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VOLUME XVIII ■ NUMBER 3

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PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL WICHLOE
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ABOVE: The farmhouse had been strictly utilitarian. The front door was accessed through an enclosed three-season porch, which prevented natural light from reaching the living room and dining room.

BELOW: Adding dormers and raising the roof created additional space on the second floor while retaining the home's original charm.



Small Space, BIG STYLE

An open layout transforms a 1940s farmhouse into a sophisticated, yet comfortable retreat

WRITTEN BY BERNADETTE BACZYNSKI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL WICHLOE

STYLED BY DONNA PAUL

LEFT: A formerly enclosed stairway, which now leads to the second-floor master suite, creates a division between living and dining areas. The wood-burning fireplace was added during the renovation.

RIGHT: On the ceiling, the new girder marks the former division between porch and living area. Eliminating the wall added light and square footage to the new living room.



BELOW: The new dining room's French doors, leading to the deck, allow natural light to flood the space. The flooring takes its cue from stained-and-dyed oak floors elsewhere in the house.

RIGHT: A covered porch is accessible from one side of the dining room. Stadium steps provide a sensible transition between the sloping yard and new deck, also accessible from the dining room.



OPPOSITE: Custom ceruse-finished oak cabinets have a simple Shaker style and blend with quartzite counters and stainless appliances. A wine chiller is located in the island.





FOR ONE NEW YORK CITY COUPLE, WHOSE business takes them around the world, a secluded retreat was just the antidote they needed. To enjoy what little down time their schedules afford, they wanted a quiet place, just big enough for two, with a separate area to accommodate the occasional visiting guest.

At first glance, the 1,400-square-foot 1940s farmhouse in Bridgehampton, New York, seemed perfect: The location was great, the size was ample, but “it had a ’40s mentality,” says interior designer Betty Wasserman,

of Betty Wasserman Art & Interiors, who worked with the couple. “It had little rooms and a closed-off kitchen, which was how people lived then, but not now.”

Indeed, on the first floor, an awkwardly placed bedroom opened into the living room and kitchen, and an enclosed front porch was too narrow to be enjoyed. Upstairs, low ceilings made tiny bedrooms feel even smaller. And access to the yard was limited.

“It was a nice piece of property, set back from the road, with mature trees that screened views of neighboring

properties,” says Wasserman. “It also had several out buildings, which appealed to the couple.”

Architect Kathryn Fee worked with Wasserman to reconfigure the house, gutting the interior, except for a bearing wall, and leaving the footprint intact.

Along with removing interior walls, one of the biggest changes came from incorporating the front porch into the living area; a new girder supports the ceiling. One end of the room is a media center, with a wall-mounted flat-panel television; at the opposite end, a new wood-burning fireplace with bluestone surround sets the tone for a cozy seating area. “Now, the living room is large and flooded with light,” says Fee.

The wall dividing the first-floor bedroom and the kitchen—itsself a relic from the '60s, with limited counter space and old appliances and cabinets—was removed to allow a combination cooking/dining area that opens onto a new deck. Getting rid of the wall also gave Wasserman freedom to extend a kitchen island into the dining room, creating additional seating and serving counter.

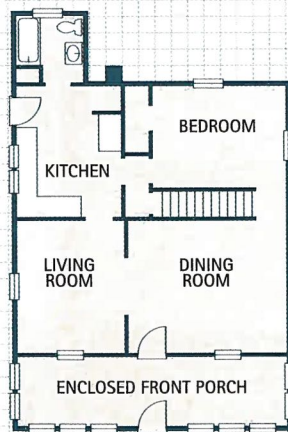
It's upstairs, though, that the cottage's retreatlike appeal really shines. Fee added dormers to the second



ABOVE: In the master bath, a deep tub has a cherrywood surround which matches the suite's custom vanity and built-in wardrobe doors. A quartzite ledge extends from the vanity, providing space for art display.

OPPOSITE: New dormers create an alcove for the bed in the serene master bedroom. Easy-care plantation shutters add a simple architectural element to rooms throughout the house.

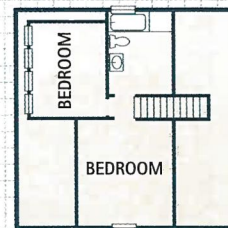
First Floor



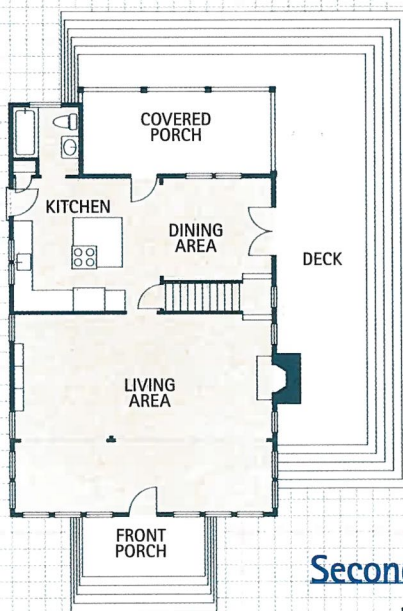
BEFORE

Originally, small rooms were closed off from one another. A glassed-in porch ran the width of the house, cutting into valuable living space. Two tiny bedrooms and a bath were crammed into the second floor.

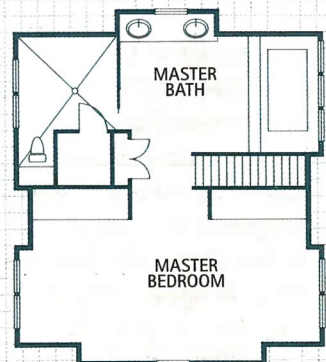
Second Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



AFTER

By opening all first-floor spaces to one another and incorporating the porch, the design team created space for entertaining and relaxing. A wraparound deck, accessible from new doors in the dining area, extends living spaces. A new master suite was created upstairs.





ABOVE: The sleeping area in the guesthouse is separated from the living room by a freestanding storage wall, with shelves accessed from the other side.

RIGHT: The old two-car garage was situated in the perfect spot for guest quarters.



OPPOSITE: Original garage doors became part of the redesign: Side doors are now stationary; center doors open out onto the courtyard that separates the main house from the guest suite. Inside, sliding panels hide narrow storage shelves in the freestanding wall.

story and raised the roof about a foot and a half. "Then we turned the whole floor into a private 'hotel suite' for two," says Wasserman. The bath, which opens onto the bedroom, has a European steam sauna, a walk-in shower and a deep tub for soaking.

Visiting guests, meanwhile, have a private cottage of their own in what was once a detached two-car garage. Insulation, plumbing and hardwood floors were added, along with an 18-inch-deep floating closet wall to separate sitting and sleeping areas. Now, the homeowners aren't the only ones who retire to a cozy spot at the end of an evening. And that's precisely the way they wanted it. ■

WHAT WAS DONE

- ▶ Guttered the house, retaining its existing footprint and leaving exterior and bearing walls
- ▶ Created second-floor master suite, raising ceiling height and adding dormers
- ▶ Rebuilt open first-floor plan, incorporating former three-season porch into main living room
- ▶ Replaced windows, installed oak floors and added fireplace in the living room
- ▶ Installed custom kitchen cabinets; added access from dining room to new deck
- ▶ Turned existing two-car garage into separate studio/guest quarters

THEY SAW THE GUESTHOUSE
AT MY PLACE AND WANTED
THE SAME THING.

DESIGNER BETTY WASSERMAN

