

AFTER



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Cape Ann Turnaround

IN MASSACHUSETTS, A SUMMER HOUSE IS RESCUED FROM NEAR RUIN

Renovation Architecture by Robert S. MacNeille, AIA, of Carpenter & MacNeille
Interior Design by Elizabeth Brosnan Hourihan of Carpenter & MacNeille/Text by Penelope Rowlands
After Photography by Gordon Beall

“What was lovely about the house was that it was so untouched,” architect Robert S. MacNeille says of a 19th-century Shingle Style residence on a cape in Annisquam, Massachusetts, that he refurbished for owners Nikolay and Natalia Bogachev. A seamless addition, on the east side, comprises a vestibule, a mudroom, a garage and a study. The landscaping is by Maryann Alberts Malarkey and Timothy Lee.

Perched on the very edge of the Atlantic, the massive Shingle Style summer house known as Selkirk Ledge has loomed above the Massachusetts coastline for more than a century. While its Cape Ann setting is magnificent—the house sits between the meandering Annisquam River on one side and the ocean, complete with a picturesquely winking lighthouse, on the other—the structure no longer was. It had weathered drastically over the years and was perilously close to ruin. “Selkirk cried out for help,” architect Robert S. MacNeille says succinctly.

When rescue came, it was from an unexpected direction—due east. A Russian couple, Nikolay and Natalia Bogachev, who live in both Moscow and Luxembourg and whose children were attending Massachusetts boarding schools, went looking for a local spot in which their family could gather. They visited 40 places in just over two weeks—“It was fun,” Nikolay Bogachev insists—before coming across Selkirk, the one that was the oldest and in the worst condition. Even so, the decision to buy it came easily. “It’s the only place I never really want to leave,” says Bogachev, an oil executive. “It’s beautiful. Crossing the Annisquam River is like entering another world.”

Selkirk was in such disrepair that, short of demolition, there was only one course to take. “We stripped it down to the bare bones,” says MacNeille, whose design and construction firm, Carpenter & MacNeille,

The living room’s inglenook is “not original to the house, but it’s original to the time period,” says interior designer Elizabeth Brosnan Hourihan. Above the fireplace is a late-19th-century oil by Arthur Quartley depicting the Annisquam River. Picture lamp, Vaughan. Stark sofa and wing chair.

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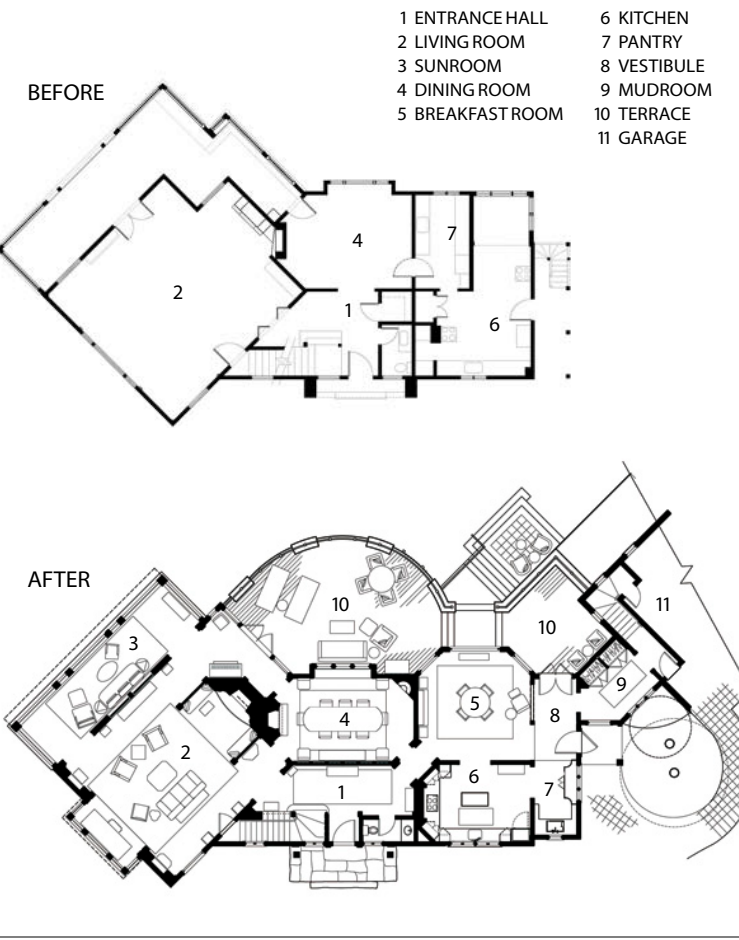


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undertook the renovation. (The fact that the interior framing, including studs and joists, was exposed made the process that much easier.)

The architect replaced a two-story porch with a striking new addition that increased the house's size from 6,633 square feet to 8,853 square

feet. Some of Selkirk's more unusual features, including intricately carved detailing at the gable ends of its steep cedar roof, proved to be inspiring. The new space is reached via a side entrance that, nestled below gables and dormers, has a pleasing, fairy-tale quality very much in keeping with

what MacNeille describes as the "northern European, almost Scandinavian exterior" of the original structure. (To that end, the architect added wood posts to the main entrance that "reflect the craftsmanship of the restored shingle and trim detail," he says.)

The addition's soaring, dou-

ble-height vestibule leads to a mudroom (a necessity, since the house, now winterized, is used year-round) and, beyond that, a garage and a second-floor study. From the vestibule, a pair of French doors opening onto a series of terraces bring the exhilaratingly omnipresent ocean into view. The old-

er spaces were reworked and refined, including the master bedroom, whose ceiling was raised, and the original kitchen, part of which is now a breakfast room bay. On the third floor, a new dormer housing a room for playing Russian billiards—a game that "needs more skills" than the Ameri-

can version, Bogachev avers. The living room feels alive with light, which, intensified by the shimmering water at the end of the lawn, plays across the walls. MacNeille brightened this space dramatically by adding a bay window to a south-facing wall; he also expanded it by enclosing a porch and in-

corporating it into the room. The interior architecture, stately and exquisite, includes an imposing inglenook with leaded windows that brackets the fireplace. "It almost feels like this is what it should have been all along," Elizabeth Brosnan Hourihan, director of interiors for Carpen-

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE TOP: MacNeille used reclaimed antique heart pine in the redesign and expansion of the dining room. Coral paint, Farrow & Ball. Vaughan chandelier. OPPOSITE ABOVE: First-floor plans show the addition and the interior reconfigurations.



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ABOVE AND TOP: Hourihan employed off-white in the master bedroom for “a soothing ambience.” A bay window allows space for a seating area, as well as bringing in more light. Stark drapery fabric and carpet. Benjamin Moore paint. Chair and ottoman, Brunschwig & Fils.

ter & MacNeille, points out. Nikolay Bogachev visited Britain often during his childhood and wanted “something like an English country house,” MacNeille recalls. “He had a very clear vision.” As a firm in which architecture and interior design are conceived as a whole, Carpenter & MacNeille was well suited to deliver it. “It’s

an integrated process from the start,” Hourihan says. The living room illustrates the delicacy of her interior design, which she describes as “painterly and fine.” Hourihan chose a palette of greens and golds, knowing it would be enhanced by the ever-changing seascape. She sought out furnishings that would look

“as if they’d been there forever.” If such pieces as the low table of solid English oak or the late-17th-century-style armchair seem timeworn, though, it’s an illusion. While Natalia Bogachev, a lawyer, loves traditional furnishings, she’s superstitious about antiques. “She believes that they have an influence of their past

owners,” her husband explains. Therefore, with the exception of some rugs and accessories, almost everything in the house is new. The palette intensifies in the dining room, a jewel of a space with walls paneled in an almost impossibly rich-looking pine; the adjoining surfaces are painted a deep coral. Leaded

windows—antique, yet newly installed—with handblown glass draw in light from the adjacent hall. Seen in flickering candlelight, it seems as if this handsome room, and, indeed, the surrounding ones, must have been in place when whaling ships first set sail from New England. And it’s somewhat

ironic that it took a pair of Russian visitors to start the process of restoring this solid, Yankee residence—albeit one with Nordic accents. “In my mind a house must tell more about the owners than the owners can tell about themselves,” as Natalia Bogachev puts it. This one has some very flattering things to say. □

ABOVE: MacNeille added a sizable semicircular terrace off the main living areas. Kravet fabric on furniture. The ocean here has “a Baltic Sea kind of feeling to it,” says MacNeille. “I saw the house, and Nikolay and Natalia are Russian... it just made sense.”