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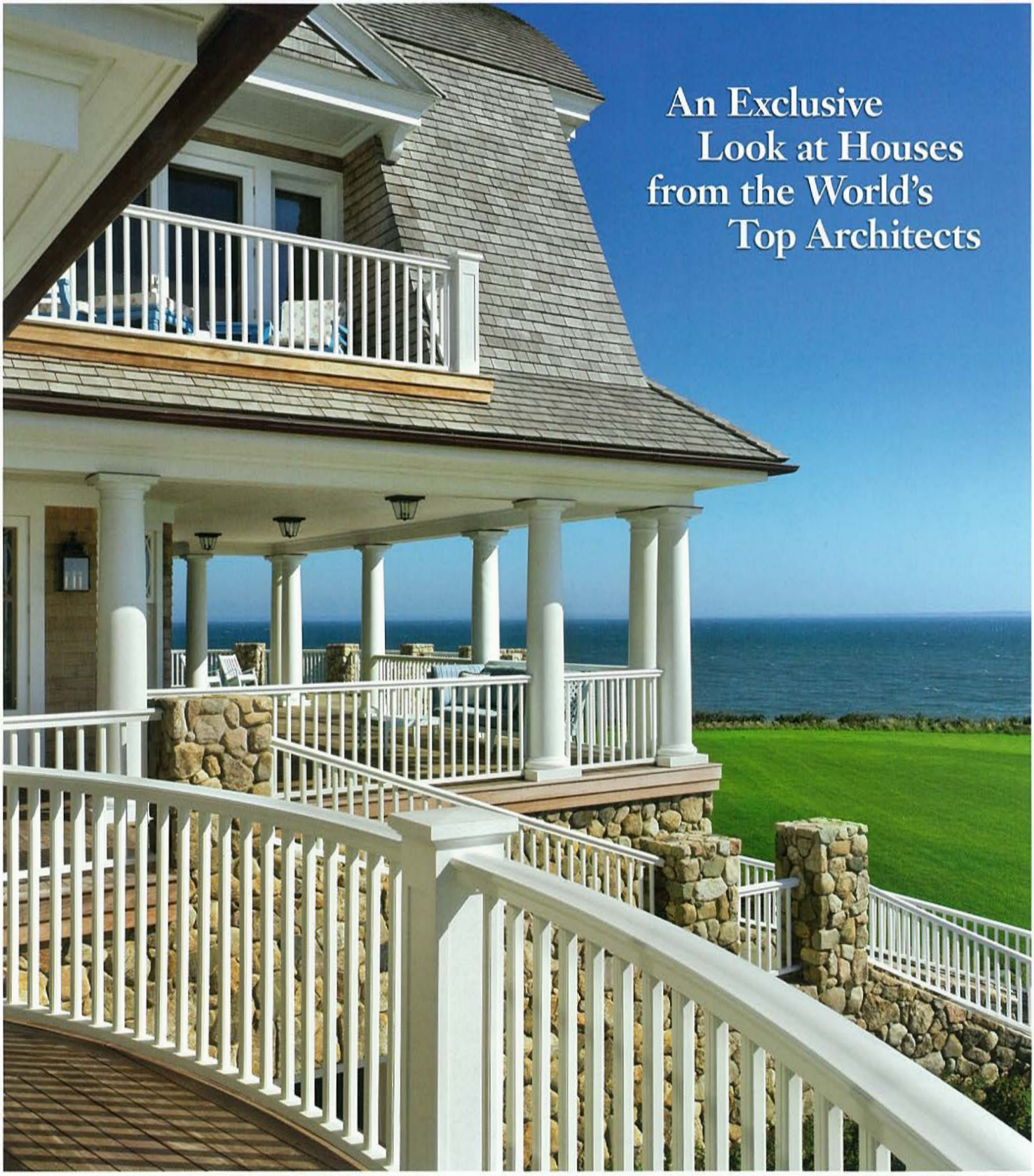

An Exclusive Look at Houses from the World's Top Architects

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Seaside Traditions

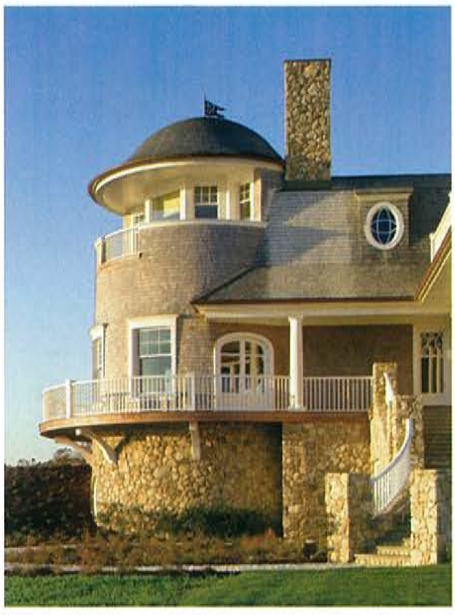
FORMAL FLAIR FOR A RAMBLING SHINGLE STYLE HOUSE ON BUZZARDS BAY

Architecture by Robert A. M. Stern Architects/Interior Design by Anne Mullin Segerson
Text by Mildred F. Schmertz/Photography by Peter Aaron/Esto

For a seafront site on Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, Robert A. M. Stern designed a striking Shingle Style house for a Boston family. With its haystack gables framing the front porch, "it has a bold yet picturesque profile," notes the architect.

The entrance hall was "inspired by the great center halls of Shingle Style houses," says project partner Randy Correll, who worked closely with Stern on the design. "It's generously proportioned, highly detailed and appointed with a fireplace and comfortable furniture." Travers chair fabric.

Interior designer Anne Mullin Segerson used blue tones—"from turquoise to periwinkle," she says—for the living room. Travers drapery fabric. Holly Hunt leather for sofas; Donghia linen for cushions and back pillows. OPPOSITE BELOW: At the west end of the house, a tower "emphasizes the sculptural possibilities of Shingle Style," Stern says. All windows and exterior doors, Tischler und Sohn. OPPOSITE: In the tower, a circular library has a stone-and-driftwood fireplace by artist Lew French. Donghia chair fabric.



Some of the early Shingle Style houses, which began to appear almost a century and a half ago, were built on sites that were windswept, raw and tough," says architect Robert A. M. Stern. "Originally these houses just sat on the land with very little modification to the natural, actual site. What I love about this house is that we were able to design and build it on a similarly rugged site and did little to landscape and soften its setting." In the company of a smaller guesthouse, the house in question stands at the tip of a peninsula that extends two and a half miles into Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, with incomparable views in all directions. The low rise it sits upon is, in fact, the bunker of a World War II U.S. Navy surveillance station that remains buried on the site.

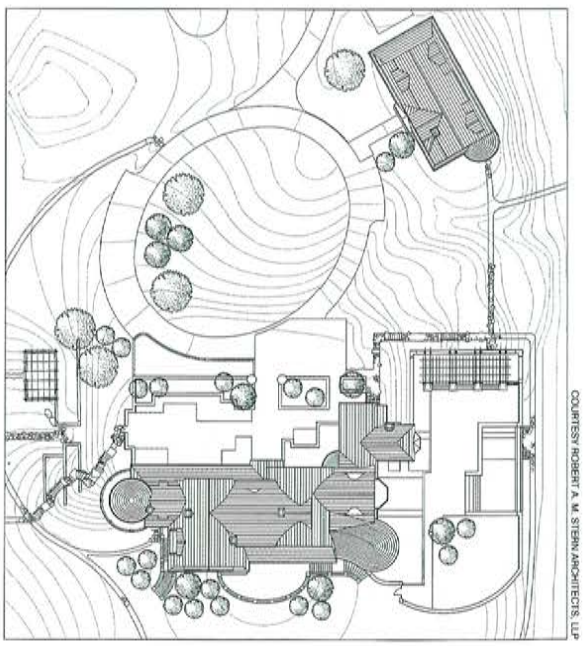
The owners are a Boston-based couple (he's an investment manager; she's a lawyer) with one young child and two adult sons who have children of their own. The husband had built an earlier house on the same spot but several years ago decided to tear it down and replace it with a house big enough for large gatherings of family and friends. When project partner Randy Correll first showed the clients the preliminary scheme that he and Stern had developed, they declared that the house needed to be much bigger. "This doesn't often happen," Correll reports. "It would have been more likely for the clients to declare that what we had done was too grand, too expensive, and tell us to cut it back." Because the dramatic location could well absorb a big house, the architects happily devised a larger residence in keep-

ABOVE: Oak beams were left unpainted in the family room, where Mullin Segerson chose accessories with nautical references, including hand-painted pillows and a box with a starfish motif. Sofa fabric from Osborne & Little. Caned barstools from McGuire. Stark carpet.

ing with what the couple had in mind.

"Randy and I designed this house so that the family lives in and is aware of all of it—day to day," says Stern. It is entered from a deep porch and front door on the north façade, which faces the sea. A small vestibule leads to an entrance hall that is half as wide as the living room. As in the tradition of historic Shingle Style houses, it has its own fireplace and seating. Two corridors extend from it to the east and west ends of the house—one bordered by the north façade, the other by the south. These façades are configured with large windows and French doors that fill the corridors and the rooms with daylight and are shaded by a deep porch on the south and a roofed terrace on the north.

The north corridor, joining the stair hall, the entrance hall and the living room, ends in an octagonal breakfast room and a



COURTESY ROBERT A. M. STERN ARCHITECTS, LLP

distinctive circular library in what Correll describes as "a lighthouselike tower." "The library offers 270-degree views of Buzzards Bay," he says, and "has the most spectacular sunset and evening views." The domed ceiling is buttressed by mahogany beams, and the walls are paneled in horizontal mahogany boards "cut radially to the shape of the room, their surfaces convex to enhance the play of light and shadow."

Capitalizing on natural light was paramount throughout. At the heart of the house, the living room consists of two bays, each with a pair of French doors, which lead to a terrace on one side and to a porch on the other. "I love the living room because it has light on both sides," Stern says. "You can sit there for hours and watch the sun move." Designed to accommodate several seating areas, the room is "the center of the owners' entertaining spaces," adds Correll, who designed the carved mantel with shells and mermaids, reinforcing the nautical theme that runs throughout the residence.

Above the living room, the master suite—which comprises well over half of the second floor—has "unobstructed water views," says Correll. The architects designed a cove-lit, barrel-vaulted ceiling for the bedroom that the interior designer, Anne Mullin Segerson, had painted "to mimic the sky." The colorful yet peaceful room is decorated, as is much of the house, in shades of blue—blue stripes for window treatments, a blue floral rug, walls faux-finished in blue and silver. "The room turned out to be so happy and playful," says Mullin Segerson. Within the suite is a staircase that leads down to the circular library and up to the husband's study.

The lowest floor, devoted to recreation,

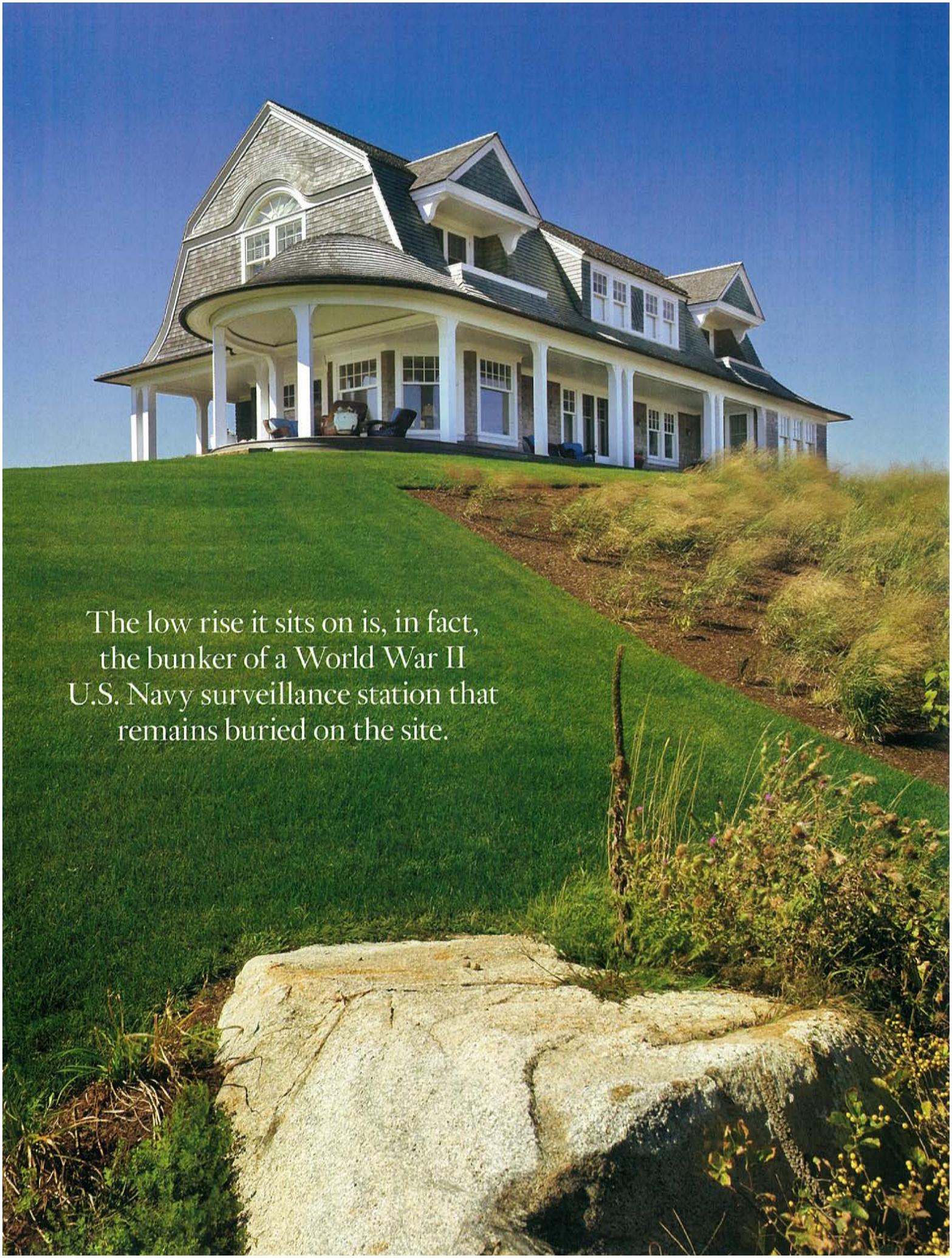
OPPOSITE: The site plan shows the relationship of the main residence to the guesthouse. ABOVE: In the master bedroom, the designer stippled the vaulted ceiling "with the palest of blues," she says. Through the bay window, remarks Stern, "all that can be seen is sea and sky." Fauteuil fabric from Travers.

has a fully equipped exercise room, a two-lane bowling alley, a pool table and a bar in the shape of the prow of a boat. "A bowling alley is a great thing to have in a house in a remote place," Stern observes. "It brings everyone together of all different ages. People get into it; they put on bowling shirts." Informal seating areas are scattered about the floor. "The layout lends itself to the pleasures of groups of guests pursuing the various amusements offered," Correll explains.

The architects designed all the interior architectural detailing throughout, while Mullin Segerson and the wife collaborated on the traditional décor, buying just about every item in the house, from exotic chandeliers to tableware. "The wife was the principal client," says Stern, "and the house could never have been as good as it is without her. All clients are wonderful, but some clients are more wonderful than others, and she was one of those." □

TOP: "All of the primary rooms open onto it," Correll says of the ocean-facing porch that wraps around much of the house. ABOVE: The pool was located to the northeast side of the residence to protect it from the wind. Perennials fabrics.

OPPOSITE: Although the guesthouse "is much simpler than the main house," says Stern, it still has "a variety of classic Shingle Style details." A gazebo with a bell-shaped roof "highlights the location of the best view," Correll points out.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