





a seaside *Retreat*

SPLENDID VIEWS MAKE
THIS HOUSE A DELIGHT

Plaice Cove is one of many small, sheltered bays along the seacoast in New Hampshire. With a secluded beach surrounded by a rocky shoreline, it is the perfect place to spend the summer or to just get away from the daily grind. For Lou and Colleen Fantozzi, who discovered the area almost by accident, Plaice Cove provides the perfect refuge.

“My wife likes to go around and look at houses,” Lou says. “I don’t know if she met the realtor first, or if she just drove by the house first, but either way, when she found this place, she just fell in love.”

But for Lou, it wasn’t love at first sight. “When I first looked at it from the outside, I wasn’t so sure. It’s so different from the other houses in the area,” he says. “But when I walked inside, it’s just amazing. The view from the deck out to the water is gorgeous.”

Bill Soupcoff of TMS Architects in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, designed the house several years ago to make the most efficient use of limited space and to take advantage of the spectacular views. But he agrees that the house is rather boxy. “Any of those sites along the coast are constrained by a fifty foot by one hundred foot building lot—which is not very big. When you take the setbacks, you’re left with a fairly tight footprint on which to build. That’s probably the most challenging thing for those sites. The ‘boxiness’ is a product of those constraints.”

To reduce the visual impact of the boxy facade, Bill worked with Teleran Construction in Stratham, New

The walls of the dining area are covered in grass cloth, a natural fiber that mimics the look and feel of the dune grasses outside the window in Plaice Cove.

WRITTEN BY ERICA HOLTHAUSEN
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Above: The sundrenched living room features natural linens and light colors that complement the spectacular ocean view and add to the casual, fun and breezy feel of the home. | Below, from left: Architectural details, including a layered use of stone, cedar shingles and stucco, add texture and interest to the exterior of the house. An exterior deck on the southeast corner of the house provides additional living space and takes advantage of the public way adjacent to the home. | Facing page, from top: With plenty of sunlight and uninterrupted views of Plaise Cove, the deck is a relaxing place to enjoy a glass of wine at the end of the day. Inside, curved walls on the second floor play with the ample sunlight.



Hampshire, to incorporate small changes of palette and texture by using different materials. The base of the house is constructed of stone, while the main body is sided with cedar shingles. Because the zoning laws also limited the height of the building, the roofline has a low profile. Stucco siding on the third floor further helps to break down the scale and adds visual interest to the house.

“There are subtle little things you can do to make the building more visually interesting,” Bill says. “If you look at exterior photographs of the building, you’ll notice that the windows are set in. That allows the siding to wrap into the windows. It breaks up the box a little bit and creates nice shadow lines as the sun moves across the sky.”

Of course, the most important factor in designing the building was the view. “You’re there for the ocean,” he says. “So we wanted to make sure the house opened up visually to the best views. There is a public right-of-way on the south side of the house, which is lucky because it opens up the view and provides a lot more sunlight. We designed the house to take advantage of the sunlight and to provide great views up and down the coastline.”

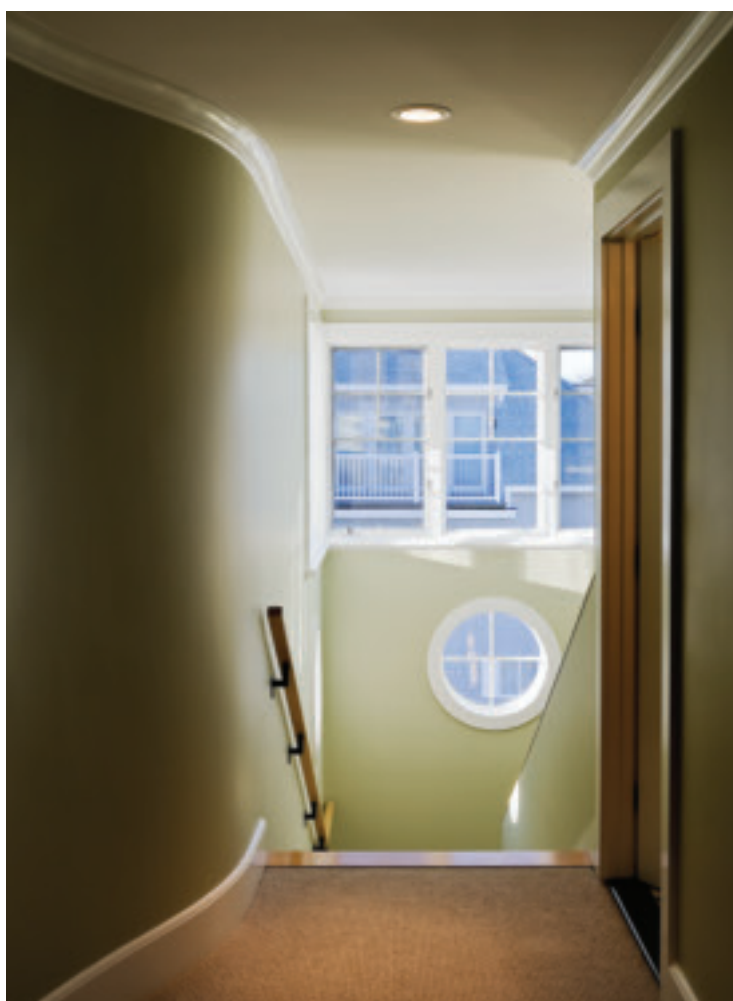
Large windows wrap around the south and east sides of the house, letting in a tremendous amount of sunlight and providing spectacular views overlooking the marsh grasses and rocky shoreline. But even the windows add architectural details that may go unnoticed at first blush. “Huge windows can look like a big black box at night,” Bill says. “We put transom windows along the top with a large pane of glass below. The transom windows add more detail and visual interest without obstructing the view from inside the house.”

No seaside retreat is complete without an outdoor living space. “We built an exterior deck right off the main living space,” he says. “It has direct access to the beach and is in the southeast corner to grab as much sunlight as possible. It’s also nicely protected from nor’easters. It’s a very private deck.”

The main living area on the second floor features an open concept, sun-drenched living room, kitchen and dining area. It’s easy to understand what got Lou to follow in his wife’s footsteps and fall in love with the house. “When you walk into the house and look out the back sliders — that view of the ocean! It’s just gorgeous,” he says.

Shortly after this first visit, Lou and Colleen purchased the house on Plaice Cove. That was several years ago. More recently, they decided to sell their primary house and move to New Hampshire year round. “Friends in construction always commented that our beach house was really well put together,” says Lou. “We figured if we were going to build a house, we should hire the same team.”

So, Lou and Colleen turned to TMS Architects and Telaran Construction to build their new home. As a part of the process of building the new home, Lou and Colleen were introduced to Michael Cebula and Jeffrey Adams of Cebula Design in Newburyport, Massachusetts. It didn’t take long to realize that these new members of the team were a perfect fit for Plaice Cove as well.



The main living area features natural materials and is defined by an open concept that creates a light, airy space and ensures that every room has a view of the rocky shoreline.







The master bedroom is a bold coral color that frames the view of the ocean. A comfortable seating area provides space to read or simply to enjoy the view and reflect on the events of the day.

“Nothing had been changed from when we moved into the house,” explains Lou, “and we had wanted to make some changes. Now we had interior designers we could trust and work with. So far as we were concerned, we just couldn’t have picked a better team.”

Because Lou and Colleen had owned the beach house for several years, it was already fully furnished. But it didn’t really feel like theirs yet. “When we bought the house, most of the colors were off-white,” Lou says. “It was kind of sterile, but we were always a bit afraid of changing the color on the walls.”

“A little color goes a long way,” Michael confirms. “But you really can’t compete with the view they have there.”

In the living room, the walls were painted a soft green. Existing furniture, including two upholstered armchairs, was combined with two new linen couches from Cebula Design’s own furniture line. A cranberry throw resting on the back of the couch complements the colors in the upholstered armchairs and accent pillows.

“I used linen on the couches because it’s a natural material,” explains Michael. “It has a cool feel in the summer. A heavier material wouldn’t feel as good for a beach house. But the linen has a nice cool, casual, easy feel to it.”

The use of natural materials continues into the dining area, which was covered with a light green grass cloth. “They are on the water but also in a marshy area with a lot of dune grasses, so the naturalness of the grass cloth really worked well with what was going on outside,” he says.

It was also a nice contrast to the smooth lines of the wood cabinets in the adjacent kitchen. “Grass cloth gives a warm and nice texture,” Jeffrey says. “Sometimes you have to really like it, because you can see the seams. It’s not a mistake; it’s a natural fiber. And you may have a dark line of grass that then goes to a lighter line of grass, but that’s the beauty of grass cloth.”

The kitchen is in between the living room and dining room. The natural wood cabinets complement the wood fireplace surround in the living room. To further tie the two spaces together, a natural stone backsplash was installed behind the countertops. “The stone matched up perfectly, with not one uneven cut mark,” Jeffrey says. “It just warmed up the kitchen and really pulled it together. Then the grass cloth in the dining area mimics that natural warmth.”

Because it is so important to control the sunlight streaming in through the windows, they opted to keep the minimal but effective window treatments. The soft



The master bathroom features a beautiful soaking tub overlooking the ocean. A faux finish adds texture to the walls and complements the natural stone tiles.

shades are made of translucent fabric panels that rotate to control the light. "You really have to control the light at the beach," said Jeffrey. "The natural sunlight is wonderful, but you don't want to walk around with sunglasses in your own home."

Upstairs, the master bedroom received a bold new look that may have cured Lou and Colleen's fear of color. "They painted the bedroom coral," Lou says, "and once it was done it was absolutely gorgeous." The bold color frames the view of the ocean and is complemented by more neutral-colored furniture. "It's a great spot to just sit and read."

In the master bathroom, the walls are treated with a faux finish to create a glazed look. "It's just a color-washed wall," Michael explains. "You layer color to get an interesting effect. It definitely adds texture and interest to the walls."

The finishing touch, of course, was selecting the artwork. "With clients, you always look for what is best for them, what fits their esthetic," Jeffrey says. "But we also try to expose people to things that they might not have thought that they liked or known about."

To help with the selection, Michael and Jeffrey brought a number of pieces to the house so Lou and Colleen could see the artwork in the space. "Every

room is different now, but they all match well. And they loved picking out beautiful pieces of art," Lou says.

Today, Lou and Colleen couldn't be happier with their beach house. "In the wintertime, it's a nice little escape. It's not that far, so when we want to get away, we can do that for a night or two," he says. "And we love it in the summertime, because we get to bring our kids, and they bring their kids. It's becoming a real brood!"

"It's really warm and inviting," Jeffrey says. "Spacious and open, it's very family friendly. Nothing is off limits."

"We didn't want to compete with what is going on outside," Michael says. "The interior is simple, uncluttered and clean. It's cool and breezy. They have such an amazing view of the ocean, and that was the focus."

"It's a great place to be, right on Plaipe Cove. You'd never know that little cove existed unless you drove down those streets. And there's no beach in front of our house, so you don't have gaggles of people out there," Lou says. "It works out very well for us." ■

