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Color and Light in Shimmo



BY ELIZABETH STANEK
PHOTOS BY THIBAUT JEANSEN

While watching the ferry round Brant Point from a living room enlivened with colors that echo the garden and harbor views, it is clear that interior designer Trudy Dujardin has captured the spirit of Nantucket in this Shimmo home. With an artist's eye, Dujardin has created rooms with tones, compositions and historical touches as elegant as the original artwork on the walls. Her designs play upon the light and architecture of the house, and successfully create a décor that encompasses both traditional Nantucket details and the natural beauty of the island landscape.

"I once had a painting studio in

Rowayton, Conn., in an old stone mansion near Five Mile River," says Dujardin. Though painting proved too solitary a career, she found interior design to be the perfect niche for her artistic eye. "Every house is a blank palette," she says. "I listen to clients and work from intuition." This client's Shimmo home, designed by architect Lyman Perry, was an incredible canvas for Dujardin to work with.

A veteran designer of coastal architecture, Perry has designed more than 200 Nantucket houses, and laughs as he refers to them as his "children" scattered about the island. After touring his creations, the clients were captivated by both the architectural and interior design of one house in particular.

Opposite page: In the dining room, an antique scrimshaw tortoise shell hangs above the floating mantel, which display's 18th century Chinese export ware.

This page: Wicker sofas cushioned with floral fabric by Cowtan and Tout, make the gathering room the perfect place to lounge; A painting by island artist Jan Pawlowski ties in the water views.



"They fell in love with my house in Monomoy," Dujardin says. Built in an era when islanders watched in trepidation as larger houses began sprouting among the dunes, Dujardin's house was one of the first more sophisticated houses that replaced the original cottages, Perry said. He worked hard to keep the design appropriate in scale. "One of my mantras is that 'Houses should be of the land, not placed on the land,'" he says. "Both Trudy's house and the client's feel at home in context."

Drive down a dusty dirt road, turn up the circular shell drive and it's apparent that the architectural design of the client's house is at ease in its environment. Nestled behind a row of privet hedges trimmed to perfection, the shingle-style home is very traditional yet more "cottagey" than many newer houses on the island. Leading to the gardens, a moongate symbolizes good luck and good fortune. A small lily pond complete with

goldfish is visible through a breezeway trellis connecting the main house to a guest house where wild roses climb the shingles.

Dujardin joined forces with Perry in the planning stages to help develop the space. "Having designed her house, we were on the same page," Perry says. Angled toward town, the house was positioned to bring in the southern exposures.

Walk in the front door and it is apparent how Dujardin's and Perry's work complements each other to evoke an atmosphere full of Nantucket tradition.

A cherry railing ascends the stairs, as does a dark blue Wilton 100 percent wool runner by Stark Carpet. "A blue and white theme is a signature for Trudy," Perry says. Shades of blue continue in the hand-tufted entrance rug featuring a fish, turtle and scallop-shell motif. An ivory monogrammed mortgage button tops the newel post at the bottom of the railing. A charming historic detail,

This page: In the master bedroom, the owners can cozy up by the fireplace in chintz upholstered chairs; The custom carved mantel features a Nantucket lightship basket filled with wildflowers.

Opposite page, clockwise from top: The wet bar, with hand painted tiles, is great for entertaining; Wainscoting and a scalloped shell niche accessorized with treenware add traditional Nantucket details to the entrance; The porch's pergola lets guests bask in sunlight while gazing out towards the harbor.







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mortgage buttons once served to seal the hole in the post where the mortgage papers were placed once the house was paid off.

Next to the staircase, a recessed scallop-shell niche houses a collection of treenware, which was often whittled on whaling ships. The entrance's smoke bell lantern emulates those at the Jared Coffin House. First used in the British Raj in India, its design was intended to minimize smoke build-up on the ceiling resulting from the burning candles.

However, truly lighting the entrance is the soft glow of yellow from the living and dining room straight ahead. "You walk into a house drenched in sunshine," Dujardin says. Cherry wood floors lead to a room so flooded with light from the south side, that even a late afternoon fog rolling in from the harbor can't dampen the uplifting mood. Bruce Stilts applied a special faux finish on the walls, which involved two shades of yellow paint stippled together to create the soft effect. The yellow is continued in the recessed scallop-shell niches that, alongside railroad lamps, flank Perry's famous floating mantel. Together they display a collection of 17th and 18th century Chinese export porcelain whose touches of blue brings in the water view but does not fight it. The porcelain was often brought back to the island by whaling captains and served two-fold as ballast on the ship. Above the mantel hangs a rare Victorian tortoise shell scrimshawed with maritime scenes. A cherry French country trestle table with wheat-back chairs completes the look that Dujardin deem "country elegant."

While the living and dining area exist as one room, Dujardin commends Perry's pilasters, which psychologically divide the room. His detailing is also apparent in the coffered ceiling and the fireplace that creates the focal point of the living room.

The living room speaks to Trudy's artistic eye for applying the color the client desired. "There are no heavy colors," says Dujardin. "The colors are strong and passionate, yet soft, not weak, pastels." A yellow Charles of London sofa with rope pattern taping is accented with sophisticated glazed floral chintz pillows with rose-colored mos loop fringe. The chintz is echoed in the skirt of a side table and the loveseat by the fireplace. The floral ties in the owner's much-adored garden view as does the custom made wrought iron cocktail table. "She loved it," says Dujardin, noting the femininity of the piece that features a little turtle and birds that might be found fluttering among the blooms.

The federal stars that support gauzy sheers add a further touch of whimsy that nicely contrasts the elegant blue-green Chinese export lamps and red and white plaid silk pull-up chairs.

And though it is hard to compete with the harbor view of crisp white sails against a pool-blue sky, the original artwork adorning the living room walls just may contend. Above the fireplace hangs an oil painting by marine master and Cape resident, Michael Keane. To the right, above a slant-front antique desk accessorized with scrimshaw ivory binoculars, hangs an Antonio Jacobson. On the other side of the fireplace, a family portrait is displayed.

Through French doors, the living and dining room flows out to the herringbone brick terrace and the porch. "While the house serves as a summer and off-season family retreat, a place for children and grandchildren, the owners also love to entertain and are very

sociable,” says Dujardin. “The porch is like another room.”

Seated in classic white wicker chairs, guests can sip cocktails and gaze past the manicured lawn and stonewall that curves like the bow of a ship, to the harbor beyond. The wicker furniture is cushioned with a durable navy and white extruded acrylic that can be hosed down and is as welcoming to sandy feet as it is sundresses. During the day, sun streams through the pergola above. Come nightfall, stargazer lights made of weathered pierced copper hang from the rafters, giving the effect of sparkling constellations above.

Along with porch’s ambiance, there is great ingenuity in its design. “Trudy is very interested in non-toxic, ‘green’ materials,” Perry says. Made from a reforested wood, Pau Lope decking was used. It is a popular choice for Nantucket decks since it doesn’t need to be treated and consists of a tight grain that prevents splinters.

Visually the porch is a testament to Perry’s sensitivity when positioning the home. Instead of composing the house of two boxes, Perry “broke off” a wing so that it forms a 45-degree angle. “Because the house is broken up, it forms exterior spaces and creates seating areas protected from the wind,” he says. The angling also provides two distinct viewing opportunities. While the living and dining room looks out on Coatue and Shimmo Pond, the kitchen and gathering room primarily have harbor views.

When sunlight plays on the gathering room’s harbor view, it’s befitting that a painting by island artist Jan Pawlowski hangs above the natural-wood floating mantel. Renowned for his “plein air” style, Pawlowski works outside to capture the effects of light on a landscape. The antique pine tables and natural wicker furniture cushioned with floral fabrics create a relaxed feel. An old copper lantern, vintage whaling etchings and a collection of Lincoln Seely whirligigs accessorize the built-in bookshelves that lead the eye up toward the clerestory windows. Sailor’s valentines decorate the far wall, a whimsical touch that makes the gathering room “the perfect spot for the owners to order in dinner and play board games with the grandchildren,” says Trudy.



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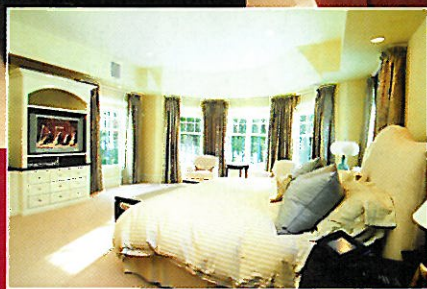
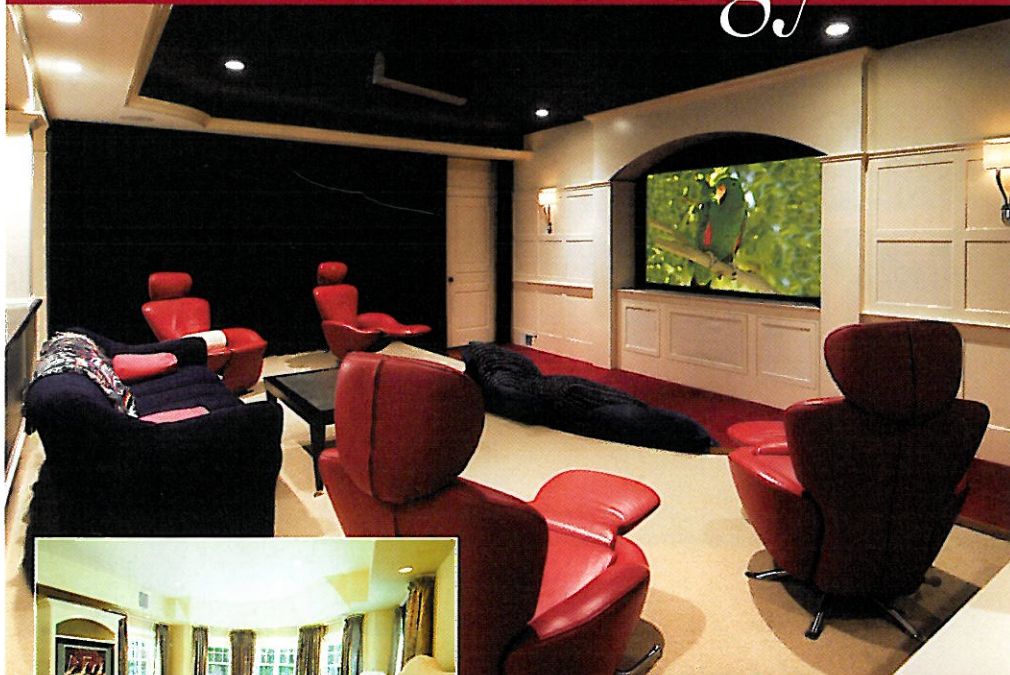
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Also great for more formal entertaining, the gathering room flows into the wet bar and kitchen where hand-painted tiles of the owner's blue and white china compose the backsplash. Above the sink, the painted tile depicts her beloved cat looking out on a view of Brant Point.

Following Perry's signature flow, the house design abstains from long corridors and dark spaces. One of the few downstairs doors leads to the owner's study. With walls covered in Madagascar cloth, the private retreat boasts a cozy ambiance. "They travel a lot, are very worldly, and also sports enthusiasts," says Dujardin. Fly-fishing sketches adorn the walls, and a needlepoint pillow celebrating the client's favorite team rests in the corner wing chair. "When you furnish a home, there are many layers," Dujardin says. The excellence of detail is attributed to two years of shopping excursions to antique stores in upstate Connecticut and New York City. Trudy's most unique find, a pair of old wooden lawn bowling balls with the owner's initials carved in them, came from North Carolina. The balls serve as bookends on the antique desk that rests on a hunter and rust Elizabeth Eakins rug, hand-done in wool to give the look of patchwork. The taping in the soft folding Roman shades coordinates with the rug's green tones and the wash over glaze on the moldings and fireplace paneling, done by Nantucket artist Bruce Stilts.

Stilts' artistry is also exemplified in the downstairs powder room where a whimsical mural appears as if small paintings of topiaries have been casually tacked all over the walls. From a whale hedge to sailboat fleet topiaries, the mini works of art brings out the greens in the hand-painted sink and fabric that skirts the antique pine washstand.

A large, bright mural of the home's harbor view, complete with details such as the owner's boat, was painted in a curved recess on the basement level of the house. While the spirit of the grandchildren can be found throughout the house, the basement room, which pops with colors, is truly a child's haven. Two built-in trundles, with cherry star inserts, resemble the berth on a ship. The adjoining room hosts a Ping-Pong table and vinyl tiles arranged to resemble boat signal flags. Even the monogrammed towels

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hanging in the bathroom, keep up the sailing theme by boasting the colors of the Rainbow Fleet.

"It's an upbeat house," Dujardin says. Off a small hallway upstairs featuring Millhouse antique chests are the guest bedrooms. "Each guest bedroom has a color scheme and everything coordinates," she says. "The towels, trims – everything is customized." With creamy lemon chiffon walls and floral fabric from Hinson and Company adorning the windows and twin wicker beds, the yellow guest bedroom is light and airy. A pine dresser, rag rug and hand-painted mirror from Main Street's Lion's Paw keeps the space casual. Yet the most appealing aspect of this guest bedroom may be the reading niche complete with little bookcases recessed in the sidewalls below tole sconces. Perry seized the opportunity to incorporate a window seat. "It's a room within a room," he says. "It is pleasing for everyone to curl up in with a book."

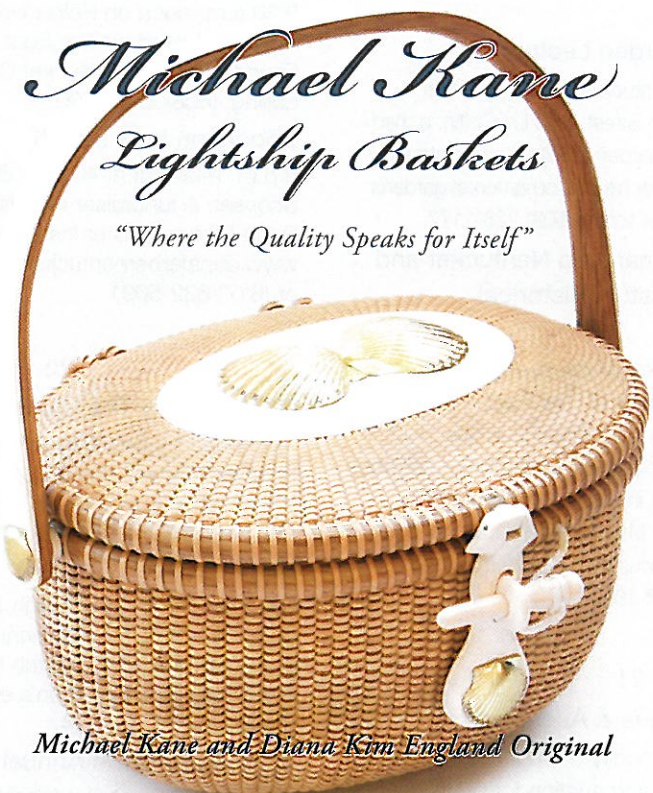
And when the owners need a bit of repose, the soothing blue master bedroom that looks out on the harbor is the perfect tranquil space. The fireplace, with its custom carved, pickled wood mantel depicting a lightship basket brimming with wildflowers, is perfect for cool Nantucket nights. Above hangs a Michael Keane original, the blue of the artwork set off by the floral chintz upholstered chairs with bullion trim.

Doors to his-and-hers bathrooms lie on either side of the fireplace. "Her bathroom is very dainty," Dujardin says. "It's a dressing bathroom that any woman would cry for." That's not to say that the gentleman's bath didn't fare well also. "He can stand at the sink shaving and look out to town," says Lyman.

Perhaps that simple pleasure in the morning speaks to of success of this Shimmo Pond home. All of its elements – the elegant furnishings, palette of colors and picturesque harbor views – combine to create a work of art that is lived in and appreciated throughout the day. It is the harmony of Dujardin's interior design and Perry's architectural elements that resulted in not just a house on the island but a home that embodies the natural beauty, artistic inclination and rich history of Nantucket. ● Elizabeth Stanek is the editorial assistant for *Nantucket Today*.

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