

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Sweet Summer

Timeless Style, Easy Living





ON THE Bright Side

A South Shore home has the easygoing feeling of summer all year long.

Meals are enjoyed at the ash dining table crafted by Rhode Island-based Lorimer Studios. Tiny spotlights on stainless-steel cables supplement the Foscarini pendant lamps. "It's an airy way to get more light without affecting the views," says architectural designer Kevin Dauphinais. **FACING PAGE:** The living room's quiet palette keeps the focus on the outdoors. "It's like looking at a painting in every window," says homeowner/designer Susan Zaverucha.

Text by PAULA M. BODAH | Photography by JESSICA DELANEY | Produced by KARIN LIDBECK BRENT



ABOVE: Dan Gordon and Patrick Taylor devised an informal, understated landscape, with low-growing native plants that can withstand the salty air. **BELOW:** An oversized island (with easy-to-clean CB2 leather chairs) means the whole family can gather for a casual meal. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** Two walls of windows with minimal panes surround the sunny living room. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** The wet bar is open to the stairwell, letting light flood into the kitchen.

With the last of their four children out of college, Susan and Sonny Zaverucha felt ready to downsize—to a point. What they really wanted, they told architectural designer Kevin Dauphinais, was a place cozy enough for two but roomy enough to welcome their progeny as well as future children-in-law and grandkids.



The Duxbury, Massachusetts, property they had bought was a gem overlooking the marshes of the Back River with views to Duxbury Beach. But it was only about a half-acre and, like so many waterfront properties, subject to plenty of rules and regulations about building. Susan and Sonny imagined several guest rooms in addition to their own bedroom suite, a two-car garage, a swimming pool, and plenty of gathering spaces indoors and out—a big program for the small lot.

Dauphinais, owner of Sandbox Design Studio, took advantage of the lot's sloping nature to design an upside-down house, with the living spaces and the primary bedroom suite on the ground level and the guest bedrooms





tucked below at what he calls the garden level.

On the approach, the dwelling looks like an unassuming one-story that nods to the New England waterfront vernacular with its cedar-shingled garage and cedar roofs on both garage and house. “From the street, you don’t know there’s a lower level,” Dauphinais says. “It’s kind of a nice surprise.”

A black-framed glass front door flanked by two tall windows gives the facade a modern slant, as does the vertical siding of Boral, a synthetic product composed of recycled materials including volcanic ash. “It’s very weather- and rot-resistant and takes paint really well,” Dauphinais explains.

Dan Gordon and Patrick Taylor devised a landscape plan as understated as the house, with low-growing plantings, including drifts of fountain grass and Russian sage. “It’s not overly formal,” says Taylor, who acted as project manager. “Because of the coastal environment, we chose plants that can withstand the climate, like bayberry, summersweet, and grasses.”



ABOVE: The primary bath’s tub offers a stellar view of the Back River. **BELOW:** The primary bedroom has a Verellen bed with a slipcovered headboard. **FACING PAGE:** Ten-foot-tall sliders ensure a garden-level guest room stays bright and airy; the Harbor Cane bed and Del Sur coconut bead chandelier, both from Serena & Lily, strike a beachy note.



“OUR INTENT WAS TO CREATE AN ELEVATED COASTAL HOME THAT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE EXPANSIVE MARSH AND RIVER VIEWS.”

—Designer and homeowner Susan Zaverucha

Susan, who is an interior designer, worked alongside designer Julia Vandal to dress the light-filled open floor plan in casual but stylish furniture and accessories. “Our intent was to create an elevated coastal home that takes advantage of the expansive marsh and river views,” Susan says. In the window-lined living room, a pair of Verellen sofas and twin lounge chairs wear easy-care slipcovers in summery white. Splashes of blue—from the turquoise of an abstract painting in the entry to the azure of toss pillows in the living room to the navy of the kitchen island—further connect the house to its surroundings.

To keep the garden level as bright as the main floor, Dauphinais set two skylights in the ceiling above the sleek, stainless-steel-railed stairway. “The skylights let the light pool down to the middle of the house on the lower level so



ABOVE: Rather than the expected waterscape painting, Susan chose baskets to bring texture to a guest room wall. **BELOW:** The garden-level sitting room is conveniently close to the backyard pool. **FACING PAGE:** The rear elevation reveals the two-story nature of the house; a bluestone grid visually ties the plunge pool to the house’s stone cladding.



you don’t feel like you’re in a basement,” he says. Ten-foot-tall glass sliders that open the downstairs sitting room to the backyard terrace and pool also usher in plenty of light.

Sonny, a commercial developer, acted as general contractor, a circumstance that initially gave Dauphinais pause. “Typically when homeowners say they want to do the general contracting, we get nervous,” he confesses. “Come to find out, he was the right guy for the project.”

Given the results—a sunny, easygoing home that’s equally comfortable whether the Zaveruchas are enjoying some alone time or welcoming the whole gang—it’s clear the entire design team was perfect for the job.

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see *Resources*.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN:
Kevin D. Dauphinais, Sandbox Design Studio

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Susan Zaverucha, Julia Vandal

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Patrick Taylor, Dan Gordon,
Dan Gordon Landscape Architects

