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# Sound Investment

*The spirit of its proud past lives on in a one-time sea captain's house, renovated and ready to stand guard over Nantucket Sound for another century.*

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY STACY KUNSTEL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PARTENIO  
ARCHITECTURE: MATTHEW MOGER, LYMAN PERRY ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN: ROBERT JENNINGS | CONTRACTOR: SCOTT BOWMAN



THOUGH LITTLE WAS CHANGED ON THE EXTERIOR OF THIS CLASSIC NANTUCKET HOME, ARCHITECT MATTHEW MOGER ADDED A NEW DORMER ON THE LEFT, MAKING MORE ROOM FOR THE MASTER BATH'S TUB AND SHOWER.





A NEW SIDE PORCH PROVIDES AN INFORMAL ENTRY. THE COVERED PORCH BEYOND SPANS THE BACK OF THE HOUSE. *FACING PAGE:* THE GLASS DINING TABLE TOP SEEMS TO FLOAT ABOVE A WEATHERED BASE DESIGNED BY MOGER AND INSPIRED BY A BOAT THAT ONCE WASHED ASHORE OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.

**S**he stands on Nantucket Sound, a sentinel for more than 150 years as whaling ships, fishermen and ferryboats moved in and out of these waters. Owned by a sea captain and named after his ship, the house is known by the rounded sound of her name: "Amanda." Once weather-worn and tired, Amanda took a dramatic turn this century that, in many ways, brought her back to true. The gray shingles and blue shutters would still be recognizable to her captain, but an interior transformation distilled her beauty down to its purest form. A talented team washed away the conventions of the past to bring a house and family into the present.

Amanda's recent history begins with a New Jersey couple familiar with her quintessential Nantucket lines, white picket fence and rambunctious collection of roses and hydrangeas. Longtime vacationers on the island, they had waited patiently for the perfect house to call their own. "I never dreamed we'd get Amanda," says one of the homeowners.

Wanting to bring the house into the present but not knowing how to articulate their vision, the couple turned to architect Lyman Perry, who has kept an office on the island for longer than they'd been visiting it. "He quickly realized that we wanted to keep Amanda the way she was," the homeowner says. Some renovation was needed, but the couple wanted Amanda to remain recognizably herself.

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Perry had one of his architects, Matthew Moger, a designer known for his contemporary flair with older homes, fly in the next day. "We weren't able to articulate what we wanted directly," the homeowner admits. "We knew you could retain what Nantucket is all about, but make it contemporary. Matthew did exactly what we wanted without our having expressed it or even known it."



Moger subtly drew from the family the life they wanted to live in Amanda. He stayed within her sagging walls and examined the loose pile of rot that her foundation had become. He slept on her flat porch roof for three nights, exposed to heavy dew and a landscape of stars above his

sleeping bag. Throughout, he thought about the challenge the homeowners had given him: "This is our one opportunity for brilliance," they had said.

"I wanted to feel what it was like to be that building and have a sense of what she's lived through," says Moger, who also has his own furniture line. "Amanda stands on a beach far from town. She's watched the whaling ships





BY OPENING THE ATTIC, MOGER EXPOSED ITS ORIGINAL HALF-CIRCLE WINDOW. THE MOVABLE SCONCES RECALL CANDLES PLACED ON WINDOWSILLS. FACING PAGE TOP: WOOD SALVAGED FROM THE HOUSE AND STAINED BECOMES A FOCAL POINT IN THE GUEST BATH. FACING PAGE BOTTOM: AN OASIS OF WHITE MARBLE AND MAHOGANY, THE MASTER BATH IS AN UNDER-THE-EAVES SANCTUARY.

come in; now you hear the ferry and the fishing boats. That's what you get from sleeping on the roof instead of being protected inside of her."

Moger's unconventional approach fit with his efforts to re-frame Amanda's history. "Hull-like forms were carved out," he says. "Salvaged elements were left untreated, but were rearranged. Some hang like artwork in spaces as a reminder."

The main living space of the house stood divided into compartments no longer conducive to modern life. Lots of walls, a small living room and a staircase cut family members off from one another. A tiny dining room and a little service kitchen reflected an outdated way of living. "The interior needed not only to reflect history but also how they wanted to live," Moger says. "They wanted it casual and minimal."

Today the kitchen, dining room and living room occupy one open space. Vestiges of the old walls can be found in the original fir floors, which were restored. "The old dining and kitchen floor are still there," says Moger. "You look down and see the old configuration of the room. The traces of the old rooms are like wrinkles and age spots."

Old pieces of Amanda await discovery throughout the







house, thanks to an active conservation effort and the organizational skills of builder Scott Bowman, who cataloged every piece removed from the site. “We tried to reuse as much of it as we could,” Moger says.

The architect designed cocktail tables from the old attic hatch and mounted them on stainless steel legs in the liv-

ing room. Bowman had installed turnbuckles across the space to ratchet the house plumb, and Moger kept that reminder rather than installing beams. It would be one more annotation on the home’s history.

Even with Moger’s contemporary approach, an overriding sense of history pervades the walls of Amanda. “I love

*“I love that it is so traditional on the outside and still Nantucket on the inside. It’s a Nantucket that reflects evolution.”*

ing room. Interior designer Robert Jennings filled the space with deep chairs and a sofa draped in linen, and painted the walls the palest version of blue sky.

In the open kitchen, appliances were built into an adjacent wall or kept under counter. When it came to bedrooms, Moger gathered guest areas on the first floor, pulling them far enough away from the family area for privacy and cladding them in old boards salvaged from the house.

The second floor, once a warren of five bedrooms, became the singular domain of the homeowners. Attic space was blown out to create a large landing at the top of the stairs, and a wall of bookcases was built under an existing

that it is so traditional on the outside and it is still Nantucket on the inside,” the homeowner says. “We wanted the interiors to be Nantucket, but it’s a Nantucket that reflects evolution.”

“Just because you do a contemporary interior doesn’t mean you’re not respecting the history of the house,” adds Moger. “She’s sexy and hip now.”

For all the newness, the homeowners say, “We don’t have a sense that you’re walking from a traditional exterior into something so different. Matthew kept the soul of the house. You see it the minute you walk in.” **NEH**

**RESOURCES** For more information about this home see page 237.

THE LONG, LOW MAHOGANY HEADBOARD BOASTS DRESSER DRAWERS ON THE BACK SIDE. AN INTERIOR WINDOW LETS THE HOMEOWNERS CHOOSE COMMUNICATION OR PRIVACY. *FACING PAGE:* DECKING WITH A WELL-WORN COMPASS PAINTED ON IT WAS SALVAGED AND TURNED INTO ART ABOVE THE FIREPLACE IN THE MASTER BEDROOM.

