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A Place to Land

With a blend of textures and materials, Samantha Pappas designs a casually luxurious forever home

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In Kara and Marc Perrelli's Falmouth Foreside home, there is a single, shiny nod to what is traditionally thought of as coastal design. It's so subtle, you'd be hard-pressed to find it, unless you were lucky enough to spend a night in the spacious bunk room. There it is, in the niche built above each bunk to house a reading lamp: blue wallpaper striped with silver lobsters. This clever use of an iconic Maine symbol exemplifies Samantha Pappas's approach to the interior design of this family home. By layering various textures—linen, leather, wood, rattan, cane, and stone—and accenting the spaces with local art, she created a stylish yet relaxed retreat celebrating its enviable Casco Bay location, but with nary a buoy or whale in the mix. "The color palette throughout the house is very coastal—blues, greens, and white—but I didn't want it to be too kitschy/beachy, because that's not their personality," says Pappas. "The lobster wallpaper is the kitschy-ist thing we have, but it's hidden away."

Early in the nearly four-year-long project, Pappas was recommended to the Perellis by their builder, Falmouth-based Brush and Hammer Builders. The designer-client partnership was a great fit from the get-go. "We had an in-person meeting at the beginning of COVID, and we asked her to work on a couple of rooms—the kitchen and the family room—to start," says Kara Perrelli. "We just loved everything that she picked." With eight children between them and a busy life in Northern Virginia, the couple decided to place the design of the entire house in Pappas's hands.

At the end of a narrow lane, the home's exterior reflects the classic New England vernacular, with a stone foundation and fireplace, wood-shingle siding and roof, gables, and dormers. Next to the two-car garage, a recessed door leads to a generously sized mudroom/entry hall with equally spacious built-ins by Maine Cabinet Company for storing coats, shoes, and outdoor gear. One of two staircases leads from the hall to the bunk room and bath. Down the hallway on the main floor

(Opening spread) For the living room, designer Samantha Pappas selected low-profile, clean-lined furnishings to keep the focus on the view, while blending textures for additional visual interest. The leather swivel chairs are from RH, and the pillows are from Farmhouse Pottery; the spindle-back chairs are from Kyle Kidwell of Kidwell Fabrications.

Outdoor gear can be efficiently stowed in the entry/mudroom (above, left) in the built-ins by Maine Cabinet Company, which are painted in Farrow and Ball's Borrowed Light No. 235. The waxed cotton canvas baskets in the cubbies are by Selvedge Design Studio. The main entry (above, center) opens into the heart of the home—the living room/dining room/kitchen space. A staircase leads to the primary suite and two other bedrooms. The small paintings visible on the shelves are by Margaret Gerding. The seating group sits on a Thayer Design Studio rug; the coffee table is by O and G Studio, and the decorative bowl is from Home Remedies. The fabric on the cushions of the spindle-back chairs is from Fayece, and the custom lumbar pillows are by Erin Flett. In the window seats, the cushions are covered in Belgian linen by Lindsay Cowles. The fanciful wallpaper in the first-floor powder room (above, right) is by Abnormals Anonymous; the custom vanity is by O and G Studio with an Olympian white marble countertop from Boston Granite Exchange; the faucet is from Watermark Designs; the mirror is by Made Goods; and the lighting is by the Urban Electric Company.

In the lower-level family room (top), a spacious sectional from RH offers plenty of cozy seating for movie nights. The console/storage cabinet is by Maine Cabinet Company, and the bamboo-look floor lamp is from Dunes and Duchess. A bowl by Allison Evans of Ae Ceramics sits on the Aeterna Furniture coffee table. One home office (above, left) features a Thos. Moser sofa and a concrete bubble side table from Made Goods. Chairs by David Gaynor Design (above, right) surround a game table by Dunes and Duchess, and sconces by the Urban Electric Company illuminate a painting by Allen Bunker.

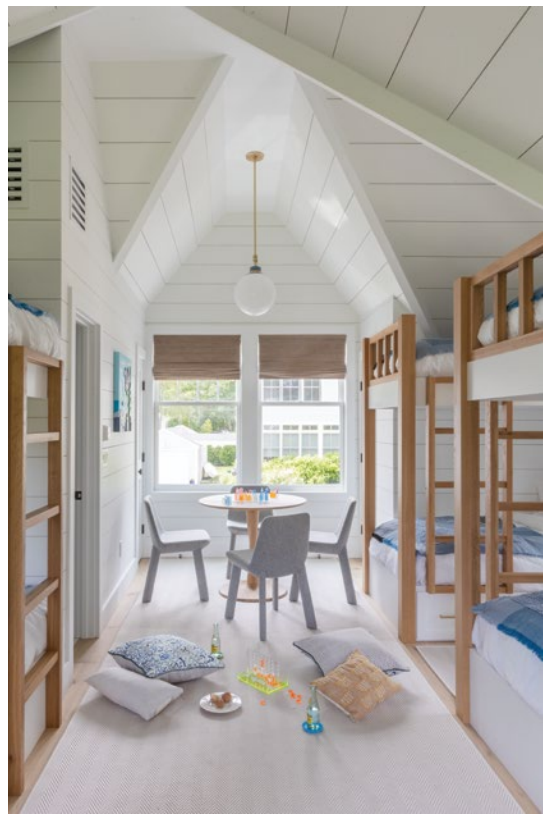


is one of three guest rooms with en suite baths, and a powder room. The latter is wallpapered with a fanciful design by Abnormals Anonymous (also the source of the lobster wallpaper) that evokes undersea plant life. The serene guest room features rattan-front nightstands, paintings by Maine artists Dietlind Vander Schaaf and Jeffrey T. Fitzgerald, a wave-patterned Angela Adams rug, and a striking modern ceiling pendant that recalls a cascading waterfall.

The hallway opens onto the heart of the house—the living room/dining room/kitchen—where windows on three sides offer spectacular views of boat-dotted Falmouth harbor and the Casco Bay islands beyond. To keep the sight lines unobstructed, Pappas chose low-profile, clean-lined furnishings in muted colors. In the living room area, a white linen RH sofa is flanked by two pairs of armchairs: two butterscotch leather swivel chairs,

(Opposite, clockwise from top left) In the sleek yet relaxed kitchen, Pappas chose black soapstone for the kitchen island top and Matarazzo Supreme honed marble (both from Boston Granite Exchange) for the remaining countertops and pantry. The muted colors in the dining area complement the Casco Bay scenery beyond the windows. The table is from Huston and Company, with chairs by Serena and Lily and a chandelier by the Urban Electric Company. The kitchen cabinets are by Maine Cabinet Company, and the hood vent is covered in Venetian plaster, a finish chosen by Pappas for its textural quality. Kitchen fixtures are by Watermark, island stools are from O and G Studio, and pendant lights are from the Urban Electric Company.

In the primary suite (above), a soothing monochromatic color palette creates a tranquil retreat punctuated with bright artwork, including a large painting by Michelle Armas and two smaller pieces by Laurie Fisher. The bed is from Serena and Lily, and the bench at its foot is from Amber Interiors. RH nightstands are topped with lamps from Lostine, and fawn velvet bucket chairs face the water view. The shell mirrors in the owners' bathroom (left) offer a subtle nod to the seaside. The painting reflected in the mirror on the left is by Liz Hoag.



also from RH, and a pair of oak spindle-back chairs by Portland-based Kidwell Fabrications. On the opposite side of the space, gray rattan dining chairs surround a white oak trestle dining table from Huston and Company in Kennebunkport. The rocky shoreline's hues are echoed in the fieldstone fireplace, the pale gray stools at the kitchen island, and the honed marble kitchen backsplash, and punctuated by the bright brass pendant lighting, kitchen faucet, and cabinet pulls.

"I like combining all the different textures, because I think that's what highlights them," says Pappas. "If everything was linen, it just gets lost and kind of boring; having the leather next to it makes you want to touch everything." Soft, waffle-weave throw blankets add even more tactile appeal. "Those are the things that make it feel like a home instead of just a styled space, and you can see that the Perrellis use them—I just love that."

A closer look at the details of Pappas's design reveals linear patterns: pale teal cross-hatching on the custom linen cushions of the spindle-back chairs, bolder stripes on the Erin Flett pillows, and a God's-eye-like design in the gray and white living room rug. But curvy elements are at play, too. The living room seating faces a round coffee table topped with Carrara marble, and cushions for the window seats framing the fireplace are upholstered in the same swoopy blue and white fabric as those on the dining chairs across the room.

From the spacious kitchen, a second staircase leads to another guest room, a bedroom for the Perrellis' youngest child, and the primary bedroom. In the guest room, Pappas blended elegance and whimsy, as well as more texture, by centering the bed—with its curved cane headboard and velvet upholstered base—under a collection of colorful sardine-can paintings by New England artist Julie Bowers Murphy. The room shares a Jack-and-Jill bath with the young daughter's bedroom.

In the luxurious primary suite, Pappas kept the palette and furniture style minimalist to maximize the view and the space. The gray hue of the wall color—Benjamin Moore's Shoreline—is echoed in the sleek, upholstered four-poster bed, the bedding, and the drapes. A pair of fawn velvet barrel chairs facing the water offer a cozy spot to relax with morning coffee or an evening glass of wine. "We wouldn't have thought a seating area would fit in that space, but Samantha did, and we use it all the time," says Kara. In the adjoining bathroom, pearlized shell-framed mirrors over the double vanity are another subtle coastal reference. At the same time, the functional but small walk-in closet provides an example of how the build and design team met the project's challenges.

Brush and Hammer, along with Waltman Architectural Design of Yarmouth, had to deal with the constraints of the narrow lot. The original home was built as a cottage in 1888, when the neighborhood was originally developed as a summer

colony. "The architect's first design that met our needs was five feet deeper," says Marc. "But we realized that, with setbacks and everything else, that had to change, and that's when every space started to matter." It was important to the Perrellis for the home to accommodate their large family and eventually grandchildren, and they decided that a large second-floor landing mattered more than a bigger closet. "We wanted each space to be livable," says Kara. "For example, we didn't want a formal dining room. We really wanted to live in all the spaces."

Pappas's background as an engineer helped her manage the space constraints, which also impacted the layout of the home's lower level. A casual family room with an enormous sectional sofa and a table for puzzles and games has a wall of windows facing the water, as do a third guest room and Kara's good-sized office. To make the guest room work, Pappas furnished it with a full-size bed, which enabled her to fit in a nightstand, and chose narrow double doors for the closet instead of a single door. She also managed to squeeze in a laundry room with a sink. But Marc's office is comparatively small and windowless, which is a continual source of amusement. "It was hilarious," he says. "Every time we got together to discuss the project, I found out that something else had happened that would impact that space." At the end of the day, though, it was a small price to pay for a home gym that also boasts a water view: "The place that we are both in every day is the gym, and

the fact that we have that view of the ocean from the basement level, which was a big deal for us, is really nice," Marc says.

He wasn't initially so amenable when Kara called to tell him that Pappas wanted to wallpaper the ceiling in one of the guest rooms. "I loved all the bedrooms, but that one wasn't my favorite," Marc says. "However, once she did what she wanted to do, I loved it that much more, and it might even be my favorite now." Pappas, who ended up choosing everything in the house, down to the plates and silverware, says she prefers to design entire homes over just one or two rooms. "She sent me the photo of that wallpaper, and I just said, 'I trust you,'" says Kara. "As time went on, we really trusted all of her selections."

The Perrellis plan to eventually spend more time in Falmouth, where Kara grew up and where her mother still lives, about a mile away. "We could not be more thrilled with the house. It's our happy place, our final landing pad," Kara says.

Pappas and her husband have a daughter the same age as the Perrellis' youngest child, and the two couples have become friends. "As far as clients, they were incredible to work with," says Pappas. "I don't want someone to come to me because they want to recreate something they've seen that I've done. I want to create a home that is specific to those people, and that's what we did here. If you met them, you would see that they fit right into this space. And that's always the goal. I want people to love it because it's theirs." **MH+D**

Julie Bowers Murphy's sardine can paintings (above, left) add a whimsical note above the Anthropologie bed in the second-floor guest bedroom. The ceiling wallpaper is by Zak and Fox, the nightstands are from Made Goods, and the bedside lamps are by O and G Studio. Silver lobsters stripe the Abnormals Anonymous wallpaper in the bunk room niches (above, center), each of which has a sconce by Cedar and Moss for nighttime reading. In the same room (above, right), a pedestal table by Ethnicraft surrounded by Blu Dot chairs provides space for a board game or puzzle, and throw pillows from Kate Loudoun Shand, Erin Flett, and Anthropologie invite lounging.

Architect Waltman Architectural Design and builder Brush and Hammer faced several challenges in fitting the house on the narrow lot (above), but together with Pappas, they ultimately created a classic, New England-style home that takes full advantage of its oceanside setting and offers plenty of room for a large extended family.