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A SHINING EXAMPLE

*With a hint of sparkle here
and a bit of glimmer
there, a Martha's Vineyard
home reflects the vibrant
spirit of its owners.*

Text by **Maria LaPiana** | Photography
by **Joshua McHugh**

Architects Jennifer Smith and Scott Hutton sited the house to take advantage of water views and relied on traditional New England materials. They created spaces that are both outward focused and intimate—from porches and patios to tiered-level lawns. The window trim echoes the interior accent red, which was mixed to match the client's favorite lipstick and nail polish color.




PROJECT TEAM
Architecture: Jennifer Smith and Scott Hutton, Smith & Hutton
Interior architecture and design: Heather Wells
Builder: Gerret C. Conover, Conover Restorations
Landscape design: Elisabeth O'Rourke, Jardins International


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The house is grand, indoors and out, with curved walls, tall windows, numerous gables, and architectural details inspired by the iconic Shingle style. The walk-in bar visually expands the living room in a practical and appealing way. The living room is glamorous and comfortable in equal measure; the black doors open to the roomy bar.

They say that in a perfect world (when stars align, and circumstances allow) your home is a mirror of yourself. It's a place of self-expression, a potent statement of who you are.

All existential “deeper meaning of home” stuff aside, Boston interior designer Heather Wells will tell you in a heartbeat that this iconic Shingle-style residence on Martha’s Vineyard is every bit a reflection of the empty-nesters who live there. “It’s exactly who they are,” she says—from its overall relaxed vibe and discrete living spaces to the way it sparkles.

“For starters, they’re gorgeous,” says the designer of her clients. “They’re impeccably dressed and beautiful inside and out. They have a formality to them, but they’re incredibly friendly, always smiling, welcoming. The wife is

super design-oriented, and really grounded. She’s a high-low gal.”

Although the couple met in New York, they both come from families with deep roots on the island and had, while growing up, spent plenty of time there. They searched until they located a waterfront lot they loved, then decided in 2017 to build their Vineyard dream house.

With its twin gables, a gloriously sprawling wraparound porch, dormers, and a rounded turret, the house is quintessential Martha’s Vineyard. A three-bay garage houses the husband’s cherished classic cars. The project also included a new guest house, pool house, and the renovation of an old beach shack that sat on the property.

THERE'S NO FORMAL DINING ROOM, BY DESIGN. THE OWNERS "WANTED THE PORCH TO WORK REALLY WELL, SO IT SERVES AS THE DINING ROOM," SAYS HEATHER WELLS.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A side porch is perfect for informal gatherings. A gorgeous alcove with unparalleled views holds the family's only indoor dining space. The kitchen was designed with two islands: one for the couple to share with every party's ubiquitous crowd in the kitchen and another for the caterer.

Architects Jennifer Smith and Scott Hutton sited the nearly 12,000-square-foot main house to take advantage of views, of course. Their firm, Smith & Hutton, is based in the Philadelphia area, but they do most of their work on the Cape and islands. "We went with a traditional Shingle-style and used materials found in New England," says Smith—from white cedar shingles and mahogany decking to the landscape

design's brick, boxwoods, and white hydrangeas.

On siting and materials selection, the two worked closely with Edgartown builder Gerret Conover and landscape architect Elisabeth O'Rourke of Nantucket's Jardins International.

Designer Wells came on board early enough in the construction process that she was able to make some changes to the interior architecture and choose all the

interior finishes. The main house features four bedrooms, six full baths, and three half baths. The floor plan was completely informed by the couple's penchant for entertaining. "They're very social and wanted different levels of entertaining," says Wells. "There was a lot of discussion around how the house was going to flow."

There's no formal dining room, by design. "They wanted the porch to work really well, so it serves as the dining



EVERY SPACE IS USED ALL THE TIME, SAYS WELLS. "THEY HAVE DINNER PARTIES EVERY WEEKEND—WHETHER IT'S FOR TWO, TWELVE, OR TWENTY-FIVE."



The billiards room is on the lower level—a space dedicated to entertaining and fun and outfitted in sumptuous reds and black. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** Quilted barstools make for comfortable seating at the lower-level bar. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** The fun-loving homeowners and their guests enjoy lively bowling competitions.

room," says Wells. An expansive, flat backyard is perfect for a large tent that can hold several hundred guests. Indoors, a flexible sitting area with four comfy barrel chairs is easily transformed into a dining space. Other indoor entertaining spaces abound—from a living room with a walk-in bar to a family room that connects with a wide-open kitchen to a no-holds-barred lower level that houses a bowling alley and media room. A shout-out to that living room bar: while it was always intended to be a separate space, it was Wells who suggested the black doors, taupe cabinetry, and silver leaf back-splash that add easy elegance.

Nothing was gratuitous, and every space is used all the time, says Wells. "They have dinner parties every weekend—whether it's for two, twelve, or twenty-five."

On any given summer weekend, the couple will have "three or four things going on," she says. The house had to be up to it. "The first-floor living areas were required to transition easily from a crowd to as few as two people," says Hutton.



The spiral staircase in the wife's dressing room leads to an extension of her closet. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** The master bedroom's tufted headboard and diaphanous drapes add even more elegance to a glam space. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** The shower's Bisazza tile wall adds a bold touch to the wife's serene bathroom.

“THE OWNER IS A VIBRANT PERSON, AND HER INTERIORS REFLECT THAT. SHE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED A LIGHTNESS, SPARKLE, AND REFLECTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE,” SAYS WELLS.

If the house feels open and inclusive on the first floor, upstairs is a different story. “The spaces on the floors above needed to transition comfortably to smaller private areas that would feel cozy,” says Hutton, “in order to balance out the open flow of the first floor.”

The master suite includes a sitting room, his and hers baths and dressing rooms, and a private porch. The wife has a gorgeous sanctuary in the turret, with an antique desk and modern chaise set up to take advantage of the stunning views. The husband's retreat comprises most of the top floor. They both have spiral staircases inside their dressing rooms; hers leads to an extension of her closet, and his takes him up to his getaway.

There are two more en suite bedrooms on the second floor, as well as a first-floor guest suite. Both first and second floors feel relaxed and sophisticated with their color scheme of serene grays, black-and-white, oatmeal, and a little dusty purple. The lower level, where a wine cellar and lounging/TV-watching area join the bowling alley and pool table, is the polar opposite: rich and bold in shades of red (inspired by a favorite lipstick and nail polish) and black.

Comfort rules this house, and yet there's glam at every turn. “The wife understands that certain things raise the level of the space in the same way that diamonds elevate jeans and a white shirt,” Wells says. “She is a vibrant person, and her interiors reflect that. She specifically requested a lightness, sparkle, and reflectivity throughout the house.”

Crystal fixtures that catch the light just so, custom fabrics with a hint of shimmer, and furniture and decorative accents with a metallic glow are the extras that provide the sparkle.

There are lovely vignettes throughout the home—like a hallway's little console table with a bold painting above it and two petite poufs underneath—and Wells credits the client for them. Some clients run out of steam, but not this one. “She saw the project through to the end,” the designer says. “Everything is purposely placed and not just there to fill space. She was able to get to nuance—and we didn't have to twist her arm to get there.”

“She touched every corner in a beautiful way. That's who she is.” ■■■

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 154.

