

# New England HOME

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# Features

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Muddy feet and summer softball games, meet your match. This family retreat has a place for everything—and everything is in its place. See the story on page 144.



# Brigadoon

At one family's retreat,  
kids hike, chickens  
roam, and parents relax  
by a scenic estuary.

*Text by* FRED ALBERT  
*Photography by* JARED KUZIA

# by the Bay





A mammoth factory light from Rejuvenation illuminates the breakfast table in this Gloucester, Massachusetts, kitchen, which sports concrete counters and a corner pantry fashioned from steel-and-glass panels from Costa Fabrications. **FACING PAGE:** Most meals are enjoyed on the heated porch, which interior designer Kristina Crestin painted a moody blue-black (Benjamin Moore Polo Blue).







**CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW:** Since the family loves sectionals, Crestin outfitted the living room with one from Lekker Home that easily seats nine; she upholstered the massive ottoman in a foot-friendly Dash & Albert rug. In the mudroom, custom grass-green lockers fitted with wire mesh doors keep kid stuff organized but in view and inject a burst of color. The folksy front facade offers little hint of the home's zero-energy design, which produces as much energy as it uses, thanks in part to solar panels on the neighboring barn.



**From their eighty-six-acre retreat** overlooking Gloucester's Essex River, a husband and wife measure the seasons by the migration of the birds and the changing colors of the marsh grass, while their brood of school-age children tend to the chickens, wander the trails, and hunt for crabs under rocks lining the shore.





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** There's no shortage of seating at the kitchen's twenty-two-foot island, which was made by B&G Cabinet. Chairs from Schoolhouse adorn the pool house, which was built before the main residence so the family could enjoy summers on the property during construction. Hanging pendants from RH help fill the pool house's volume and cast magical patterns on the ceiling—without upstaging the sectional, whose grass-green performance fabric is echoed in the Sallie Strand painting; the custom Ping-Pong table was designed by Crestin.



It all feels a bit like Brigadoon—if that magical realm were only twelve minutes from your front door.

Residents of a neighboring town, the couple purchased the abandoned farm a decade ago and spent the next few years camping out in the derelict house that came with it. After familiarizing themselves with the setting, they commissioned a new vacation home from architect Steven Baczek, builder Steve Howell, and interior designer Kristina Crestin, co-host of HGTV's *Farmhouse Fixer*.

With its prim white siding, metal roof, and cozy front porch, the resulting farmhouse presents a disarming face to visitors braving the dusty, half-mile driveway to its door. Step inside, how-





IT ALL FEELS A BIT LIKE BRIGADOON—IF THAT MAGICAL REALM WERE ONLY TWELVE MINUTES FROM YOUR FRONT DOOR.

ever, and homespun reserve gives way to contemporary swagger and wall-to-wall windows that frame breathtaking views of the estuary below.

“This house is like a mullet,” the wife proclaims. “Business in the front and party in the back!”

The wife wanted a comfortable house that would be easy to clean, with compact bedrooms and large living spaces to foster a sense of togetherness. Oh—and lots of color. “She was up for anything,” Crestin says. Since colorful walls would be hard to contain given the open floor plan, the designer went with white (“She had to sell me on that,” says the wife with a laugh) and confined the colorful accents to doors, cabinets, and furniture, where they make a big impact but don’t overwhelm.

At mealtime, the family converges on the kitchen, where a flotilla of grass-green stools flanks a twenty-two-foot indigo-blue island illuminated by a huge




**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** The primary suite includes a walk-in closet with sliding door panels on one side and a built-in dresser with leather handles on the other. In the neighboring bath, white-oak vanities flank the water closet doorway; the tiles are from Marrakech Design and the lights are Hollis+Morris. The parents enjoy stellar views of the estuary from their bedroom, thanks to triple-pane Schüco windows that span more than six by nine feet and conceal motorized shades at the top.









"It's a bird-watcher's paradise," the wife says of the estuary out back, where seals sometimes frolic between the mounds of marsh grass. The eighty-six-acre property is also home to chickens and goats, as well as an apple orchard and crops, which the children help tend as a kind of outdoor environmental classroom.





Calder-esque pendant. “It is a giant kitchen, so this was an opportunity for a sculptural moment,” explains Crestin. The trough-style sink below is so large it’s serviced by two faucets and is even deep enough to conceal a drying rack.

Although there’s a nominal dining area at one end of the kitchen, most meals are enjoyed on the four-season porch, which Crestin painted a moody blue-black. “We liked the idea of a space that just felt different,” says the designer, who suspended a cluster of wire pendants overhead because they reminded everyone of the baskets used to collect eggs. “This is almost like a secondary living room,” Crestin observes. “You can open up all the sliders and feel like you’re outside.”

Despite its size (7,250 square feet, not including a 650-square-foot pool house and a 2,800-square-foot barn), the home produces as much energy as it consumes, thanks to architect Baczek’s zero-energy approach to design. Photovoltaic and hydronic panels are paired with ample insulation, a high-efficiency heating and





**CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW:** The pool house is lined with sliding glass doors to accommodate a constant flow of guests, who can shelter on the covered patio or relax poolside in an RH chaise. The barn includes storage and a room for processing apples, but it can also double as party space, thanks to heated floors powered by hydronic panels on the roof. The new house sits on the same site as the old house and was designed to maximize views.



air conditioning system, LED lights, and Schüco windows from Germany. “Those windows are triple-pane and super energy efficient,” notes Howell.

Heading downstairs one morning during a recent visit, the couple’s teenage daughter paused to take in the view

and announced, “Gosh, I wish we lived here!”

Her mother was amused but understood the sentiment. “Beauty is good for the soul,” she says. “It affects how you feel, being in nature like this.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see *Resources*.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Steven Baczek Architect  
**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Kristina Crestin Design  
**BUILDER:** Howell Custom Building Group  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Indigo Design



