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HOME

YOUR GUIDE TO EVERYTHING HOME



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Gambrel

Offers Classic Look
and **Easy Living**

At family's request,
McPhee Associates
designs it from the
outside in



FINDING A NEIGHBORHOOD that perfectly meets their family's needs is the goal for most homeowners. Luckily, Karen and John Parsons found just that place at their summer home in Harwich Port, just seconds from the beach, restaurants and shopping, and their four children could safely ride their bikes in a protected area. Ten happy summers later, the house across the street, this one right on the beach, came up for sale and the Parsons decided to buy it. The house itself wasn't ideal, but the beachfront property was, so they opted to tear down the house and finally build their dream home.

"THIS COUPLE was very involved with the design," says builder Rob McPhee of McPhee Associates, a design-build company in East Dennis specializing in custom homes. "Most of the time we'll design houses from the inside out to take care of the function of everything. They were actually tackling it from the outside in." The Parsons wanted a house that would fit their small lot but still give them plenty of space. They chose a three story shingle-style gambrel.

FOR THE EXTERIOR DESIGN, features like columns and decorative corbels on the soffits create a sense of timeless elegance. The arched front door is echoed by the four arched windows on the second floor, two of them framing a small balcony with a trellis top. Oval windows on both sides of the front door are perfectly balanced by the same window set horizontally on the third floor. A false roof breaks up the tall expanse of the three story house. The wide front porch lined with rockers is a favorite spot for the family to relax.

"WE SIT ON THE FRONT porch before dinner and have a cocktail and watch the people walking to the beach," Karen Parsons says.



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Clockwise from right: The homeowners asked McPhee to design the outside of the home first; they knew just what they wanted. A classic staircase for a classic home. The mudroom, just off the kitchen, has a low bench and a big bag for each child's belongings. With four kids, these homeowners made sure to include the perfect escape; their master suite.



SOME CONSIDERATIONS were more practical. The terraced front yard and high foundation were flood zone requirements, but an artful use of fieldstone walls and hydrangeas soften the grade. In the back, small wind walls protect the deck from the predominantly southwestern wind, while portholes preserve the views. A hand sprayer is built into the back steps so the kids can rinse off their feet after a day at the beach.



FOR THE INTERIOR DESIGN, Mrs. Parsons wanted a classic, but casual look that fit their relaxed vacation lifestyle. With four children, three of them boys, she chose a distressed look for the heart of pine flooring, kitchen island and custom built cabinetry in both the kitchen and living room. The upholstery is all done in primary colors in a durable Ralph Lauren fabric. "I really didn't want to be worrying about who's sitting on the couch with a wet bathing suit or who's dragging their plate across the counter and creating a scratch," she says.

WHEN IT COMES TO considerations like wall color, trim color and carpeting, Parsons prefers to keep things monochromatic for consistency and flow. In the main living areas, the walls are all sand colored and the trim off-white. The kid's bedrooms are the exception, with her daughter's room a cheerful pink and green and the boys' rooms navy and khaki. "That's where I change it up a bit, depending on the person, but the rest of it we kept pretty constant," she says.

ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC features of the house is the stained bead board ceiling offset with white beams and decorative squares in the living room, dining room and kitchen, all part of the open floor plan. The wood creates a warm and cozy atmosphere that looks golden in the daytime and glows at night.

"THEY WANTED AN OPEN floor plan for entertaining because they are a young family and wanted to have friends over," says McPhee.

EACH OF THE FOUR BEDROOMS, two on the second floor and two on the third floor, are on the back of the house with balconies overlooking Nantucket Sound. Parsons says her husband's favorite thing to do is grab a soft blanket and fall asleep on one of the chaise lounges on the balcony off the master bedroom. "Our bedroom is just like this haven to us," Parsons says. "It's so peaceful and quiet. We had the French patio doors open last night and the ocean was just roaring. It doesn't get old. The first time we came here, we were so happy it took our breath away." Three years later; "It still takes my breath away."



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