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BEAUTIFUL WOODWORK BRINGS TO LIFE AN 1890S

seaside HOME

Written by KELLIE E. TABOR-HANN Photographed by NANCY HILL

Built by GARDNER WOODWRIGHTS

Landscape Design by KATHERINE FIELD AND ASSOCIATES



When Gardner Woodwrights took on the refurbishment of an 1890s seaside home, they wanted to help ensure that the home would live on beautifully for another century. Randy Gardner, founder and president of Gardner Woodwrights, explained, “We wanted the work to emulate the late 1800s but with longevity and low maintenance.”

Both the home’s exterior and interior reflect this approach. Outside, the exterior trim and roofing materials are meant to “keep the charm and character of the home,” says Gardner, “while allowing for longevity.” The thicker, taper-sawn cedar shingles and pre-dipped sidewalls, for example, pay tribute to the home’s original look, but they can withstand the often unforgiving Watch Hill, Rhode Island, weather.

Likewise, all of the flashing is lead-coated copper with stainless steel fasteners. Gardner elaborates, “Lead-coated copper doesn’t react with tannins in the red cedar shingles, preventing that bleeding, bluish-greenish tint you see with red copper.” And aluminum fasteners will deteriorate over time.

Wood for the Ages The homeowner and architect Mark P. Finlay of Southport, Connecticut, tapped Italy’s wood market for long-lasting, high-quality wood. They chose pre-primed, solidly constructed mahogany windows and doors by Finestra. This wood especially reflects “the Europeans’ desire to do old-school type of construction in finishing and construction,” says Gardner. Gardner and his exterior team, led by project manager Ted Black, skillfully finessed this beautiful wood into spectacular porch floors and ceilings around the entire home.

Both the closed and open porches reveal the fine result of crafting 1 by 6 clear vertical grain fir into spectacular porch ceilings and ipe (nicknamed “iron wood” for its denseness) into smooth floors with no exposed fasteners. The ipe boasts a smooth grain that doesn’t lift, thereby adding extra durability for the ages.

Fine Interior Gardner Woodwrights’ interior project manager Roo Gardner led a team charged with refurbishing and adding on to the home in just over a year—in time for the homeowner to enjoy the summer season. Many rooms, including the children’s customized boat-like bunk room, evoke the home’s seaside setting.

One of the most challenging interior projects was turning existing space into the client’s home office. The catch? The client wanted the room to “emulate the interior of a boat,” notes Randy Gardner, from floor to ceiling.


The client himself envisioned this “signature room.” Gardner’s interior team worked with dark-stained mahogany with “multiple coats of finish to bring out the high luster like the interior of a boat.” This room alone took about two months for several dedicated woodwrights to bring to fruition. And the result is extraordinary.

As the signature room, this nautical space symbolizes the home at large. For the fine wood-working that characterizes only the best boats characterizes this Watch Hill home as well. And thanks to Gardner Woodwrights, it is a seaside beauty that will continue to live on for generations.





LONG-LASTING CHARM Above: This ceiling features 1 by 6 center-and-edge bead board in clear vertical grain fir, and the floor is ipe, nicknamed "iron wood" for its dense nature. Opposite, from top: The carport was part of the addition, and the square columns were custom-made in the field. * A welcoming patio for summer living. * The porch swing makes a great spot to take in the ocean air. Previous page: This open deck off the master bedroom allows for privacy and beautiful ocean views.



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but with longevity and low maintenance.”

—RANDY GARDNER, *Gardner Woodwrights*





CUSTOM DESIGN Above from top left: Gardner Woodwrights patched and refinished the floors and stripped and refinished the staircase; windows, doors and trim, mantle and bookcases are new. * This master bedroom features custom-built bookcases, which make this area "almost a recess or enclosure," says Gardner. * These custom-made bunks, with trundle storage, feel like the cozy interior of a boat. Opposite from top: This "signature room" in dark-stained mahogany with a high luster is meant to "emulate the interior of a boat." * The traditional windows and doors from Italy maximize the light and views; floor in quartered sawn white oak.