

Riverside Nostalgia



The allure of sun-soaked carefree days and the welcoming community of his childhood has brought him back to Bass River over the years. With the help of a local architect and builders, this summer resident has rebuilt his parents' old home to fit seamlessly into the neighborhood and to allow his kids the same summertime memories he enjoyed.

His mother grew up on the mid-Cape. When she married and moved away, she vowed to return as often as she could to the place she called home. So he and his sister visited every summer of their lives, either at the grandparents', a nearby rental, or at the summer home his mother and father eventually bought—sight unseen, believe it or not—on Bass River in 1970.

As a boy, he actually spent the entire second and eighth grades at that home in Dennis, but the rest of his years growing up were scattered

all over, because his father was employed by the international company Ingersol Rand. But they always returned, even when they were stationed for a few years in Mexico City. In that case, the family made the epic multi-day journey (by car!) from Mexico to New England to spend those few summer weeks in Dennis.

His life on Cape Cod was more stable than life at any permanent address he had. "We moved around a lot," he says, "So somewhere in either West Dennis or South Yarmouth has always been home base for us." The parents moved here permanently in

BY SCOTT LAJOIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN CUTRONA



Above: With its spacious first floor and deck/porch, the house has become a hub of activity among the neighborhood kids. Below: South-facing windows in the office enjoy some of the best views of Nantucket Sound.

1978 and he eventually graduated from Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School. But college beckoned, and he was off again. During his days at Stanford and living on the West Coast after that, he returned home diligently every summer.

As his parents were aging, they sold the Bass River property to him and his wife, who have settled north of San Fran-

cisco with children of their own. Then his mother fell ill and passed away. The couple built a dock on the river, but it was evident they needed to make some major physical improvements so that one day it could accommodate huge family gatherings of their four children, future grandkids, and his sister's family. "I couldn't have imagined a more rounded summer experience, and I wanted to give that to my kids," he says.

The couple approached architect Erik Tolley who used Todd and Lori LaBarge of LaBarge Builders as builders. "I didn't like the idea of taking down a 150-year-old Quaker meetinghouse that had been brought over from Nantucket," he says, but in the end, they decided it was the best option, as long as they "made sure to keep the integrity and style so that it would blend in with the neighborhood." Tolley and the LaBarges were up to the task.

What you see from the road is what you saw before, down to a



couple of windows with diamond panes and an old metal 'S' on the chimney. They even recycled some of the home's old doorknobs, scattering them throughout the new house. The footprint is a little bigger, but didn't expand at all toward the road. The center roofline is essentially in the same place, as is one of the staircases.

His wife was a proponent of opening up some of the interior spaces on the first floor. "We like the low half-walls," he says. "They give a sense of separation while allowing you to see almost the entire first

Left: The view from the kitchen island takes in the entire first floor. Below: An inlaid compass rose occupies an open area by the entrance of the house.



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floor.” It was a big contrast from the previous version of the house, which he knew so well, where the rooms were accessible only through doors.

The couple also rearranged the layout of the second floor without changing the roofline all that much. The master bathroom had been a bedroom, and an additional bedroom, bathroom, and laundry were added. One of the kids’ bedrooms, complete with bunk beds, is nearly identical. “It’s the same room I grew up in,” he says.

The original design called for a chimney on the north and south sides. However, when the house was being framed, the couple realized they didn’t want a fireplace obstructing their south-facing view, so the bricks on the first floor



were taken out. Supports were put in so the chimney still extends through what is now the den and out to the roof. “I like the brick detail in the office,” he says. “If we ever want to fashion a brick fireplace there, we can. Right now that chimney is in a state of hibernation.” Even the television placed by that wall of windows in the living room re-

additional height would make the house look too big to neighbors and be situated too high above their yard. But he was pleasantly surprised when the four feet did little to change neighbors’ perceptions, and the sloping landscaping up to the porch blended the yard into the structure.

They went back and forth on a lot of elements. What

Above and left: One of the bedrooms for the kids, complete with built-in bunk beds, is nearly identical to the one in which the homeowner grew up summering.

treats into a specially-designed hutch when not in use, so the view remains intact.

The kitchen now has access to the deck, which merges into the porch along the river side. They specifically didn’t put a roof over this new portion because it would have shaded the living room windows. It also allows for a private spot to soak up some sun.

In order to meet modern floodplain restrictions, the new house had to be built on a foundation that was four feet higher than the previous one. He was frightened that the



The eaves and dormers on the second floor create many interesting nooks.

they decided to keep in the end impressed his dad, who passed away before any construction began. “What we have now is something my dad would have been very proud of,” he says. “And that means a lot to me.”

The new house—with its spacious first floor and deck/porch—has become a hub of the activity among the neighborhood kids, many of whom are summer residents, while still being a reminder of a childhood of a generation ago. “It’s amazing to see our kids have summers on the Cape with the children of the folks he enjoyed summers with,” says his wife. 🌿

Builder: The LaBarge Companies, 237 Main Street Route 28, West Harwich, www.labargehomes.com

Architect: ERT Architects, Inc., 947 Main Street, 8, Yarmouth Port, www.ertarchitects.com

Interior Designer: Carol Appleton Appleton Interiors, 463 Long Pond Road, Brewster, 508-896-8000

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