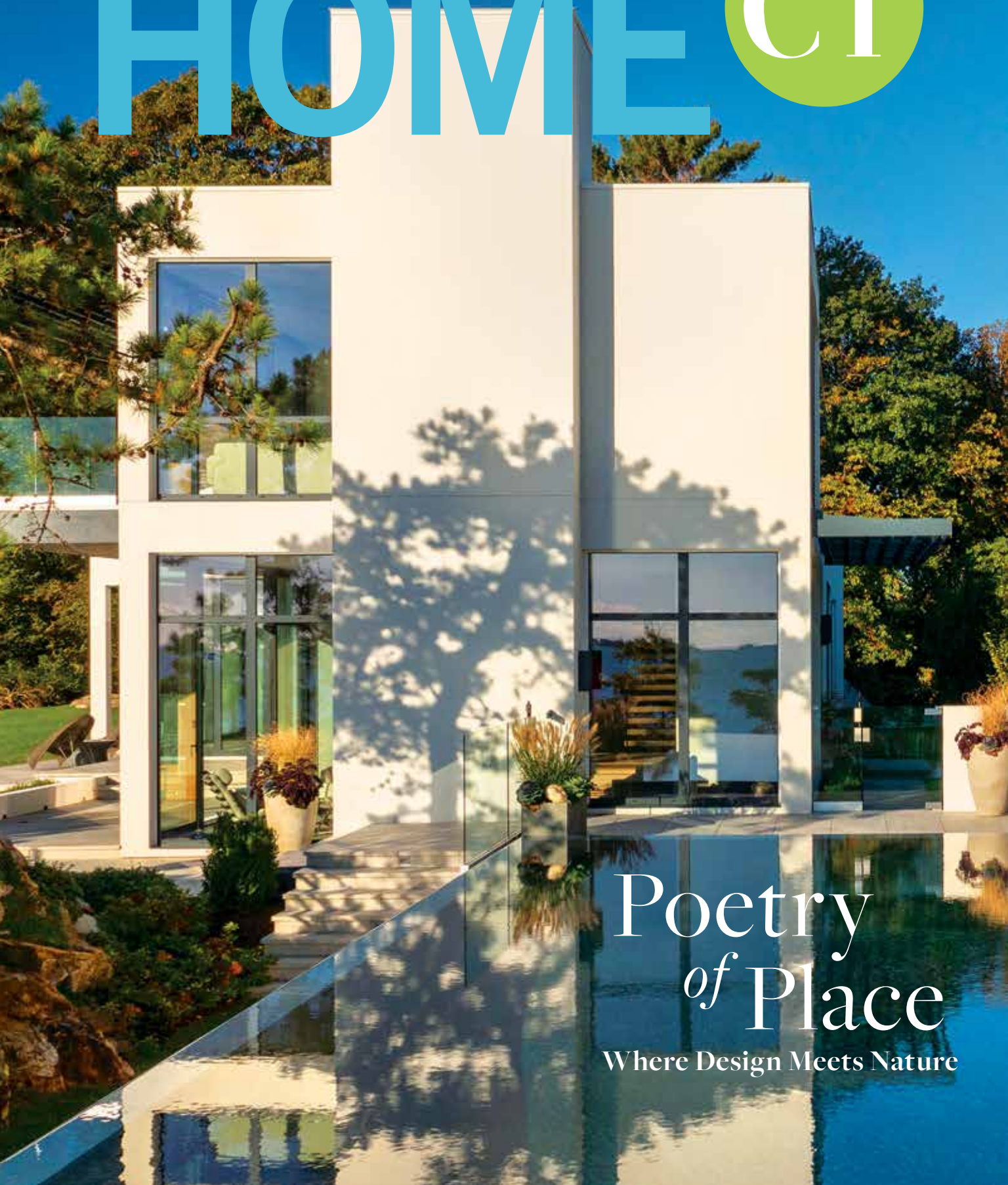


New England HOME CT



Poetry
of Place

Where Design Meets Nature



The
LIVING
is **EASY**

A couple trades their antiques-filled colonial for
pared-down simplicity on the water.

Text by ALYSSA BIRD | *Exterior photography by* PETER BROWN
Interior photography by AMY VISCHIO

Cardello Architects and Fletcher Development had a plan in place for this waterfront residence when the current clients purchased the site. The couple worked with architect David LaPierre to revise certain aspects of the proposed plans, including the addition of a lower-level rec room with a grotto, spool (a smaller pool with spa features), an outdoor shower, and easy access to the firepit and dock.



Spring greens, purple, natural oak, white, and a few subtle patterns like the one on the dining chairs complement the blues throughout. **FACING PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** On the main level, the family room, kitchen, and dining area are open to one another and enjoy views out to the water. The residence is dubbed “the hydrangea house” after the wife’s favorite color, hydrangea blue, which appears on the kitchen cabinetry and range hood.



Things have a way of falling into place eventually. In the case of designer Havilande Whitcomb’s longtime clients, it took three years of searching before they found the perfect waterfront property in Rowayton. That frustrating waiting period paid off in dividends, however, as the empty nesters were rewarded with a cleared site, permits in hand, and an initial design underway.

The couple picked up where the previous owners had left off with Cardello Architects and builder Fletcher Development, tweaking the plan slightly to

better accommodate their needs. The most dramatic amendment to the 7,000-square-foot five-bedroom residence? The addition of a lower level containing a bath, wet bar, and television and games space that opens onto a grotto area complete with a spool (a small pool with spa features).

“We had to dig fifteen feet into the bedrock, and the site is too close to the neighboring homes to do that by blasting,” explains builder Ryan Fletcher of the fifty-foot-wide shotgun lot. “Instead, we were drilling and hammering for months.”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The primary bath features a Victoria + Albert soaking tub, Artistic Tile flooring, and Watermark fixtures. A powder room is sheathed in a wallpaper by Crezana, the mirror is from Oly, and the sconces are from Visual Comfort. The vanity in the primary bath is the same shade of blue as the showstopping tub. **FACING PAGE:** When it came to the primary bedroom, the clients amended the original plan to accommodate a vaulted ceiling. A Brightbound light fixture adds another layer of texture, and the painting by Catherine Erb is from KMR Arts.

The residence is now dubbed “the hydrangea house,” says the client.

The result, according to architect David LaPierre, is a property that “feels chiseled into the landscape. The site limited us to a house that’s thirty-four feet wide, but we maximized the buildable area and utilized large expanses of glass on the southern and western exposures to take advantage of the view.”

Inside, the floor plan is designed for laid-back living and entertaining, with the kitchen, dining, and family areas open to each other as well as the water vistas. “It’s a big house, but the main floor doesn’t feel overwhelming for two people,” says the client. “The home has a good balance of private spaces and larger ones, and the ability to expand and contract. When our kids aren’t visiting, we can close off certain areas and be very comfortable.”





Designed with outdoor entertaining and activities in mind, the lower level leads to a firepit and the waterfront; both the grotto area and the deck on the main floor can be enclosed by screens that lower from the ceiling.
FAR LEFT: A nautical-inspired cable-and-wood staircase connects all four floors.



Throughout the process, the homeowners leaned heavily on Whitcomb, who they have known for three decades and worked with on multiple projects. “Havilande is fantastic at maximizing space, she’s creative, and she’s not afraid of anything,” says the client, who was hoping to create a much more contemporary home than their previous antiques-filled colonial.

“They were looking for a fresh start, with a pared-down design and a simple, serene color story,” says Whitcomb. “The wife loves the contrast of hydrangea blue and a bright, springy green, as well as the shade of purple that hydrangeas become as they age. We paired these tones with natural oak, white plaster, and crisp white trim.”

In fact, the residence is now dubbed “the hydrangea house,” says the client. “I’ve never bought into minimalism. Color and pattern make me happy.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE:
Cardello Architects
INTERIOR DESIGN:
Havilande Whitcomb Design
BUILDER:
Fletcher Development
LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Wesley Stout Associates