Architect Michael Gray's remarkable transformation includes the porch's ball-and-rope window. A new portico and myriad details highlight the home's Shingle-style character.

Global Warmth

Modern ethnic touches bring a sophisticated, worldly flair to the classic seaside-cottage aesthetic in a home on the North Shore of Massachusetts.

Text by Megan Fulweiler • Photography by Sam Gray • Architecture: Michael T. Gray, Carpenter & MacNeille • Interior design: John De Bastiani • Landscape design: Laura Gibson • Builder: Don Tison, Carpenter & MacNeille • Produced by Stacy Kunstel

Who isn't familiar with the snowball effect? A minor home improvement project—swapping out an entry door, say—culminates in a stone terrace, a pergola and spruce topiaries. The momentum builds and one thing launches another, often with rewarding results. • The rebirth of this Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts, home began innocently enough. Aware that their new address required some remodeling, the owners invited Michael Gray, director of architecture for the nearby Essex design and construction firm Carpenter & MacNeille, to stop by. • Built in 1993, their pretty house was structurally sound, but it needed updated systems and a cosmetic recharge. Ideas swirled back and forth like flocks of birds. Gray sketched some remarkable renderings illustrating how the future could look and—snowball!—clients and architect concurred: a total interior remodel along with a dramatic exterior makeover was in order. With two teenagers and an active lifestyle, the owners envisioned brighter, more comfortable spaces. Admirers of the Shingle style, which is prevalent in their area, they also wanted the house to reflect a nineteenth-century seaside cottage aesthetic. In other words, "a visually engaging home," Gray says, "with interesting decorative details seemingly round every corner." • Working closely with Ian Mentasti, a designer with Carpenter & MacNeille's sister company, Stephen Terhune Woodworking, Gray led what he terms a "selective demolition" of the interior. Revamped rooms were enhanced with character-giving paneling,

The old mirror and garden seats, all from Alexander Westerhoff Antiques in Essex, Massachusetts, play off new love seats in the living room. *Top right:* The entry's charming rug and settee introduce visitors to the fresh color scheme of the house. *Bottom right:* A seascape is a nod to the home's location on the North Shore.

built-ins, cabinetry and trim. The staircase in the three-story house took on a more open, gracious appearance and the 6,000-square-foot house gained an impressive kitchen.

Interior designer John De Bastiani took charge of the decor. Having helped the owners with previous projects, the Boston and Los Angeles–based designer knew their tastes. "They're wonderful, enthusiastic people," he says. "The wife's style sense really comes through. I love working with them."

Many of the owners' furnishings had gone along with the sale of their old house, so they were starting almost from scratch. Blue and white—a crisp white with no antique-y yellow undertones—is the wife's favorite combination. With those colors as the theme, De Bastiani wasted no time layering the airy rooms with furniture, art and accessories that conjure thoughts of the sea.

To give the decor a more modern feel, however, the talented designer also introduced an array of ethnic touches. Rather than familiar checks, for instance, living room curtains flaunt a Brunschwig & Fils pattern with a Moroccan flair, library chairs are clad in ikat and pillows wear zippy antique textiles. It's all wonderfully traditional but with a fresh global spin and a nod to practicality, a style the designer calls "useful traditional" and that he counts as a signature of his work.

"It's fun taking basic elements and doing something different with them," De Bastiani says. "We cut striated wall-to-wall carpet for the stairs and ran the stripes across rather than up and down." It sounds absurdly simple. Yet, installed in that manner, the lines visually enhance the staircase's grandeur.

The living room escaped major construction, but a new

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The blue-and-white palette takes a fresh turn thanks to ethnic-influenced fabric patterns. Sea-inspired accessories add a note of whimsy to the library. *Facing page top and bottom:* The light-filled master suite includes a serene bedroom with private deck and a storage-packed his and hers bath.

hunks of coral and shells. The wool rug sports a weave "reminiscent of ocean waves," says the designer. Only in the nearby powder room does the color scheme vary. Here, walls swathed in a raspberry-and-white Carleton V fabric partner with a marble-topped vanity and custom shell mirror.

Given the elegance of the rest of the house, one would expect an equally gracious master bedroom. De Bastiani didn't disappoint, undoing the couple's antique bed and reassembling it with a chic upholstered headboard. The serene gray walls are hand-painted with a crosshatch pattern, a soft carpet pampers tired feet and a pair of mercury glass lamps adds a calming symmetry. The adjoining bath is equally luminous—all marble and light.

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And the exterior? Totally transformed. After Gray and his team tackled the interior architecture, they wrapped the building in cedar shingles, creating a fully realized Shingle-style home. Their historically inspired design includes any number of eye-openers, including decorative shingle patterns and a unique rope-and-lattice porch window—"a piece of the past," says Gray. Details are extensive, every one of them highlighting quality craftsmanship.

If ever there was a moment when the owners questioned their courageous do-it-all-at-once decision, it's forgotten. These days they're sitting back and enjoying. •

Resources For more information about this home, see page 142.