

Boat House | This 3,200 square-foot house (THIS SPREAD), designed by architect Duo Dickinson, sits on a sliver of land surrounded by water. To extend the size but still comply with building codes, Dickinson added porches that practically double the size of the first floor when the weather is fair. See Resources.



LIVING ON THE EDGE

DUO
DICKINSON
CREATES
A HOME
WITH
BOAT-LIKE
PRESENCE
SITUATED
ON A
SCENIC
PENINSULA

BY LIZ ARNOLD
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Charter Club | Designer Raymond Forehand's interpretation of nautical throughout the house comes across yacht-like. The library (top right) was inspired by a captain's quarters and, with its lustrous cherry walls and polished chrome fixtures, feels much like a luxury vessel. **Ship Shape** | Wind instruments line the custom cherry marine high-gloss cabinets in the kitchen (above). A pendant light hangs near Charles Shackleton stools. **Al Fresco** | Ivory cast aluminum outdoor furniture with Sunbrella fabric cushions (opposite) dot the deck and lawn. **Rock the Boat** | A portal window (right), found by the husband in an antiques store, is installed above the range in the kitchen and is surrounded by a stainless steel Walker Zanger mini-brick backsplash. See Resources.



ROOFLETS SHADE THE MANY WINDOWS TO PROTECT FROM THE ELEMENTS AND FROM SUNLIGHT

"WHERE'S YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO SIT?"

The woman who shares the sophisticated beach house with her husband in coastal Connecticut gets this question all the time. "There are views everywhere." Considering that the 3,200-square-foot property, designed by architect Duo Dickinson and interior designer Raymond Forehand, is situated on a scenic peninsula and was influenced by the interiors of yachts (the husband loves boating), it makes sense that the collaboration would set sail with views in mind. But first, they had to navigate some rough waters.

The quarter-acre lot sits on a finger of land surrounded by water. Strong tidal action saturates the soil below and creates buoyancy. Anything built on it could pop like a cork. Dickinson enlisted structural engineer Ed Stanley and site engineer Joe Risoli to help counterbalance that effect. The pair anchored the house with a watertight garage and basement, concrete footing and nearly 120 pilings to support the structure. "The engineering is just about the highest level I've ever encountered for a house," says Dickinson. "It was extremely difficult."



Wide Open Spaces | Giant fabric-covered sofas (above) arranged around a coffee table mark the living area, which shares an open space with the dining and kitchen areas. The plaid pillow fabric is Brunswick & Fils and the cream is Rogers & Goffigon. **On a Curve** | Forehand's curved stair (left) is the focal point of the entry. An antique rug sits on the limestone floor. **Hanging Out** | A polished nickel chandelier from Phoenix Day presides over the British Khaki teak dining table (opposite). Simon Pierce hurricanes flank a hydrangea and rose arrangement. See Resources.



To extend the size of the house but still comply with building codes, Dickinson added porches that nearly double the size of the first floor during fair weather. Cantilevers make the house appear lighter and add visual interest, while rooflets shade the many windows to protect from the elements and from sunlight overheating the house in the summer. Cedar shingles and fieldstone lend a charming, beachy aesthetic.

The architectural sensibility is mirrored in the interiors, where Dickinson and Forehand, who have teamed up on projects before, worked in what Dickinson calls "a hand in glove experience." Interior millwork, designed by Forehand and fine-tuned by Dickinson, is somewhat overscaled. A large newel post accents the spiraling stair. "We wanted to bring in certain elements from the dynamic exterior," explains Forehand, "so some of our millwork is on steroids." Curving lines, adored by the architect, designer and couple alike, snake around the house: walls slope gently, arcs frame the doorways and center the rooms, and the stair—designed by Forehand—is a focal point upon entry.

Keeping in mind the residents' love of the sea, Forehand planned a nautical scheme. But his idea of nautical is "not anchors and ship wheels," he says. "Our nautical is yacht interiors, with high-gloss finishes, polished chrome on everything from drapery rods to hardware and polished fixtures." Coffered ceil-





ings and porticos evoke the feeling of a luxury vessel. Forehand observes that the library in particular, with its lustrous cherry walls influenced by a captain's quarters, looks like it was extracted from a Hinckley.

As requested, views were maximized, almost fanatically. On the first floor, the living, dining and kitchen areas share an open space. Light spills in from the many windows, all of which feature electric shades concealed by detailed millwork. In the kitchen, a portal window—the husband found it at an antiques store—was installed above the range. “The moon rises there,” says the wife, “and we loved the idea of being able to see it.” Upstairs in the master bedroom, a window built into a closet looks out at more windows in the adjacent sitting room. “It sounds bizarre,” says Forehand, “but it totally works.” When the closer window is open, a nice breeze circulates throughout the floor.

Furnishings were kept clean, casual and transitional. The residents, empty nesters whose children are young adults, wanted a cozy home they could enjoy. It was when they saw Forehand's own home that they knew they'd found their designer. “We fell in love,” she says. “It wasn't the kind of house that looked like an interior designer had been there. It was comfortable, and we realized he understood our style.”

Forehand kept the overtones a sandy color and accented with oceanic hues of blue and green. He relied on durable, textured fabrics to give the neutral palette variation and to keep the feeling casual. Most rooms reflect a layout that takes advantage of the views, and the clients, aware of the house's compact size, wanted to use every inch of the house, much like a yacht.

And like seasoned sailors, they threw caution to the wind when it came to building their dream home over the course of several years. “They are very patient people,” says Forehand, “and as heavily as they were involved in the design process, they trusted us entirely.” The result, according to Dickinson is “a boat-like presence, sailing into the view.”



Easy Breezy | Sheer draperies by Rogers & Goffigon maximize light and views near the bar (above). The custom cabinetry is topped with a teak countertop and fitted with a Perrin & Rowe polished nickel faucet. The deco decanters are from the owner's collection. **Sitting Pretty** | In a sitting room off the bedroom (right), a window built into a closet offers more views. The check carpet is by Schumacher and the cream and celery pillow fabric is by Rogers & Goffigon. **Sea Worthy** | The crisp master bedroom (opposite) is accentuated with soft oceanic colors and sandy tones. The texture of the Old World Weavers chenille covering the custom headboard gives the neutral palette variation. See Resources.

