

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Modern Drama

Designers add
spice to
New England's
spaces

Good Bones

Park-like grounds further the manor-house feel, and a random pattern of different-colored stones (including Venetian buff for the window heads and sills) lends the new building the patina of age. **BELOW:** The arched portico softens the design's formality, while the windows above gather natural light for the stair hall.

A House for the Ages

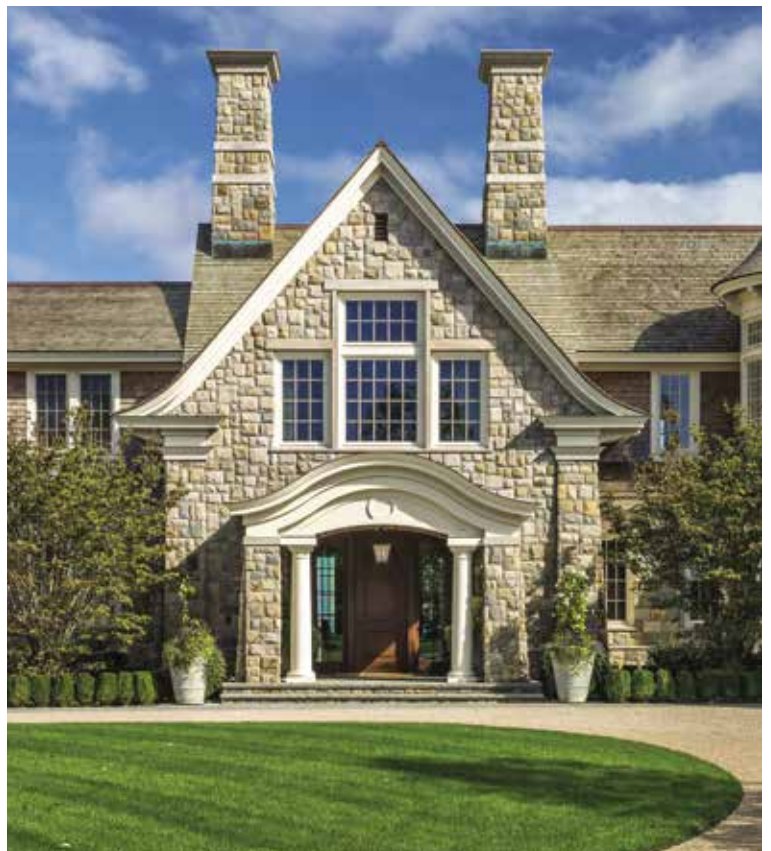
Three generations gather to make memories on Rhode Island's south coast.

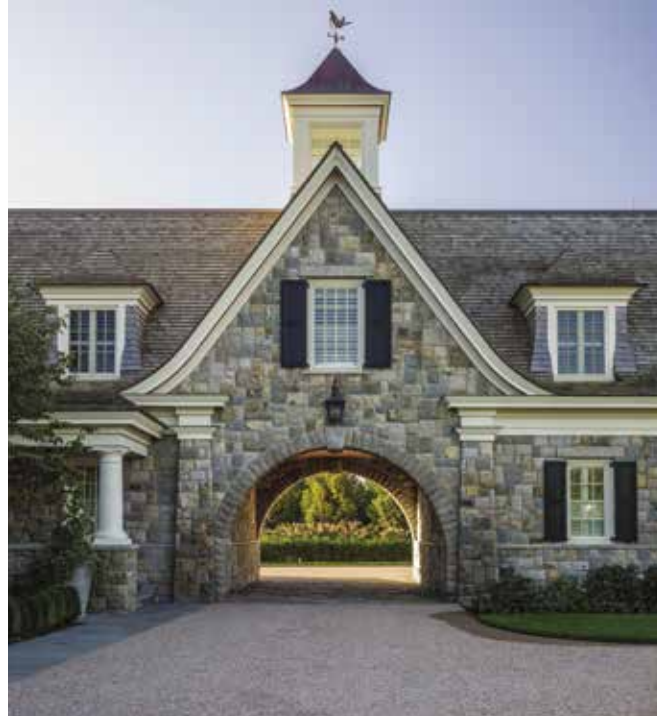
✿ **A happy marriage of past and present** creates visual harmony, and no one knows this better than Newport architect Paul Weber. Take this estate on Rhode Island's south coast. The columned portico and the symmetrical composition of windows with twin chimneys above is classic. But Weber has tweaked his design ever so slightly, angling the cupula-crowned garage/guest wing to, as he explains, "break it down and make it more casual." He uses the same clever formula inside, where traditional details lend character to an open and functional floorplan.

Strong affection for Rhode Island (the husband is a University of Rhode Island alumnus) drew the owners to the waterfront property. It seemed the idyllic spot for building a retreat their grown children and grandchildren could enjoy—one of those places where memories pile up. A Shingle-style house was an option, but the owners envisioned instead a nest with "a stronger sense of permanence," Weber says. The solution? A grand 13,000-square-foot stone house with all the elements the couple love, like gables, dormers, and ornamental moldings.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A large expanse of covered porch merges with a screened porch resting within a convenient distance of the popular fire pit. The utilitarian porte cochere is made even more appealing with a soaring gable and dormers. Bountiful windows on the home's dramatic water-facing side pull in south and east light for the main living areas.

“PORTE COCHERES ARE ONE OF MY FAVORITE DESIGN FEATURES, ESPECIALLY IN OUR NEW ENGLAND CLIMATE,” SAYS ARCHITECT PAUL WEBER.

Today, a long driveway (the owners purchased an adjacent property to enhance privacy) carries visitors to the front door. A sightline zooms from the threshold through to the home's opposite side, providing a gorgeous water view. Parking is staged unobtrusively on the back side of the wing where the porte cochere is bookended with garages. “Porte cocheres are one of my favorite design features, especially in our New England climate,” Weber says.

A turret (Weber labels it “a knuckle”) with an acorn top links the main house with the wing that holds the garage below and a guest suite, game room,

and handy bunk room above. The fully outfitted basement level reveals a generous-sized exercise room along with a media/game room equipped with an enviable walk-in wine cellar.

The main living areas take advantage of the vistas. The double-height foyer is matched by a lofty, window-lined receiving room. The latter spills into the principal gathering space that combines the kitchen, living, and dining areas. An airy hall zipping from a screen porch on the home's south end to the master suite at the opposite end aids circulation. “Weber has a wonderful sense of scale and proportion,” says Doug Shear, president of Newport Housewrights, the general contractor for the project.

Indeed, it's a seamless layout made better by a series of striking delineations. Bronze-rimmed mahogany columns on stone bases, for instance, frame the foyer and receiving room. The family room has a stone fireplace and a coffered ceiling, while the

Good Bones

RIGHT: The finely detailed bar bears the stamp of both the architect and designer Jennifer Garrigues, who chose the room's intense color and Moroccan-inspired light fixture. **FAR RIGHT:** The stair hall and foyer are bisected by the spine of the house. Engineered hardwood flooring with a rugged character plays off the meticulous woodwork. **FACING PAGE:** An unobtrusive branch of the drive swings around the house to the parking court and a pair of two-bay garages.



dining area sports an elliptical ceiling that speaks to a large curved window. Rather than one beefy kitchen island, there are two islands (one for prep, one for eating) to accommodate the cook as well as guests.

Throughout, there are also myriad attention-

getting materials (another Weber trademark) and details. Among them: reclaimed European stone floors in the foyer and receiving room, Australian cypress paneling in the library, and pewter kitchen counters. The upper kitchen cabinets—crafted by

Jutras Woodworking, which also executed the home's millwork—sport intersecting Gothic arch muntins, while the generous porches incorporate vertical-grain fir ceilings.

“Architects and interior designers always collaborate,” Weber says, crediting interior designer Jennifer Garrigues and her project manager, Diana El-Daher, for the home's high degree of style and comfort. Among Garrigues's many contributions are a host of intriguing Moroccan references, like the Chinese-red bar off the kitchen and a turret room with a plethora of pillows, adding personality and interest.

The upstairs hall, which offers access to five guest bedrooms and baths, holds a balcony with views of the foyer and receiving room below. The openness invites natural light and modernizes the home.

So does the soaring gable with arched trusses on the house's water-facing side. The gable, sheltering a sitting area below, reaches out to embrace the heavenly grounds devised by landscape architect



Dan Solien of Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects. There, among the sea roses and grasses, a fire pit stands at the ready to extend the family's precious summer days into starlit nights. ■■■

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 196.