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## Outdoor Living

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on a Hidden Hill**

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# A Purposeful Retreat

BY SCOTT LAJOIE  
PHOTOS BY DAN CUTRONA

*Everything in this new home in Brewster is painstakingly focused to give the owner a sense of familiarity and calm as well as practicality.*

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The height of the nine-foot ceilings and the intricate interior crown molding and chair rails throughout all harken back to the owner's apartment's style, while artist Time Struna's works dominate the walls. (Right) Nooks at the windows make for perfect spots to read a book. (Below) The furniture is neither "beachy" or modern, but somewhere in between.

**Builder:** McPhee Associates  
**Architect:** John Dvorsack  
**Kitchens/Baths:** White Wood Kitchens  
**Landscaping:** McNamara Bros.  
**Counters:** Cape Cod Marble & Granite  
**Interior Consultations/Window Treatments/Area Rugs:** Details, Inc.

at Tupelo Hills. It was not to sound stuck up, but rather to poke fun at the old tradition. He coined it such because he found a bunch of turtles ambling conspicuously by when he first visited the property and was surprised to find the rare, but distinctive horizontally branched tupelos situated throughout the land as well. It is fitting given John's love of nature. As he shows me around the property, he points out that he wanted to keep as much as the

tree coverage intact when they cleared the lot for the house. He mentions that some trees could've easily been taken down, but he chose to keep them intact. He also chose to keep on his property some wild bushes he didn't know much about (chokeberries) as well as some that he did (blueberries). Why Brewster specifically? His family has history here. His father built a home on Beach Plum Lane on the other side of Nickerson State Park in 1976 when he was a boy. Brewster prides itself in having a mix of both natural and social history, and John has come to appreciate that.







(Above) “The additional structural design and work needed to accommodate a true stone wall in the middle of the home [in the dining room pictured above] was no small feat,” says builder Rob McPhee. (Right) Stairs leading up to the second floor create many spots to look around the house.



John, who works for a mutual fund company, adores his permanent residence on Beacon Street in the Back Bay. While some people design and build a getaway to be markedly different from their city residence, John chose to mirror the creature comforts he had established there. For instance, the height of his nine-foot ceilings on the first floor and the intricate interior crown molding and chair rails throughout all harken back to his apartment’s style. “John [Dvorsak]’s first design called for eight-foot, nine-inch high ceilings and I said, ‘John, I want nine,’” he says. “We worked with John to pull together every detail he wanted to incorporate in his new home. While we made suggestions for John, frequently the decisions reverted back to what he recently did in his Beacon Street home. The finished look is very clean with a bit of a city flair while respecting the casualness of the Cape,” says McPhee.

The furniture and décor isn’t overwhelmingly “beachy;” it is a lot more urban with a little more of a casual feel. When it came to the tiling in the bathroom, he asked for the same exact style in this house.

Another piece of décor he insisted on, which is not too prominent in Cape Cod retreats, was a stone wall on a first-floor interior wall. McPhee said he could do a veneer and make it look real, but John wanted an



(Above) The kitchen sink is situated in a corner of the house, so he can prepare food and stare out the bank of windows on that corner to appreciate the natural surroundings, rather than gaze across the open floor plan of the house. (Left) John Dvorsak is known for designing pointed eaves in upstairs bedrooms.

interior wall with real stone to leave no doubt of its authenticity. “The additional structural design and work needed to accommodate a true stone wall in the middle of the home was no small feat,” says McPhee. “We accomplished the look John was after and the true authenticity with a solid stone wall, which came out beautifully. John was spot on with his request and the wall is a work of art itself.” It is such a compelling feature that he is planning on putting in a similar look in his wine cellar, although he laughs that he may go the veneer route in that location.

While a lot of the interior could easily be in a city apartment, John chose specifically to work in wall art that speaks to the Cape’s natural spaces, namely cranberry bogs, marshes, and grass-covered dunes. That is where the artwork of Tim Struna comes in. The distinctively stylized work of the Brewster artist is placed on at least one wall of each room. And going up the stairs are a series of the artist’s lighthouses, purposely ordered in the order in which they appear as you travel down Cape.

Certain things throughout the house were designed specifically with a piece of furniture or a practical purpose in mind.

The garage is not as symmetrical as the rest of the house. It was





(Above) The living room features three banks of French doors. (Left) The French doors lead out to a small porch at one end of the house.



designed purposely with extra space on one side just so John could store his kayaks in that one spot. The kitchen sink is situated in a corner of the house, so he can prepare food and stare out the bank of windows on that corner to appreciate the natural surroundings, rather than gaze across the open floor plan of the house. “John Dvorsack did a fabulous job with the design and architecture of the home,” says McPhee. “The exterior trim details, scale and proportion of the home as you approach heading up the hill all look fabulous.”

His office in the master bedroom features a nook where he has placed a particular desk he wanted. The desk isn’t an heirloom (“I think I got it at Pottery Barn,” he says.), but he wanted it to look like it was planned.

John admittedly doesn’t spend much time on the second floor, as it is used mainly for visiting family guests. But there are plenty of examples of architectural and decorative flair that he enjoys nonetheless, from the pointed eaves in the bedrooms (“John [Dvorsak] loves to do these beautiful spaces,” he says) to the small turtles on the tiles of the guest bathroom (“...for Four Turtle Farm,” he laughs).

A visitor might not be overwhelmed with a particular style of décor or grandiose features, but rest assured that everything meticulously planned out of and in this house means so much to the owner. 🐢



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