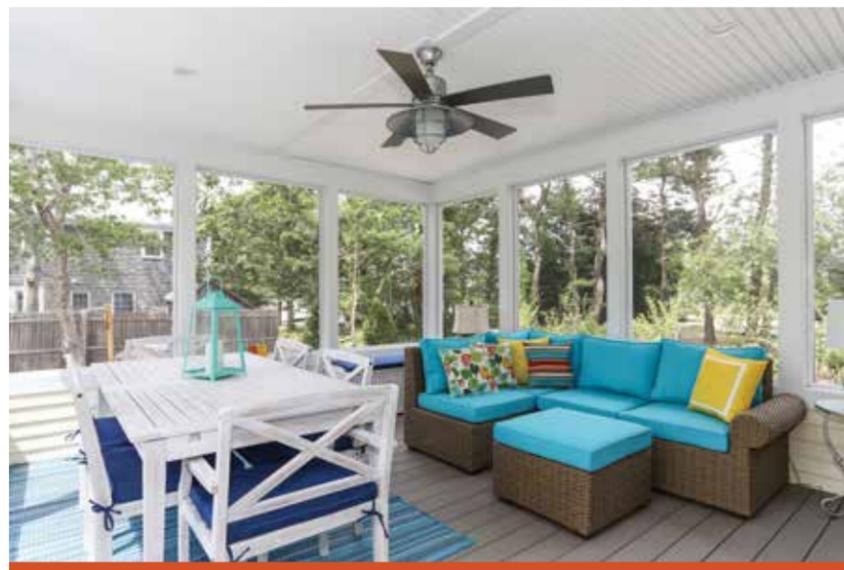
AN INTREPID COUPLE DISCOVER  
WHAT IS OLD IS NEW AGAIN  
WITH THE HELP OF REEF BUILDERS

BY JULIE CRAVEN WAGNER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PEGGY LINSEY



In the 1939 classic MGM film, “The Wizard of Oz,” Dorothy attempts to tell her Aunt Em about the mistreatment of her beloved dog Toto. Aunt Em’s advice to Dorothy was to “find yourself a place where you won’t get into any trouble,” resulting in cinematic history as Judy Garland launched into her memorable rendition of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

Finding a place where you won’t get into any trouble is a pretty good place to start when looking for a home for the rest of your life. The dream of finding a quintessential Cape home that can ultimately become a place for your retirement years is not an uncommon one. And we’ve all seen the typical Cape Cod beach cottage from the first half of the 20th century—knotty pine paneling, linoleum floors throughout, small bedrooms, only slightly larger living spaces, and if



you were really lucky, a screened-in porch that offered the best spot for sleeping on a hot, humid August night. Connecting this kind of cottage to a home that will offer the comfort and welcoming presence for our later years is not, however, a vision most retirees embrace. Such was not the case for an intrepid set of homeowners, who have created

a colorful and creative home that is steeped in the nostalgia of their childhood memories of the Cape in the summer.

The couple purchased their 760-square-foot cottage in 2003, near a north-side beach where the wife had spent summers as a child. For just over a decade they went

through the effort of renting it out, week by week, throughout the summer—all the while, knowing one day, they would indulge their desire and transform the home into one that could accommodate them and their visiting relatives for years to come.

“From the moment we bought the cottage, we knew that was where we would retire,” the homeowner explains. Since she counts scrapbooking as one of her passions, she recalls collecting magazine clippings of ideas for the future home. As the right time approached to start to implement their plan, and they began to categorize the inspirational ideas they had collected, it became clear that some repeating trends were taking shape among the clippings. “It was



remarkable that I had collected the same styles from the beginning of the process, through to the end,” she recalls. “My inspirational triggers hadn’t really changed. We just looked at each other and said, “This has to be a beach cottage.””

A beach cottage yes, but also something entirely different.

The pale green radio in the medical cabinet, belonged to the homeowner’s uncle and has been the center of attention for many Red Sox games. It takes a while to warm up, but still works, despite some charming crackles during broadcasts.

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The nostalgia of a time gone by, filled with memories of a summer childhood on the shores of Cape Cod was feeding the design choices the couple made.

“It all started with the stove,” the homeowner explains. The stove, by Elmira Stove Works, in robin’s egg blue, was responsible for the entire project’s tone. “I was certainly drawn

to the style,” she recalls, referring to the mid-century reproduction. “And I knew I could perhaps go as far as the light yellow model. It was my husband who said, ‘But, what about the blue? It’s so nice. And, with white cabinets? I think that would make a real statement.’”

The stove, and the color, started not only a design philosophy for the new

home but also spawned a pet project no one saw coming. The process of imagining, building, envisioning and finally producing this unique residence has become the subject of a website, a blog, a substantial social media presence and ultimately a soon-to-be-published book, “This New Cottage: A Tale of Color, Nostalgia and the Challenges of Rebuilding a Cape Cod Cottage.”



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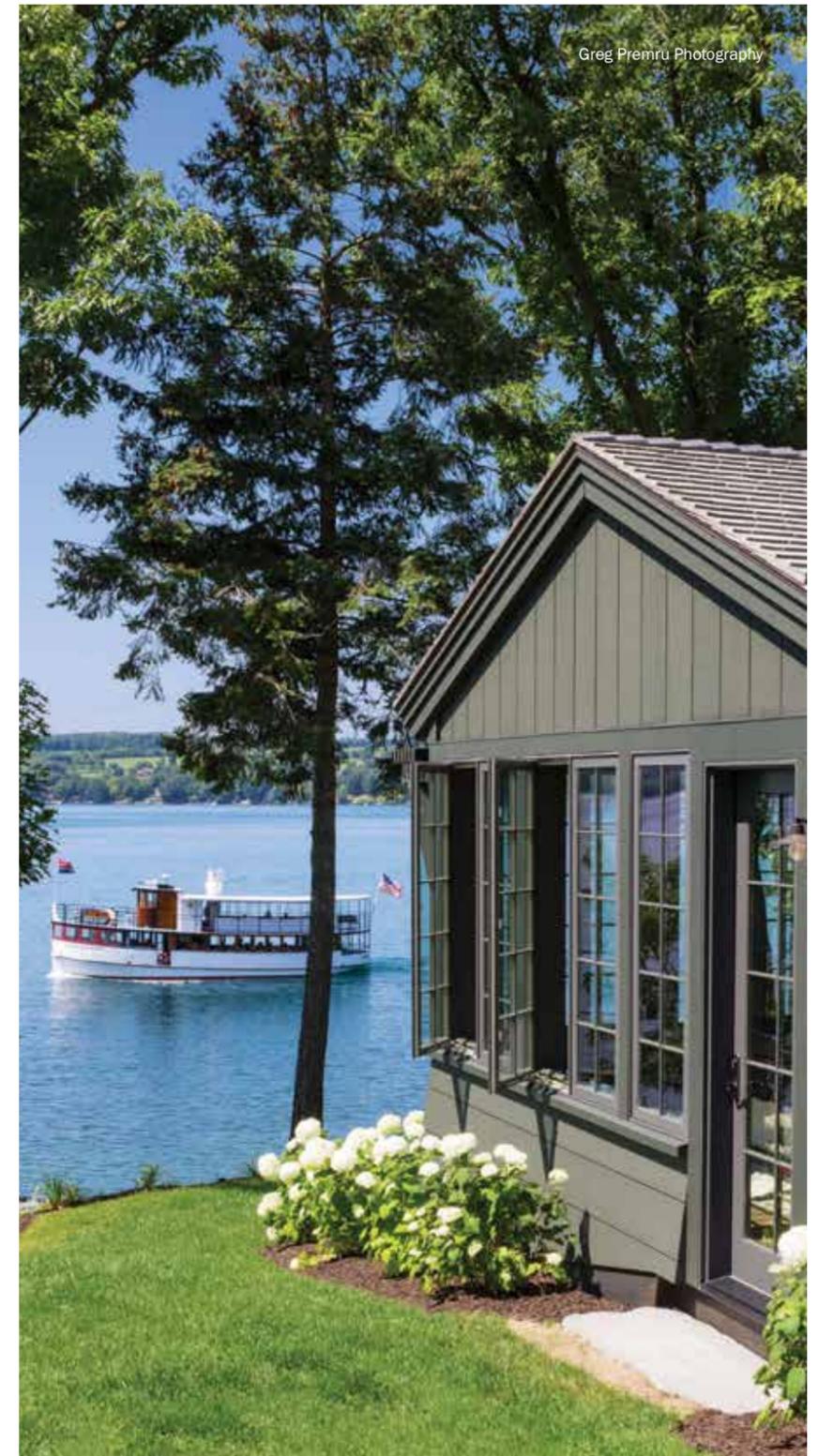
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“People who enter this house often say two things: ‘This house makes me happy and you really should have a magazine feature it.’ I thought, ‘Why would I have a magazine feature it? I’ll just write a book.’” She goes on to explain she always had the goal of writing a book on her bucket list, she just never knew what she would write about. Sometimes, life just fills in the blanks, and checks the boxes for you.

None of this would have been possible without a partner. REEF Builders, in Dennis, is known as Cape Cod’s Home Builder, but perhaps more importantly, they have a reputation for quality work and standing behind their commitments. The homeowner says that when the time came, she and her husband started to look for a builder and they had seen Reef’s signs in front of many projects around town, but more importantly, friends had told them, ‘They are on-time, on-budget kind of people.’

“We had Jim Hagerty, REEF’s vice president and designer, review our plan for the new home. I asked him how confident he was that they could deliver what we wanted while still staying within our budget, a requirement other firms weren’t able to meet. He said, ‘100 percent confident.’ I knew we had our builder,” she recalls.

The homeowner credits the choice to go with REEF as one of the most important decisions they made throughout the process, and she knew she had made the right choice long before the project was completed, recalling a conversation



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with REEF's president, Matt Teague. "Matt said, 'When I see you in the grocery store in three or four years, I want you to be able to talk to me—I want you to say hello and tell me how much you still enjoy your new home.'" Teague was accurate in his prediction of the future, seeing as he is co-writing the upcoming new book about the project.

"The decision to tear down and rebuild a home, especially a cottage in a unique setting like this, can be a difficult one for many homeowners. Often times there are strong emotional ties to a home with years of wonderful memories, and although a new home brings many benefits, homeowners sometimes lose that nostalgic sense of summers past on Cape Cod," Teague reflects.

"We jumped at the opportunity to work on this project, as it presented a distinct challenge, namely how do we design and build a modern home with special features that retains the nostalgic feelings of the past. The finishes and fixtures,

selected with the homeowner, really put our planning and design skills to the test. We really enjoyed working with a homeowner who had the vision and creativity to achieve their vision of a retro-styled cottage that has all of the functionality, energy performance and durability of modern materials and construction techniques."

Teague reiterates the special nature of the project when he says, "We worked so well together, in fact, that we collectively decided this process might be best shared in a book, which could appeal to people interested in designing and building a home, especially a retro-inspired cottage on Cape Cod."

Read more about this special project at [thisnewcottage.com](http://thisnewcottage.com) or find them on facebook at Peggy Cottage or on instagram @thisnewcottage

Julie Craven Wagner is the editor of Cape Cod HOME.



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