



A smart renovation
in Bonnet Shores
transforms a
cramped Cape into
a comfortable
getaway with a touch
of urban edge.

Cottage Industry





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ERYL AND GEOFFREY KARDON KNEW the house had potential, but getting there? That would take some work.

For years the couple had made Rhode Island their home away from home (a.k.a. the heart of Beantown). Both successful veterinarians, they enjoy the hustle of the city — its pace and its people — but everyone has to unwind sometime. For the Kardons, relaxation was found aboard a boat they kept in Wickford. And, while trading the city for the sea is certainly a change of pace, after fifteen years Meryl was ready to trade their floating getaway for a piece of solid ground.

That's where this house came in. It was nearly sixty years old, dated and it was sliced into a handful of cramped rooms, which made its modest size feel even more cramped. But, it was in Narragansett and within walking distance to a beach where their dog could walk and play in the surf. The pair was in the market for an affordable second home, and this — if done right — could be perfect.

Before the Kardons closed on the property, they met with a handful of builders to talk vision and logistics. One of those builders was Justin Zeller of Red House Custom Building, a design-build firm out of Barrington.

"There was a connection that day," says Meryl. "I was immediately drawn to his vision to work out of the box. Other builders were looking at this as a typical new construction, and that's not what I wanted."



What she had in mind was an open floor plan that would make the house feel as though it had taken a deep breath. She envisioned a clean, crisp interior with lots of windows and a beach-inspired palette. The little Cape didn't have dormers, and the upstairs space was mostly ignored by its previous owners. The Kardons hoped to locate a master bedroom on the second floor, leaving the downstairs wide open for living space. Zeller was intrigued by Meryl's vision, and believed it was a project suited to Red House's design-build philosophy. The Kardons closed on



TOP: A wide open floor plan keeps this modest, Narragansett Cape feeling roomy and relaxed. **BOTTOM:** The white painted brick fireplace surround is reminiscent of the white subway tile in the kitchen, and a new gas insert in the pre-existing fireplace adds interest and warmth. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The kitchen design is simple and clean. White subway tiles and cabinets keep the room bright and allow the sea glass green island to pop. Soapstone counters mimic the gray wash of the bamboo floors. The beadboard ceiling, painted a soft blue, is a nice finishing detail.

the Bonnet Shores property in November of 2013 and, ten months later, construction was complete.

The Red House team began by gutting the interior. A small addition off the back proved just enough to get rid of that cramped feeling. The wide open format the Kardons wanted required the installation of a vertical support post and a steel beam across half of the ceiling. The decision to continue the steel across the whole ceiling was an aesthetic call that works well with the home's clean, retro-industrial vibe. The kitchen is anchored by a gorgeous custom island, which is a compilation of several pieces that were manipulated to work as a single unit. The kitchen opens freely to a dining space, which is separated from a sitting area by the steel stairs. The open staircase keeps the room from feeling closed or disjointed.

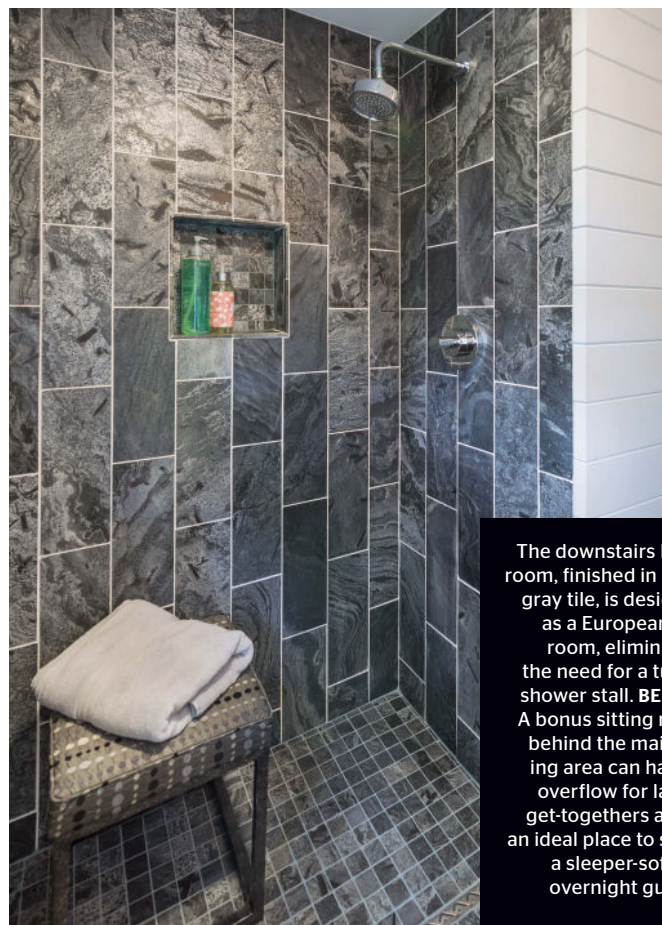
The house has great flow, which is so important in a smaller space. In addition to fluidity, the house is beautifully minimalistic — not overdone, it's the perfect balance of style and simplicity.

Upstairs, adding a shed dormer made it possible to realize the Kardons' vision of a second-floor master bedroom, and pocket doors are a thoughtful use of limited space.

"It was an intriguing project from the beginning," says Zeller, "and it embodies the beauty of the design-build process: matching the client's dream with Red House vision and craftsmanship." **HD**

Architectural Design, Concept and Construction: Red House Custom Building, LLC, 337-5634, redhousecb.com, *see ad opposite page.*

Exterior Color Consultation: KEP Designs, 451-8922, kepetersondesigns.com.



The downstairs bathroom, finished in deep gray tile, is designed as a European wet room, eliminating the need for a tub or shower stall. **BELOW:** A bonus sitting room behind the main living area can handle overflow for larger get-togethers and is an ideal place to stash a sleeper-sofa for overnight guests.



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PHOTOGRAPHY: (HOME EXTERIOR AND CLOSET) NAT REA; (BATHROOM AND KITCHEN) AARON USHER III

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