



**Best Remodel:  
Bathroom/  
Laundry**

As presented by



## BLURRING THE LINES

*As part of a long-evolving coastal renovation, a once modest primary bath has been reimagined into an award-winning retreat—where thoughtful design unfolds into a seamless indoor-outdoor experience.*

BY JULIE CRAVEN WAGNER | PHOTOS BY AMBER JANE BARRICMAN

On Saquatucket Bluffs in Harwich Port, a 1985 home overlooking the harbor has been quietly evolving for years. What began in 2018 as a living room and façade refresh gradually expanded into a thoughtful, multi-phase renovation—each chapter building upon the last.

Now, the most recent phase—a complete redesign of the first-floor primary suite bath—has earned a Gold BRICC Award distinction, proving once again that thoughtful sequencing and clear vision yield exceptional results.

The original bathroom was narrow, functional, and dated. Its proportions posed a design challenge: longer than it was wide, it lacked both visual drama and spatial flow. Rather than force a traditional layout anchored by a freestanding tub, McPhee

Associates reoriented the experience entirely where the shower would become the star.

What distinguishes this award-winning bath is not simply its finishes—though those are exquisite—but its spatial choreography, where an inspired layout unfolds in deliberate stages.

The entry reveals a custom quarter sawn white oak double vanity by Russo Woodworking Inc., its warm grain grounding the room and echoing the kitchen island installed during a previous renovation phase. Above, Robern mirrored medicine cabinets are flanked by elongated glass-rod sconces from Visual Comfort in aged brass—sleek and contemporary, yet softened by their warm metallic finish. Underfoot, 4-inch Calacutta Gold marble hex tiles establish quiet luxury. The marble continues onto the countertops, creating visual continuity and reinforcing the bath's timeless sensibility.

Beyond the vanity and sculptural freestanding tub—an elegant selection from Kohler's Memoirs Collection—the eye is drawn toward a frameless, glass-enclosed double shower. Its openness amplifies the room's proportions, reflecting light from an updated skylight overhead.

Then comes the unexpected moment.

Inside the shower, a custom three-panel, seven-foot-wide sliding glass door opens directly to a fully enclosed outdoor shower. Just steps from the indoor space, it transforms what could have been a straightforward bath remodel into an immersive, indoor-outdoor retreat.

"It's a layered progression," Rob McPhee notes—a deliberate unfolding of experience that enhances both function and atmosphere.

The material palette walks a carefully nuanced line between coastal reference and modern restraint.

Glazed Zellige tile in a muted blue-gray wraps the shower walls, offering gentle variation and artisanal texture. Its subtle movement contrasts beautifully with the structured geometry of the Calacutta marble hex flooring. In the shower pan, the same marble shifts to a 1-inch scale, increasing traction while deepening visual detail. Unlacquered brass fixtures introduce warmth and character. Over time, the metal will develop a rich



patina—a lived-in elegance that aligns with the broader renovation's emphasis on longevity rather than trend.

A custom brass nautical fixture from Nauset Lantern hangs above the freestanding tub, a refined



nod to the home's bluff-side setting overlooking Saquatucket Harbor. Its maritime silhouette feels authentic rather than thematic, grounding the space in place.

Above the tub, a vintage oil painting of a clipper ship—sourced by the homeowner from the Harwich Antique Center—adds another layer of coastal narrative. It is personal, storied, and entirely unforced.

The room's proportions initially presented a challenge as the design had to execute with restraint. Being longer than wide, the layout risked feeling corridor-like. The design team embraced this constraint by emphasizing depth and progression rather than width.

By visually extending the space through the glass shower enclosure—and then beyond to the outdoor shower—the room feels expansive despite its footprint. The transparent boundaries allow sightlines to carry outward, increasing perceived volume and light.

The outdoor shower itself is no afterthought. Finished with mahogany decking and enclosed with cedar lattice integrated into white Koma PVC walls, the space balances durability and warmth. Koma PVC was selected for its resistance to swelling, denting, and rot—critical in a coastal environment—while the natural cedar introduces texture and visual softness.



The result is both practical and indulgent: a spa-like ritual that moves from interior calm to open-air refreshment in one seamless motion.

This primary bath is not an isolated project; it is part of a larger narrative—a cohesive evolution—within the home. The quarter sawn white oak vanity echoes prior phases. The subtle coastal palette carries forward a refined aesthetic established in earlier renovations. Even the layering of indoor and outdoor spaces speaks to the home's relationship with its harbor setting.

The homeowner's vision was clear from the outset: a serene, coastal retreat that blended traditional craftsmanship with modern openness. McPhee Associates responded with a design that is sophisticated without being showy, luxurious without excess.

The wow factor lies in restraint—and in surprise. It transforms a daily routine into something transportive.

In the end, what was once a narrow, dated bath is now a fully realized primary retreat—built to last, thoughtfully detailed, and beautifully integrated into the ongoing evolution of this Cape Cod home. 🏡

*Julie Craven Wagner is the editor of Cape Cod HOME.*

