

Hendricks Churchill

NEW OLD HOUSE®

Captain's Quarters

Inspired by antique seaside homes, the Connecticut design firm Hendricks Churchill worked with historical proportions and details for a new house on Long Island Sound. Cedar shingles and sone, white-oak floors and paneled rooms are rich in tradition.

By Nancy A. Ruhling
Photographs by Amanda Kirkpatrick
January 2022



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CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Right The main house and wing are loosely based on a 19th-century sea captain's house in Provincetown, Massachusetts. **Opposite** The owners asked for sky-blue paint on exterior doors, a nod to the oceanside setting.



Inspired by antique seaside homes, the Connecticut design firm Hendricks Churchill worked with historical proportions and details for a new house on Long Island Sound. Cedar shingles and stone, white-oak floors and paneled rooms are rich in tradition.

BY NANCY A. RUHLING
PHOTOS BY AMANDA KIRKPATRICK

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RIGHT OUTSIDE the village of Larchmont, New York, on the water and by the yacht club, there's a new house that looks as though it's been making itself at home by the sea for more than a century. Designed by Hendricks Churchill of Sharon, Connecticut, it was inspired by the plain-spoken, New England sea captains' houses of the 19th century.

"After a decade of living there in an outdated structure, the owner, a passionate sailor, wanted to build a house that evoked the nostalgia of summers past, on Nantucket and Cape Cod," says Rafe Churchill, a partner and the creative director of the firm. "We studied several sea captains' homes, but we were most inspired by one in Provincetown, Massachusetts, which I've long admired."

That one remains the most traditional home in its neighborhood, he says, adding that "most of the other houses have been rehabbed and stripped of their historic details."

Although the lot on the Cedar Island Inlet of Long Island Sound is small, the owner wanted the new home to be about 5,000 square feet, the same as the one it would replace. But "he asked us to reduce the footprint," Churchill says, "which we accomplished by creating a vertical, four-story home, to replace the two-level house that was there."



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With paneled walls and a traditional mantel, the living room connects to the wing that holds the primary bedroom suite.

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Right The dining room has French doors, and a paneled treatment over the mantel and in the wainscot.

Bottom The library, its millwork painted dark green, has a cozy window seat, one of the private spots built into the interior.

Opposite The front hall opens to the dining room and, across from it, to the living room.



Revised FEMA regulations put into place after Hurricane Sandy, in 2012, complicated but also drove the design.

"The elevation of the basement floor had to be increased," Churchill says, "which meant that the house was pushed higher off the ground. The new main floor is approximately two feet above the original."

To address the precipitous drop between the main floor and sea level, Hendricks Churchill created a stone-terraced lawn, above which sits a stone patio in front of the house.

"The design evokes the sea walls that border the inlet, and harkens back to the stone quarry that once occupied this location," Churchill says. "The stone walls also set up a base for brick fireplaces that bracket the main body of the house."

Another conceit to break up the massing was the "addition" of a wing to house the primary suite on the first floor.

"We wanted to tell a story," Churchill says, explaining that the wing is designed to look like a later addition.

Of prime importance was creating a structure that would be durable enough to withstand the harsh coastal climate of the village some 18 miles northeast of Midtown Manhattan.

"We used the highest quality materials," Churchill says. "The red-cedar shingles on the roof are thicker than usual, the trim is one-and-a-half-inch-thick mahogany, and the custom doors are two inches thick."



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Left The kitchen's central island serves as a worktable.

Far left (top) A porthole window in the living room offers a water view. (bottom) Stair rails made of brass and antique mahogany evoke ships at sea.

Opposite Handmade tiles in the backsplash flank the big farmhouse sink in the kitchen.

The basement, which has a garage and livable space, is entered through a door in the terrace's stone work. This everyday entrance opens to a mudroom, and then to a hallway that leads to a staircase, the back entrance to the kitchen.

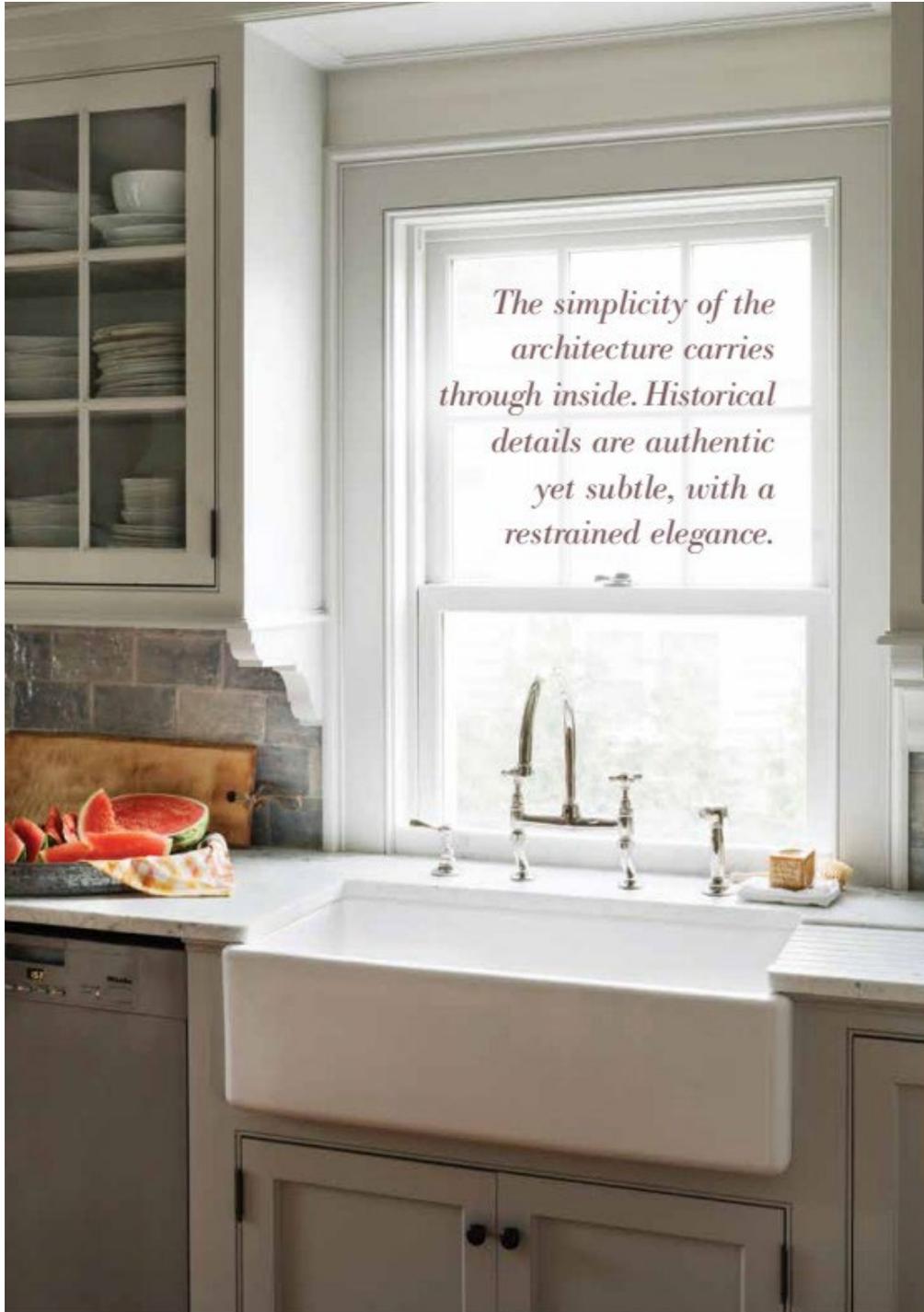
The first-floor primary suite is connected to the living room via a hallway that can be closed off with a door. Compact closets and a dresser are built into the hallway. With nice water views, second-floor bedrooms are for family members. Guest rooms in the attic have dormers that provide dramatic views.

"Unlike a lot of waterfront homes that focus on one view, this one is designed so that rooms have different views," Churchill says. The simplicity of the exterior façade is carried over inside, where historical details lend authenticity. Elegant but unfussy paneling defines rooms; soapstone surrounds fireplaces. Center-cut white-oak flooring, knotty and with irregular grain, adds a chic understatement that recalls the past. Details become more restrained at each floor, transitioning from public to private spaces.

Nautical motifs are subtle, part of the architecture. A pair of porthole windows frames the front door. Two sets of brass and mahogany stair rails are set into the stonework terrace that leads to the front door. Exterior doors are painted sky blue.

The kitchen is the hub of the house, appointed with floor-to-ceiling pantry cabinets, a central-island worktable, and a backsplash of handmade tiles.

"Every house we design is specific to the owner, and has quirky little details," Churchill says. "This one certainly does reflect the owner's personality." ◊ **FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 116.**



Hendricks Churchill

Old House Journals
NEW OLD HOUSE®

Connecticut Country

Rafe Churchill, LLC, renovates an outdated kitchen in Salisbury.

By Annabel Hsin

Photographs by John Gruen

July 2016

connecticut COUNTRY

Rafe Churchill, LLC, renovates an outdated kitchen in Salisbury.

BY ANNABEL HSIN | PHOTOS BY JOHN GRUEN



64 Old House Journal's New Old House

Kitchens | Baths 2016

At his client's housewarming party, Rafe Churchill connected with a couple interested in several renovation projects for their own 1930s Cape Cod house in Salisbury, Connecticut. As a third-generation master builder and well versed in traditional residential architecture, Churchill is more than qualified for the job.

His eponymous firm aspires to create the "new old house" and has developed a loyal client base over the years. Later that spring, Churchill and the couple worked together on creating a plan for new landscaping and an outdoor dining terrace. "I think what they really wanted was a new kitchen, but instead settled for an outdoor area serving the kitchen," says Churchill. "Six months later, we started work on the kitchen."

The existing kitchen was part of a 1980s renovation from a previous owner. The home's noteworthy details include walls of 1" x 8" tongue-and-groove paneling, exposed high ceilings and beams in the opened living and dining areas, and a large cased opening to the kitchen. These characteristics are what today's homeowners search for in a contemporary farmhouse. Unfortunately, much of the charm was lost when coupled with dingy terracotta floor tile and a kitchen poorly equipped with failing appliances and factory-built cabinets and finishes.

The current homeowners wanted to retain the open floor plan while respecting the integrity of the original Cape Cod house that once stood alone on this secluded 40 acre lot. Their top priority was an efficient and functional kitchen fit for a professional chef, as the couple were once restaurant owners and continue to enjoy hosting dinner parties. "They had big plans for an addition and major changes to the open floor plan," says Churchill. "Instead,

my team suggested that the scale of the kitchen was appropriate and another addition may be the last thing this house needed. After helping them realize the success of the existing footprint and much of the layout, we reduced the scope of work to a simple renovation."

First order of business was to remove all existing appliances, cabinets, and about 1,000 sq. ft. of terracotta tile that ran from the kitchen through the dining and living areas, which took about five days with small jackhammers. Influenced by the Cape Cod architecture, the design was kept simple with Shaker-style cabinets, closed toe kicks, freestanding appliances, a white fireclay farm sink, and industrial pendant lighting. The only departure from the traditional are the cabinets painted with Farrow & Ball "Green Blue" No. 84 "to add a more contemporary feel to the overall interior," says Churchill.

Situating the 48" Wolf range with complementing hood and an equally sized glass door Sub-Zero refrigerator into the kitchen's narrow footprint was a challenge. Churchill moved the range to an exterior wall so that it would be easier to vent the hood; the fridge was placed on the opposite wall for symmetry and an improved workflow.

Since the kitchen is located next to the pantry, both Churchill and the clients agreed to minimize the use of upper cabinets to accentuate the high ceilings. The one concession was the upper cabi-

net next to the sink, which Churchill designed so that it would appear more like a piece of furniture rather than a standard hanging unit. For additional storage, the maple topped butcher-block work island—its dimensions slimmer than usual to accommodate the large appliances—have deep drawers on one side and base cabinets on the other. An armoire-style china cabinet aligned with the refrigerator on the other side of the kitchen's cased opening adjoins the breakfast seating area that overlooks the wooded landscape.

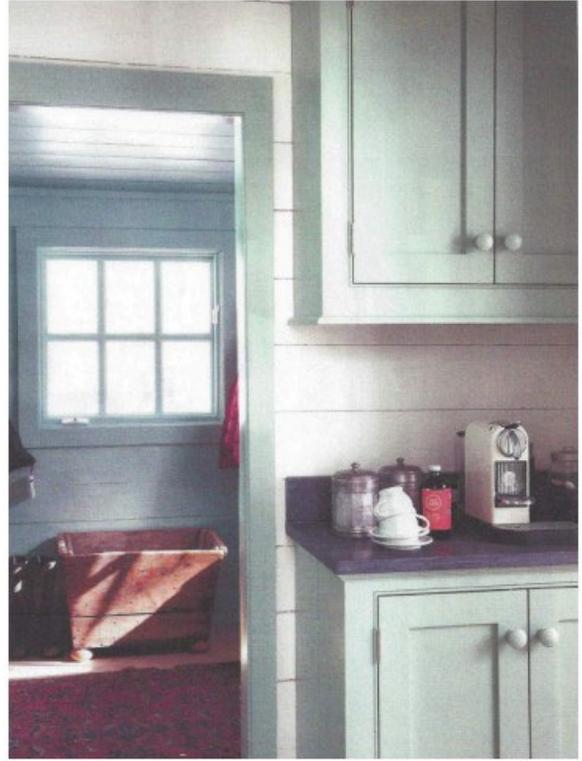
At the clients' request, the team redesigned the living room fireplace with a contemporary stone surround—not the firm's usual approach but the same Pietra Cardosa stone was used for the kitchen countertop and backsplash to bring together the two spaces. To further unite the kitchen and the open living areas, 5" rift and quarter sawn white oak flooring was installed throughout, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere perfect for the homeowners' dinner gatherings.

"Of all our projects, this kitchen seems to generate the strongest response," says Churchill. "Its simplicity and contemporary color work well together evoking a nostalgic association while appealing to a youthful interest in a fresh modern layout." 2011

Annabel Hsin is a freelance writer living in New York.

For Resources, see page 72.

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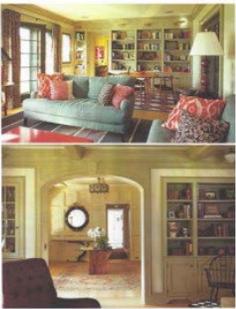
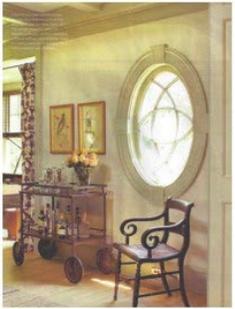
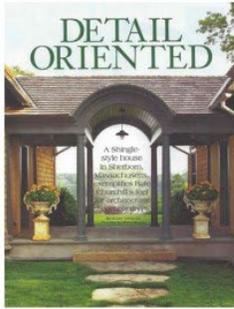


NEW OLD HOUSE®

Detail Oriented

A Shingle-style house in Sherborn, Massachusetts exemplifies Rafe Churchill's feel for architectural complexity.

September 2015



Completed in January 2014, Rafe Churchill's 2014 Building Award-winning house on Fox Pond in Sherborn, Massachusetts, is an exceptional reworking of the shingle style. Expanding covered waterfront acres, the structure emulates Newport, Rhode Island's best Bell House—of which the client is very fond. Based on that reference, principal architect Churchill and his team studied shingle-style houses in both Rhode Island and Maine to inform the design program.

Tipping the scale, visual complexity, eclectic architectural compositions, and expansive horizontal nesting characterize the home. Of course, detailed shingle patterns and millwork, porches and a rear balcony that encourage a tactile interaction with the outdoors, full-size and small windows, and asymmetrically arranged gables all feature prominently. A covering of shingles over the front entrance, a shingled stair tower, a wood-shingled roof and siding, and decorative elements on the front porch railing add shingles further into the concept.

The design suits the client's full-time needs, as the family of three resides there year-round. Prior to retaining Churchill, in fact, the client had been living on the property for a year already. The green attached to the land, the garden, and the orientation of the original house, which was ultimately torn down and replaced. "It can be a challenge to work with clients who have been living in a house or on a property for some time, and have an idea about what is successful and should be kept," says Churchill. In this case, the challenge was the house's orientation. "The hard part was defining how the house would sit on the property because we didn't believe the existing house fully utilized the site." After much discussion, they decided to shift the house 30° to the west (the former house was justified to the east) to optimize the view.

"People typically want a view from every room in the house," notes Churchill, "and they usually want a view of the same thing—whether it is a lake, a mountain, or a field—they want to see it out every window." For this project, as with many others, the team took pains to explain that it is not the same view that makes a house interesting and memorable. "The worst difference

Below: Handmade stained on Fox Pond, the brothers have taken full advantage of its natural setting; every room offers some type of view, whether of the water or woodland. Churchill repeats each brother offer a different experience. Opposite: Heavy millwork doors are a Rafe Churchill signature element that perfectly complements the rich detailing of the custom windows housing it.

experiment in each room," says Churchill. "The library might have a view of the pond and the kitchen might have a view of the pond, but they should be different experiences with slightly different views. It takes time to explain this, but as the end of the process to work away from."

The level of detail defining the exterior continues inside. The main floor—with the entry hall, living room, screens, kitchen, dining room, and made-in-Maine staircase. "On a lot of houses, this level of detail is reserved for just the interior, whereas the exterior is traditional and understated. With a shingle-style house like this, there's opportunity to explore the millwork and detailing on both sides," notes Churchill.

The main story hall includes wood paneling and a coffered ceiling, as well as a winding staircase that hangs off the lower walk to provide a consistent space around the stairs, which are "lightly suspended within the room." The living room also has a coffered ceiling, plus areas of "what we call" handmade millwork.

It was in this experimental interior millwork and cabinetry that the firm received the Building Award. And it was the theme of the residential shingle style that created such memorable impressions. "Our projects are based on historical references," explains Churchill. "We don't necessarily reference specific projects, but we make observations of house manners or landmark buildings." They glean information by taking photographs and measuring millwork, colorways, and profiles. "From that, we apply these details to the interior."

