



Landscape architect Dan Gordon and landscape designer Peter Stephens played off remnants of existing stone walls when organizing the site and developing what Gordon describes as a casual agrarian style. "We're tying into the character of the landscape instead of imposing something different on it," he explains.





# Modern Romance

Hansel and Gretel meet Bauhaus in a Chilmark home designed for a family looking beyond New England norms.

*Text by MARNI ELYSE KATZ | Interior photography by TAYLOR AHEARN*

*Exterior photography by NEIL LANDINO*

**A**rchitect Patrick Ahearn is a celebrated classicist known for timeless, coastal-inspired dwellings. But his past tells a different story: he was trained as a modernist under Walter Gropius at the storied Cambridge, Massachusetts-based firm The Architects Collaborative. So when potential clients proposed he design a modern family homestead on ten-plus acres of undeveloped farmland on Martha's Vineyard,



**RIGHT:** In the great room, a New England fieldstone fireplace with a granite surround echoes the stacked stone walls on the property. Douglas fir posts and beams add warmth, as does horizontal nickel board. **BELOW:** An interior glass wall separates the wife's office from the seating area in the great room. The light-filled workspace has a view of the property's party barn across the meadow and features a hanging bench slotted into a square bay.





Two guest suites with cathedral ceilings occupy the wing to the right of the entry: "Windows reach the floor, lending the sense that the room is at grade rather than elevated above the land," says project architect Colby Mauke.

he replied, “Let’s give it a shot.” The result is a home that melds storybook-style silhouettes with Machine Age edge.

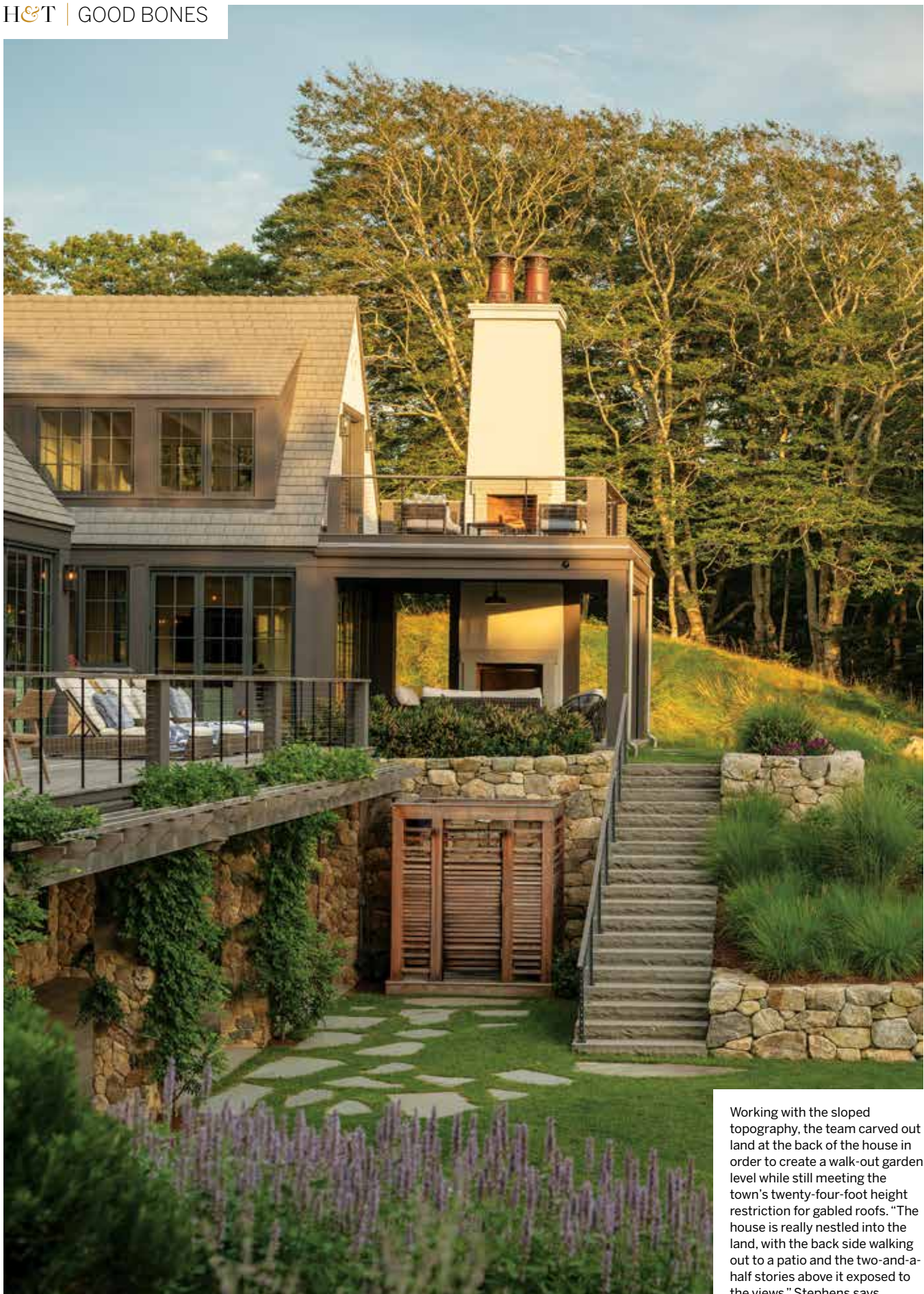
The central portion of the house is modeled on a cottage one might find in the Black Forest, complete with steeply pitched roofs. Throughout, black windows with delicate muntins feel reminiscent of industrial metalwork, while chevron shutters are decidedly Old World. The white stucco-like facade

*THE HOME  
MELDS STORY-  
BOOK-STYLE  
SILHOUETTES  
WITH MACHINE  
AGE EDGE.*



**ABOVE:** Operable windows in the stair bays let cool air come in around the gardens and hot air dissipate out the top. **LEFT:** Large bifold doors unite the family room and covered porch, creating an immersive indoor-outdoor experience.





Working with the sloped topography, the team carved out land at the back of the house in order to create a walk-out garden level while still meeting the town's twenty-four-foot height restriction for gabled roofs. "The house is really nestled into the land, with the back side walking out to a patio and the two-and-a-half stories above it exposed to the views," Stephens says.

The window by the kitchen's back counter folds away to make alfresco dining easy.



*“MY GOAL WAS TO CREATE A ROMANTIC HOUSE WITH LOTS OF GLASS TO CAPITALIZE ON DISTANT WATER VIEWS.”—Architect Patrick Ahearn*

and tall chamfered chimneys reference modern homes in Belgium and France. “My goal was to still create a romantic house, but with indoor-outdoor living and lots of glass to capitalize on distant water views,” Ahearn says.

Gabled roof towers, connected to the central cottage by one-story passageways, each boast a blackened-steel stairway encased in a glass bay. Here, at the

ends of the house, is where Ahearn flexes his modernist muscle. “The central portion could be an original structure and these cold, flat-roofed connectors with Bauhaus flavor were maybe added later,” he says.

Entry is into a voluminous great room with a seventeen-foot-high vaulted ceiling, a two-story fieldstone fireplace, Douglas fir post-and-beam detailing, and

dormers that act as clerestory windows, imbuing the space with sunlight. Nature beckons at every turn. “Walls of windows fold away, opening rooms to each other and the exterior deck for true indoor-outdoor connections,” Ahearn says.

For instance, bifold doors and windows unite the great room with the back deck, which overlooks Vineyard Sound. The family room opens to the



“The stair towers let light into the ends of the house, so no matter which direction you walk, it’s always toward the light,” architect Patrick Ahearn says. The bays are clad in charcoal-colored weatherproof boards meant to resemble metal, and the exaggerated smokestacks feature classic chimney pots.



back deck, too, as well as to a covered porch with motorized drop-down screens. Just beyond, granite stairs descend to a lawn, outdoor shower, and the garden-level patio.

“We spent a lot of time talking with the clients to get a meeting of the minds,” Ahearn says. “We dreamed this up together.”

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

**ARCHITECTURE:** Patrick Ahearn Architect  
**BUILDER:** Rosbeck Builders  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Dan Gordon Landscape Architects