

SWEET ESCAPE

BY SUSAN DEWEY - PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDALL PERRY

Blue plays a starring role in the master bedroom's coordinating elements: a striped Patterson, Flynn & Martin rug by F. Schumacher & Co., a skirted side table sporting a "Palm Beach Paisley" print, and Restoration Hardware bed linens.

*Sometimes the most inviting
"home away from home" is right next door.*







In her years working as an interior designer

in Manhattan, Osterville's Hope Van der Wolk learned how to handle some pretty demanding clients. Working for prestigious firms whose client lists included names like Jackie Kennedy and Barbara Walters, she grew accustomed to giving customers the kid-glove treatment.

Her experience came in handy when she was asked by a discerning couple to furnish and decorate a new seaside guest cottage on Seaview Avenue in Osterville. Van der Wolk, a Rhode Island School

of Design graduate who started her Osterville firm three years ago, looked forward to the project—but she was also a little apprehensive. The discerning clients just happened to be her parents.

Nonetheless, the prospect of creating a design for the tiny treasure chest of a house was too good to pass up, even though there were other challenges in store. The cottage would have to accommodate vacationing family members and friends. Plus, it also had to replicate the feel of the 40-year-old main house next door, a request from her father, who wanted the two houses to complement each other.

Hope Van der Wolk and the firm CJ Riley worked to match the guest cottage with the main home—inside and out.



ABOVE, LEFT: The guest bedroom contains a framed Hermès scarf, a gift to Van der Wolk's mother, along with painted antique beds and an Elizabeth Eakins rug. ABOVE, RIGHT: Views of Nantucket Sound inspired the Osterville interior designer.



Osterville construction firm CJ Riley faced its own challenge in constructing the cottage, which had to be built above flood plain limits, unlike the original house, constructed in 1972. To create a harmonious transition, a deck leads from the cottage and down sets of stairs to the main house. Hydrangeas, Leland cypress, and beach grass soften the lines of the deck while natural fieldstone and slate steps curve toward the cottage entrance.

As soon as the front door is opened, Van der Wolk's gift for melding comfortable yet sophisticated design with a light, whimsical touch is evident. A small entryway, decorated with an unusual Victorian hat tree and a charming antique pine bench from Brewster's Countryside Antiques, opens to a spacious great room. Even on a cloudy winter day, the white-paneled room fills with light, due to its long wall of windows and French doors that open to the deck and ocean beyond. A beamed tray ceiling makes the combined living and dining spaces more intimate.

Van der Wolk's parents wanted the great room to echo the living room of the main house, a favorite family space. An elegant fireplace, as well as the windows, ceiling, and panels, mirror the living room next door, as do the ebony-stained hardwood floors.

"I love to start off with a dark foundation and then play off it," says Van der Wolk. "We didn't want to get too light and airy in here." The dark floors balance the room's white walls and seaside hues. Well-stuffed chairs are upholstered in soothing stripes of sea green, blue, and sandy tones, while a large sofa in marine-blue fabric is stylish, yet comfortable.

Details such as a pair of needlepoint pillows with a compass rose motif add to the room's nautical flair. An unusual black coffee table with heavy, round-knobbed legs "looks as if it could be on a ship," says Van der Wolk. In the dining area, a simple green wooden table is surrounded by black, oversized Windsor chairs. Sumptuous, custom-made drapes of linen and cotton, edged with lyrical blue and green fringe, give the room a luxurious touch. An eight-foot-tall sideboard of distressed dark wood glows with a collection of *découpage* platters featuring marine themes, created by upstate New York designer John Derian. In every corner, there are interesting details, but a harmony of color and theme marks the peaceful space.

The great room's bar area has a fresh look, created by the use of tumbled marble wall tiles, with insets of crushed green glass and sand-colored cabinetry. An under-the-counter dishwasher and refrigerator/freezer, microwave, and small sink are a perfect space for brewing morning coffee, making quick sandwiches, or stirring up



afternoon cocktails. “People love to come and stay here,” says Van der Wolk, noting that her parents frequently use the cottage as an escape or a special guesthouse for friends. “I think this deck has become one of my parents’ favorite spots.”

Van der Wolk relishes accessorizing as a way to add personality to any home. She points to a carved wooden fish hanging high over the great room bar area, and in another corner, a whimsical wooden birdhouse discovered at the Brimfield Antiques Show. Her talent for combining casual elements with refined, stylish furnishings reflects

her years working for ground-breaking designer Sister Parish, the “grande dame of American design” perhaps best known for transforming the Kennedy White House. Parish is credited with creating the “American country” style, combining relaxed patrician elegance with country whimsy. With a laugh, Van der Wolk sums up her own style as “polished beach.”

The master bedroom is an oasis of blue walls, with a white tray ceiling that holds the light from oversized windows, which are subtly draped with striped ecru fabric. A low, four-poster bed of dark

Guests can settle in for a movie or play a game of backgammon in the cottage’s multifunction living room.



ABOVE, LEFT: Guests are invited to dine *alfresco* on the porch, which leads to the main house. ABOVE, RIGHT: Découpage platters by John Derian add interest to a hutch, specially constructed of old wood pieces.



wood is piled high with linens and pillows in simple white cotton with blue piping. The wool carpet is woven with sunny yellow, blue, and white stripes, brightening the room's cool palette. Eye-catching details, such as a pair of colorful lamps with playful striped shades, a round table draped with a blue and yellow paisley print, and a pair of spindly, elegant Regency-style chairs, give the room character and spirit. "The chairs are not at all what you would expect to see here," says Van der Wolk. "I like to mix different design elements. I definitely didn't want to create a 'bedroom-suite' look. I wanted the room to look more relaxed, as if it had been put together over time."

The bedroom opens into a bathroom suite that includes a double-sink vanity topped with Corian beneath a swirling seaside mosaic from Cape Cod Tileworks in Harwich. Easy to install, the tiles, which also line the shower stall, are available in sheets. A portal-style window adds interest and lets in extra light, as do several such windows throughout the cottage.

A second bathroom gleams with hand-sculpted, three-dimensional tiles of shells and fish. "My mother said we had to have starfish somewhere," Van der Wolk laughs. In the third bedroom, a

pair of whimsical wall sconces feature bases made of clusters of overlapping oyster shells. The sconces pick up the restful blue of the walls. "Blue can feel so cold, but I think we found a good shade," says Van der Wolk. The color is also picked up in a beautiful hand-woven, natural fiber carpet by Elizabeth Eakins.

"Having a place for everything and every important activity—and not having a lot of superfluous belongings in the way—creates a space free from disturbances," says Van der Wolk. "Maybe that's why people like to escape to the cottage. It doesn't have any personal clutter. The functions of everyday life are well addressed, but the forms are simple and create a space that people just enjoy."

Van der Wolk admits that her own family sometimes spends special getaway weekends at the cottage—even though they live less than a mile away. "There is just something really special about this cottage," she says as she looks out from the great room windows to the ocean. "We all love to spend time here."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
SEE MARKETPLACE ON PAGE 97.**

Susan Dewey of Centerville is a freelance writer and former associate editor of Cape Cod Life Publications.