

AT HOME ON CAPE COD

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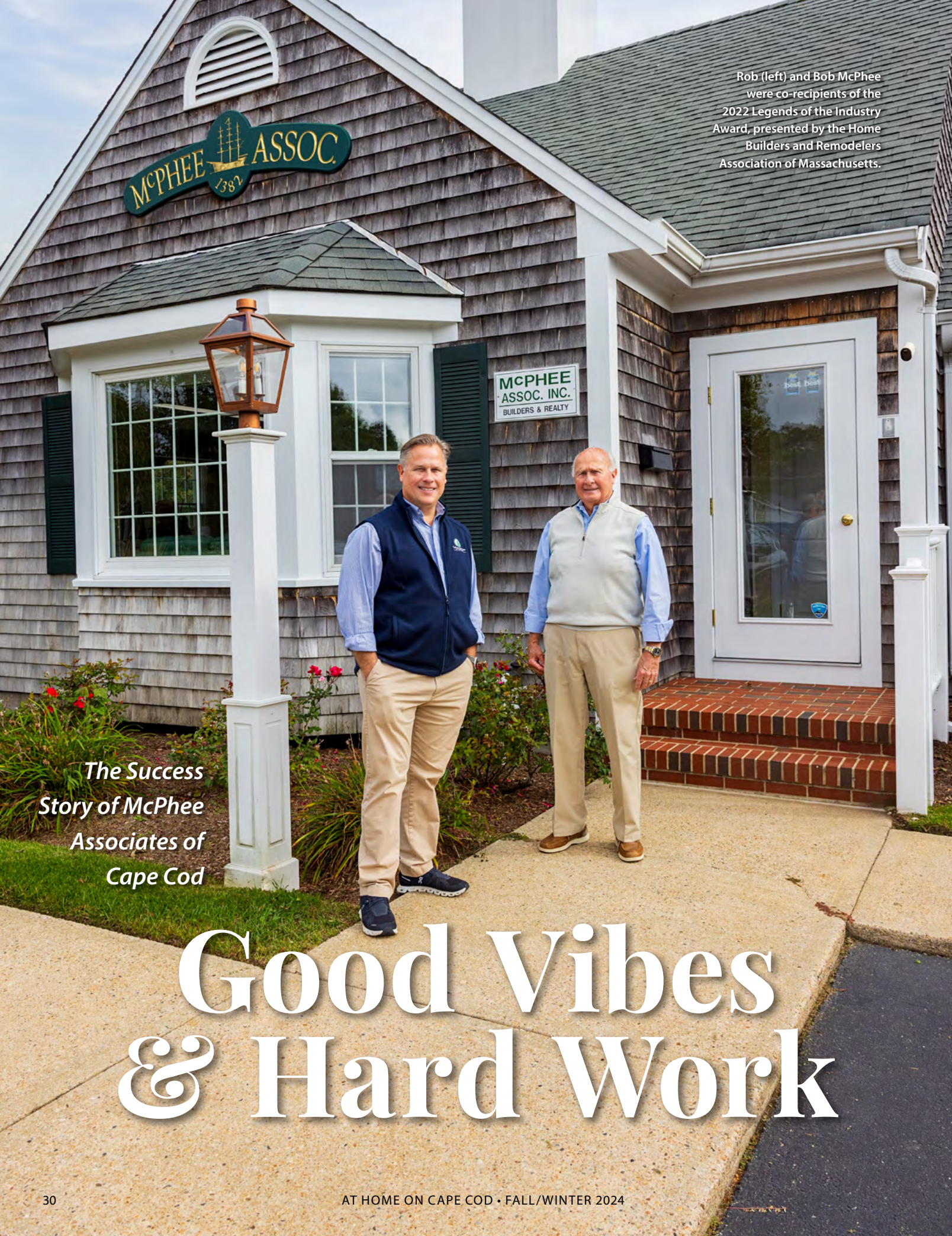
HOMES FOR
FAMILY LIVING

HABITAT FOR
HUMANITY
BLITZ BUILD

LANDSCAPE
DESIGN

Complimentary Issue

FALL/WINTER 2024



Rob (left) and Bob McPhee were co-recipients of the 2022 Legends of the Industry Award, presented by the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts.

The Success
Story of McPhee
Associates of
Cape Cod

Good Vibes & Hard Work



Bird's-eye view of a McPhee Associates' development in Brewster.

BY DONNA TUNNEY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETTY WILEY

THERE'S MORE TO THE BUILDING TRADE

than lumber, tool belts, tape measures, and architectural blueprints, veterans of the industry know. Indeed, one of the most important elements in the world of home construction is the cultivation of great relationships with clients.

Take it from Bob McPhee, founder of McPhee Associates of Cape Cod, and his son, Rob McPhee, now president of the East Dennis-based construction and development company, who both point to interacting with customers as one of the most rewarding and enjoyable aspects of their jobs.

Good vibes are essential for construction contractors, since happy clients who spread word-of-mouth recommendations are crucial to growing the business, especially in a small community like Cape Cod, say the McPhees.

McPhee Associates is a multifaceted firm that builds new homes, remodels existing houses, and manages property. In addition to construction, the company can provide architectural design if the client needs it, thanks to the architectural designers on staff.

Looking Back with Pride

He's retired now, but Bob McPhee recalls the challenges of launching his construction business way back in 1972, when Neil Young's "Heart of Gold" and Don McLean's "American Pie" topped the Billboard chart.

"There were no employees. It was a one-man show for several years, a very small business," Bob McPhee says. "I worked for a contractor while I was in college," he adds, and that was how he learned the trade.

"Very few professionals work as closely with their clients as a contractor does. You are part of their life and everything they do, the decisions they make in the design and building of their homes," Bob McPhee explains.

The younger McPhee agrees. The best part of the job, he says, comes from the relationships forged with clients.

"I love helping them go through the discovery process, seeing what they envision for their homes, whether it's a new home or a remodel. It's fun to meet with them, see what they want to achieve, and navigate the budget.

McPhee Associates
Dennis, 508-385-2704
mcpheeassociatesinc.com



Windward East is a housing development designed and built by McPhee Associates.

Sometimes the client will bring their own architect, sometimes not,” Rob McPhee says.

While the elder McPhee is enjoying his retirement in the charming environs of East Dennis, where Cape Cod Bay beckons, the air is salty, and life moves mostly at an easy pace, his son is in the thick of the day-to-day business.

“Rob runs the show now. He’s the head of everything,” says his father. “I come in once in a while, and I’m careful not to stir the pot. But it’s fun to see where everything is going.”

Rob McPhee learned the business from his father, working for the firm during summers while he attended college. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business from Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I.

“I worked in summers on the job sites, digging holes, hauling stuff, doing whatever needed to be done,” he says.

The firm, now employing 29 people and able to access a large network of local subcontractors as needed, has developed three upscale housing projects, all in East Dennis—Windward, Windward Village, and Windward East. In fact, both Bob and Rob McPhee each call one of these developments home.

The McPhee business expanded to include realty services, when the Windward parcels were being sold and then developed with custom-built, single-family homes. Once the developments were completed, they were turned over to the communities’ homeowner associations, which manage them going forward.

The shoulder-to-the-wheel work ethic of the McPhee father-and-son team has paid off over the years, landing the company some prestigious awards.

In 2023 the company received three BRICC Awards from the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Cape Cod. The two Gold awards and one Silver award recognize “excellence in building, remodeling, design, sales and marketing,” according to the association.

A year earlier, Bob and Rob McPhee were corecipients of the 2022 Legends of the Industry Award, presented by the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts.

It was the first time a father-son team was honored with the recognition, which celebrates association members across the state “who drive change and innovation in the home building industry and have made significant contributions to their communities.”

Only firms in business for at least 25 years qualify for the Legends of the Industry honor.

Regulations among Business Challenges

The construction trade has evolved over the decades, and some changes reflect the frustrations that home builders and remodelers experience today. Many are tied to regulations at the state and local levels.

“Zoning keeps getting more complicated. It takes longer just to get projects going,” says Rob McPhee. There can be administrative backlogs, but mostly, he says, “It’s the regulatory environment that makes things more complicated and drives housing costs higher.”

Construction firms must contend with zoning rules, which vary from town to town, the state building code, energy codes, and even health and conservation regulations, making the permitting process a daunting task in some cases.

“When I first started, 50-plus years ago, it would take me a half-hour and \$25 to get a building permit. Today, it’s more apt to take months, and thousands of dollars, to do the same thing,” Bob McPhee says.

Zoning laws also can add expenses to what could be a simple remodel. For instance, says the elder McPhee, “If someone bought a house in a flood zone and wanted to do some updates, today’s zoning rules could force them to bring the entire house up to code. Rules like that are on the verge of becoming overburdensome today.”

Even with the various frustrations, the two McPhees look with pride on their family business and their employees.

“It’s important that you find and keep good people,” notes Rob McPhee, adding, “You want them to be with you long-term.”

Since the company’s founding, Bob McPhee estimates the firm has constructed upward of 500 new homes, and completed about the same number of remodels, creating a legacy across the Cape Cod real estate landscape. And the work goes on. 🏡



This four-bedroom Shingle Style Cape in Brewster with gambrel dormers was designed by McPhee Associates and is currently under construction.

CAPE COD Oasis

BY DOUGLAS KARLSON
PHOTOS BY AMBER JANE BARRICMAN

*McPhee Associates designs a home for
retirees' extended family gatherings*



Great for entertaining, the private backyard features a pool, fire pit and an outdoor kitchen.



A symmetrical design, Nantucket dormer and inviting front porch make visitors feel welcome. **Right:** A custom cupola and great white shark weathervane, sourced from Cape Cod Cupola, add a touch of whimsy and charm to the roofline. **Below:** Onion lanterns with an aged brass finish are a subtle nod to coastal New England's rich maritime history.



RESOURCES

Design & Builder:
McPhee Associates
Dennis
mcpheeassociatesinc.com

Landscaping:
McNamara Brothers
North Harwich
mcnamarabros.com

Cabinetry:
White Wood Kitchens
Sandwich
whitewoodkitchen.com

MARKED BY TRADITIONAL DESIGN, attention to detail, and an outdoor space that's perfect for family gatherings and entertaining, this Dennis house built by McPhee Associates has plenty of curb appeal.

The homeowners originally approached Rob McPhee, president of the design-build firm founded by his father, Bob, to renovate another house, which would have been a long and complex undertaking.

Family-focused and nearing retirement, their goal was to find a house designed for family gatherings on the Cape where their grown children and young grandchildren could visit, explained McPhee.

As an alternative to renovating an old house, McPhee asked, "Did you ever think of building a new house?"

McPhee already had a set of plans drawn up, as well as a building permit for a property in a neighborhood he was developing called Windward East. They jumped at the opportunity. As a result, the pre-construction process was much faster than usual.

Built in the traditional Cape Cod style with natural white cedar shingle siding, the house is symmetrically designed with a traditional Nantucket dormer, covered porch, and substantial centered chimney painted white.

The central portion of the house is tastefully extended on either side. McPhee explained that varying the rooflines allowed them to increase the size of the house (including a third garage bay) while maintaining a pleasing scale.

Details make the difference both inside and out. A cupola above the garage has a copper roof with a weathervane, and the windows have shutters and pediments.

"The trim both inside and outside can really set off a house," said McPhee.

The covered porch has brass lantern lighting fixtures and paired classic columns. It's set off by a tall flagpole on the lawn opposite the front door. A smaller side porch with a blue rocking chair adds to the charm.



“It’s a nice friendly neighborhood where you can sit out there on the rocking chair,” said McPhee.

Inside, an open floor plan integrates the living room, dining room, kitchen and breakfast nook, all with a view of the sparkling swimming pool. Throughout, the attention to detail shows. McPhee Associates has a selection coordinator who assists with the selection of the finishes, such as tile, drawer pulls, flooring, and plumbing fixtures.

“Our goal is to hold the client’s hands and go through the selection process. It’s a collaborative approach that’s designed to be enjoyable,” said McPhee.

McPhee Associates helps homeowners select just the right finishes, from nautical drawer pulls to Cambria quartz countertops. **Facing page:** Custom, space-defining elements, such as a vaulted ceiling and built-in banquette, lend a coziness to the kitchen’s breakfast nook.



The woodwork is impeccable. Trimmed ceiling beams connect columns and crown molding throughout the open space. Many of the cabinets and shelves were custom-constructed, such as the bookcases around the fireplace, and the shelving in the mudroom.

Stunning white Cambria quartz covers the kitchen counters, island and backsplash. The owners opted for stained oak beadboard in the ceiling of the breakfast room, and natural walnut on the bar countertop and banisters.

“That gives it a nautical look,” explained McPhee.



Above and below: The wet bar, from White Wood Kitchens, acts as a divider between the open concept family room and kitchen. Quality woodwork is a McPhee signature, from the dark wood bar top to the crown molding in the living room.



An outdoor kitchen (below), screened-in porch and outside shower (left) help the homeowners make the most of their outdoor living space.





From an organized mudroom to a much-used back porch, the house meets the real-world needs of an active family.

In the backyard, a large patio surrounds the swimming pool, and there's a gas firepit and an outdoor kitchen bar complete with a pizza oven. There's plenty of comfortable seating and a dining table — perfect for relaxing or entertaining guests. “They fill it up with their family,” said McPhee.

A porch has a flat screen TV and screen windows that can be replaced with glass to extend the season. “If you have a rainy day you can still enjoy the view,” noted McPhee. 🌿

