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Renewal • With grace and sensitivity, a grand house is restored to glory • Adding to the family homestead makes work a pleasure • All it took was a face lift and a little TLC to turn a plain Jane house to a star • Louis Raymond's remarkable garden of light, folly, and vegetables 



WITH A NEW SEA WALL in place, roofline restored, and modern technology installed, this oceanside grand dame is once again proud. Story, Page 88.

PHOTO BY ERIC ROTH

REBUILDING THE SEA WALL was key to the restoration project. The attached carriage house to the left of the restored house contains guest quarters and pool cabana above a three-car garage. The custom weather vane atop the turret depicts an Austrian mountain goat.

RESURR



RE-SECTION

From the minute they saw the house on the bluff, the owners-to-be knew they would one day bring it back as a proud architectural landmark

WRITTEN BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK • PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC ROTH



ON THE MASSACHUSETTS COASTLINE NORTH OF BOSTON, A HOUSE ANCHORED SECURELY ON A BLUFF LOOKS MAGICALLY SUSPENDED BETWEEN THE OCEAN AND SKY.

Built in 1899, the Shingle Style beauty is standing tall, its historic facade renewed and restored, its interiors respectful of the past, yet in total harmony with its ingenious avant-garde improvements. And out of sight, its fully automated and energy-efficient systems function as smoothly as a science fiction fantasy.

ARCHITECTURE
AND INTERIOR
DESIGN
**SIEMASKO +
VERBRIDGE**

Originally a summer residence for B.W. Buckminster, an early industrialist who lived in Malden, Massachusetts, the structure was a landmark achievement, its image celebrated on many a turn-of-the-20th-century postcard. But by midcentury, the years began to take their toll. In 1963, a fire destroyed the dormered attic and the repair left the house with an unbecoming flat roof. Six years later, another fire leveled the carriage house. The once-proud grand dame was a shadow of its original showcase self. But happily, a rebirth was in store.

IN THE BALLROOM/FOYER, sometimes the site of Viennese waltz parties, the original arched mouldings, coffered ceiling, and grand two-story open staircase are restored to perfection. The splendid Austrian crystal chandelier is a sparkling new addition. A mid-20th-century Corbusier chaise (FACING PAGE) is in front of the room's fireplace. The seagull painting is by North Shore artist Tammy Smith. A vintage postcard (BELOW) hints at how the house (sixth from the right) looked in its prime.







To LEED

The house was renovated, rather than replaced, which is the ultimate sustainable approach to construction. During **demolition**, care was taken to reuse and recycle existing materials. New **lumber** is Forest Stewardship Council certified. **Locally sourced** products and those with recycled content were used when possible. **Solar panels** heat domestic water and the pool. Captured **rainwater** irrigates the landscape. An automated system responds to **outdoor temperature**; window treatments close automatically to keep the house cooler, for example. Energy-efficient **heating and cooling** equipment is used; multiple zones mean only rooms in use are fully conditioned. **Occupancy sensors** manage lights. **Paints and adhesives** are free of volatile organic compounds. A high-performance **heat exchanger** provides fresh air.



HIGH ON ITS two-story foundation, the back porch (ABOVE) takes full advantage of the ocean views. Thanks to a NanaWall Systems door that folds, accordion style, completely out of the way, the swimming pool can be fully opened to the lower level of the house, where there is a secondary kitchen, changing rooms, and full bath. The dining room (FACING PAGE) is “not just for an occasional meal,” say the owners. Seen here through an archway of the ballroom/foyer, it is where the family gathers with laptops and homework or for extended dinners. Ergonomic chairs from Variér surround a custom teak table with swirled “tree-trunk” pedestal.

In 2001, the chief executive officer of a Vienna software company he founded in 1992 had just expanded his business to the United States and had relocated to Massachusetts to oversee the new operation. His wife and two young children came along. The family was living in a rented house nearby, and one foggy day husband and wife took a stroll along the beach and spotted the property.

“It just loomed,” says the husband, with a grin, “and we both promptly fell in love with it.” His wife predicted “someday we will buy it.” Six years later, the house came on the market, and they snatched it up and set out to bring back its glory.

It was an instant meeting of the minds when they spoke with architect Thaddeus Siemasko of Siemasko + Verbridge,

an architecture, interior, and landscape design firm in Beverly, Massachusetts. From that initial discussion about their vision for the house, it took four years to bring the dream to reality. A year-and-a-half was spent planning the complicated rejuvenation and getting extensive building approvals, and then it took two-and-a-half more years for construction. The original 4,000-square-foot house was expanded to 9,300 square feet of living space, but kept as historically accurate as possible. Oh, and since its owners brought with them the sustainability standards that prevail in Europe, they wanted to go green all the way, ultimately achieving a silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the United States Green Building Council. The project also involved rebuilding an existing sea wall

OCEAN OR FIRESIDE view? Adaptable Swiss leather furniture imported by Montage of Boston makes both options easy. The sofa backs swivel, singly or in tandem, as do the tub chairs and ottoman to face in either direction. The rug is from Landry & Arcari Oriental Rugs and Carpeting of Boston and Salem, Massachusetts.





DESIGN DECISION

Building Feat

Though there were many who can claim a starring role in the massive undertaking to restore the seaside landmark, the builders got a special ovation, especially when they had the house up on steel piers (INSETS BELOW) for weeks while they excavated the hillside, built a new two-story foundation, then gingerly lowered the structure snugly into place.

"This job was a peak experience for us," says Douglas Bellow of custom builders Gilman, Guidelli & Bellow of Somerville, Massachusetts, general contractors for the

restoration. "The clients and professionals were superb, and we learned so much from the husband, who is a trained engineer."

Going to work every day just 60 feet from the ocean's edge was another plus for the crew. "This job opened our eyes to new possibilities in restructuring," says Bellow. "We exercised every option a builder has to know, including engineering, restoration, automation, and modernity."



that protects the house and makes the area safer for adjacent properties as well.

The centerpiece of the restoration efforts is the ballroom, which is also the grand foyer, a 30-by-30-foot two-story balconied room entered through Dutch doors at both the front and back porches. The kitchen and dining room were relocated from one side of the house to the other, with the kitchen enlarged by enclosing a section of the front porch. The burned-down carriage house, originally a free-standing structure, was replaced with an attached garage that extends into an extra floor of living space that looks out to an ocean-side pool and gives entree to a home theater, game rooms, sauna, and elevator.

The home of a techie is, naturally, fully automated, with systems running through a central computer and operating with conventional wall switches or with a wireless device such as an iPad. Window blinds, espresso maker, landscape irrigation, solar roof panels, and the temperature of the wine cellar, pool water, and sauna all can be controlled remotely. And should the owner be traveling (he makes frequent trips to



Austria) while a storm is looming at home, he can just push a button and shutters will drop into place over windows. A gas-powered generator ensures the automation works even if the electricity goes out.

High tech aside, the wife says the house is as “cozy as a cottage.” Rooms are average size and furnished minimally. Interior designer Jean Verbridge, the other half of Siemasko + Verbridge, who consulted with the couple and helped them make their decor choices, says, “They really knew what they wanted.”

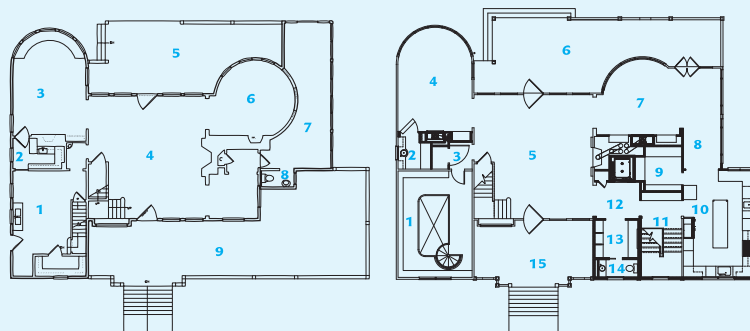
“We’re all about our books and art,” says the wife, a textile artist specializing in quilting. She is also an avid cook who supports local food co-ops, loves to bake, and does her own canning in the modern and fully equipped kitchen that looks out to ocean views. The old kitchen is now a two-story library retreat, and the couple’s eclectic collection of art, including several of her prize-winning quilted pieces, hangs proudly throughout the house.

“We have a house where the best views and the best private residential library coexist happily,” says the husband. “This is our dream house. There’s nothing I would have done differently. We moved in on May 23, 2011, and have loved every minute.” ■

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DETAILS,
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RESOURCES

PLANS

A ROOMY COOK’S KITCHEN with an ocean view was created by enclosing part of the front porch and adding a bump-out of a few square feet. For easy access to the dining room, which now occupies the adjacent space, the curved wall was opened. A two-story library and study sits on the footprint of the old kitchen. The new living room has a wet bar hidden behind a movable bookcase.



FIRST FLOOR: BEFORE

- 1 KITCHEN
- 2 PANTRY
- 3 DINING ROOM
- 4 GREAT ROOM
- 5 BACK PORCH
- 6 LIVING ROOM
- 7 STUDY
- 8 BATH
- 9 FRONT PORCH

FIRST FLOOR: AFTER

- 1 LIBRARY
- 2 BAR
- 3 HALLWAY
- 4 LIVING ROOM
- 5 BALLROOM/FOYER
- 6 BACK PORCH
- 7 DINING ROOM
- 8 HALL
- 9 PANTRY
- 10 KITCHEN
- 11 BACK STAIR
- 12 HALL
- 13 COAT ROOM
- 14 POWDER ROOM
- 15 FRONT PORCH

"LIBRARIES ALWAYS HAVE mezzanines," says architect Thaddeus Siemasko, who created one (FACING PAGE) by opening the first floor library to the basement below. Enclosing a section of the front porch made space for the ocean-oriented SieMatic kitchen. A wooden rolling "strudel table" at the end of the island is for making traditional Austrian confections. The central hanging shelf meant to hold pots displays a collection of cobalt blue bottles.

