

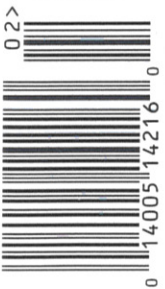
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déjà view

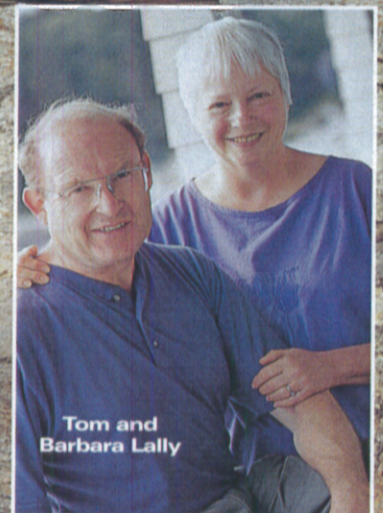
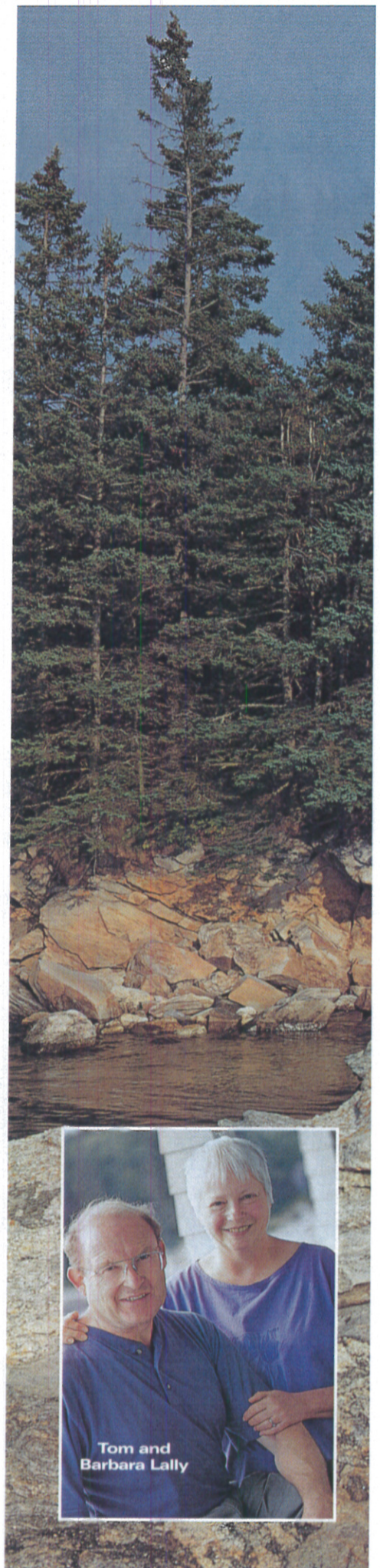
For a New England couple renovating their Craftsman-style cottage to open it to the sea, sun, and sky, discovering the bold attitude of its first owners put wind in their sails.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY SUSAN STILES DOWELL

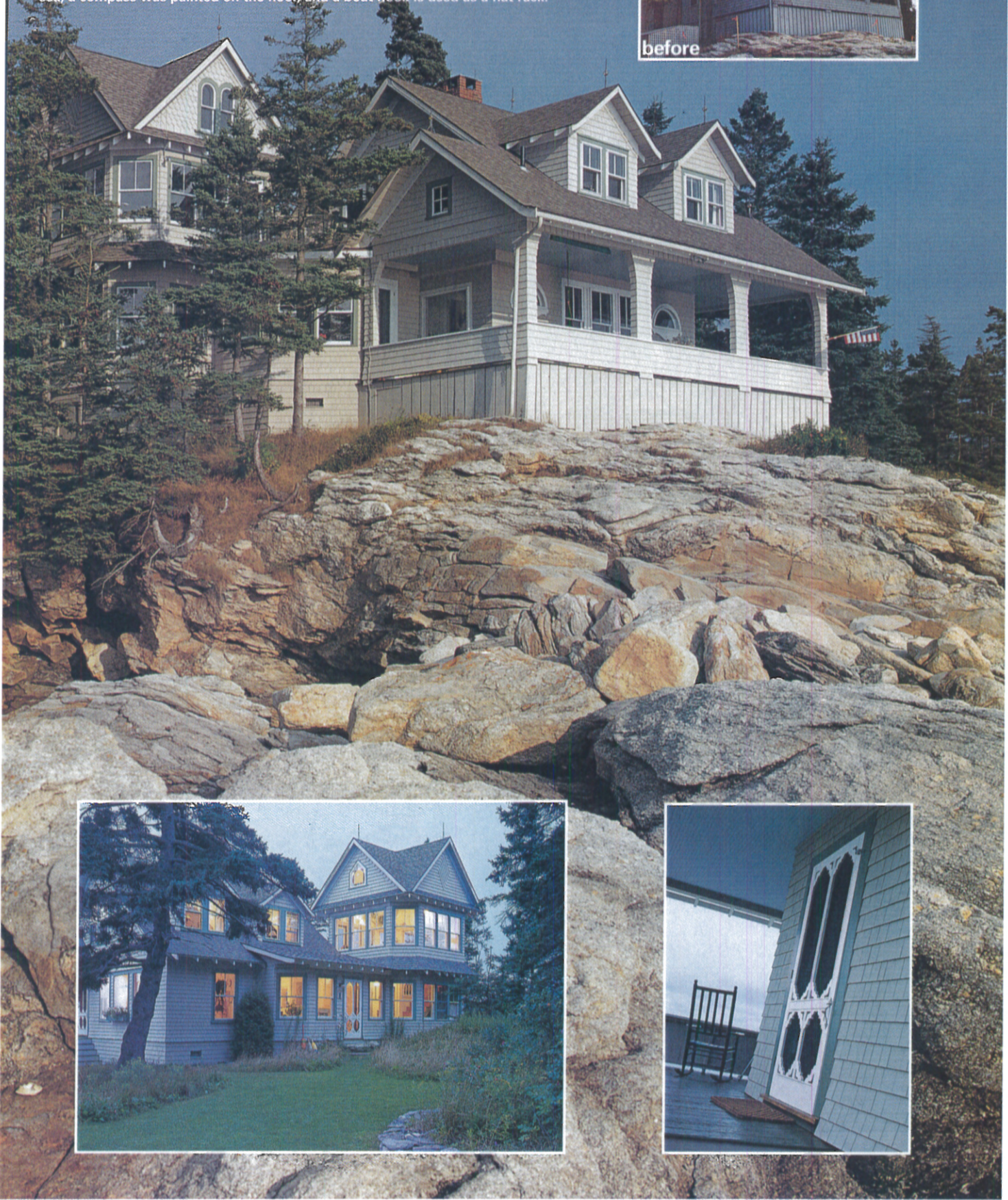
At a cottage perched bravely on a rocky promontory in coastal Maine, romantic history has repeated itself. In 1991, Tom and Barbara Lally bought the Craftsman-style house, built in 1910 by Massachusetts industrialist Joshua Loring Brooks and wife Margaret

Brooks. Although a half-century separates their respective ownership, the couples' passion for Brookmont-by-the-Sea connects them across the decades.

"The Brookses got lost driving a carriage and team of horses on some mid-coastal back roads in 1903 and stayed overnight in a fisherman's cottage," relates Tom, who found the charming story in a library book. "They went to a lot of trouble relocating where they had been, which the book describes as 'a dream world of moss-covered spruces and dashing surf.' When they found it, they hired a local lobsterman who moonlighted as a carpenter to build this simple hideaway above the tide."



This Maine cottage sits only 30 feet from the high-water mark, so the highest tides can reach its porch skirt. The new tower (at left) gives the house a grander profile, while a new foundation and steel cables under the porch reinforce its hold on the ledge. **OPENING PAGE:** Three generations enjoy this retreat, including the homeowners' daughter Jeanne Lally and Jeanne's daughter Eliza Mason, 8. **OPPOSITE:** The east wall of the house was bumped out to create a foyer that links the new tower and kitchen to the old structure. In a salute to the sea, a compass was painted on the floor, and a boat hook is used as a hat rack.







LEFT: To enhance the natural light, the Lallys chose to paint the living-room walls a reflective white and leave the maple floors uncovered. **ABOVE:** Apple green stairs inject a blast of color into the otherwise-simple space. The white half-moon treads are both artful and practical, making the steps easier to see at night. A stained-glass window, which can be opened for air circulation and more light, was installed in the outmoded doorway at the base of the stairs.

BELOW: The original beach-cobble fireplace survives intact, but its chimney was rebuilt to accommodate a flue for the new furnace, the first one the house has ever had. The cement mantelpiece holds treasures tossed up by the tide. Barbara Lally painted the copy of Winslow Homer's *Noreaster* that hangs above the fireplace.



Angled counters and scaled-down furnishings make



For Barbara, a shipshape built-in daybed in the kitchen is a perfectly sensible way to enjoy the yellow-warmed north room and the nautical view out the windows. The Lallys found a narrow door, which fits perfectly next to the bed. Under the retractable breakfast bar overlooking the view is a pair of side chairs that came from the old Eureka Hotel in Eureka, Oregon.

Tom and Barbara can well understand what had so captivated Joshua and Margaret. While staying at a local inn in 1979, they had their own romance with the ocean locale. "It was a dark night with lots of stars and the high tide flashing whitecaps from a storm at sea," Tom remembers. Years later, they, too, were drawn to return. In 1990, the couple was searching for a cottage in Maine. "I heard there was a place for sale here," Tom says, "and it was like a magnet."

The Lallys, who live in New Hampshire, had planned to use the house only as a summer place. But as they and

their three grown daughters spent time here, the house's exposure to the elements grew on them. The wind off the water was so brisk that fog never lingered; stored linen stayed dry and sweet-smelling from one season to the next. Full-moon tides lapped the porch skirt. The western light reflected sharp and bright off the ocean, and the big, red sunsets bloomed over the water.

"We got so attached to this place," Barbara says. "We wanted to be here more often and escape to it on a whim—especially in colder weather, when everything washes clean and there's a tremendous feeling of peace."

the most of the new kitchen's tight quarters.



Washing the dishes is a pleasure in a Victorian-era slate sink overlooking a breathtaking view of the Maine coast. RIGHT: Part of the original kitchen, the pantry is brightened by frosted-glass panels. Barbara paid just \$30 for the Douglas fir cupboard on the wall.

They decided to transform the summer place into a year-round retreat, winterizing it and renovating to enlarge and open the interiors to the dazzling sunshine, the panoramic ocean views, and the sight of the surf breaking on the ledges.

They hired contractor Steve Malcom of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, to brainstorm and execute the renovation. "Steve had already replaced the shingles on the leaking roof, shored up the sagging beams under the porch, and framed out interior dormers in the rafters for the upstairs bedroom windows," says Tom.

"He was sensitive to our wish to retain the Craftsman feel of the house, and he extended the period tongue-and-groove paneling from downstairs to upstairs after insulating the bedroom walls."

A local mason rebuilt the only chimney (where an osprey had taken up residence) down to the living-room mantel to install a safer flue for the fireplace and a new one for a furnace—the first the house had ever had. A cellar for



Beadboard paneling with a bird's-eye maple surround holds the whirlpool tub in the new tower bathroom. Windows for a view to the cove below were more important than storage. Shelving just below the ceiling was specially made to display colored glassware found at flea markets. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Instead of an over-sink medicine cabinet, Kate Lally's tile mural of plants and fish conveys the room's underwater mood. A glass shower keeps the room open and bright.



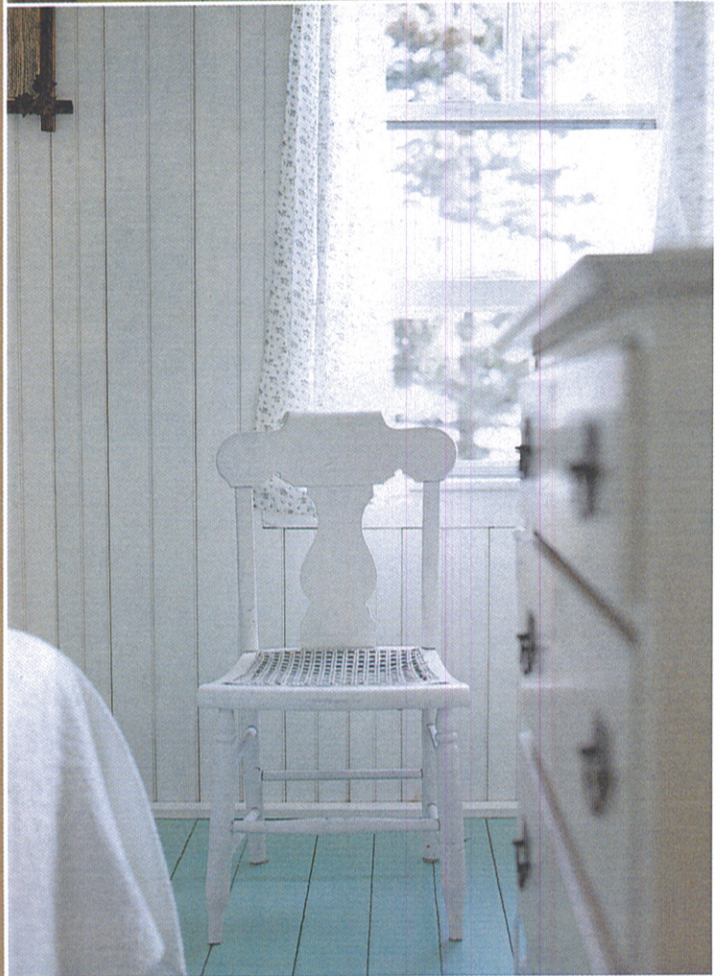


it was made from a 4-foot crawl space under the house. A radiant heating system was installed in the floor for maximum warmth; the system saves space and enhances the period feel of the house. "Steve's team jacked up the house an inch to scrape out dirt down to the ledge," says Tom. "Then they anchored the house to a cement foundation on rock." He laughs about trying to dig out some ancient tree stumps: "They were as hard as rock, spruces cut down when the house was built like a crate on the cleared point. We finally used a backhoe to pull them out."

With the house ready for winter weather, Malcom sat down with Tom and Barbara to conceptualize enlarging it and opening it to the scenery. "We were limited in our options because the house is so close to the water," Malcom says. "By Maine law, a house within seventy-five feet of the mean high-water mark is allowed enlargement only up to thirty percent of its existing square footage and volume." The Lallys' house was just 30 feet from the high-water mark. They could add roughly 600 square feet, but that didn't constrain their plans. Says Barbara, "We weren't interested in unlimited space, just adequately functioning spaces and getting the wonderful views and light into the rooms."

They decided to add onto the house's footprint on the north and west and to expand upwards into a two-story tower. The additions are in blocks—an octagonal tower, a rectangular foyer, and a fan-shaped kitchen that extends off the old house. Local designer Fred Hahn drew the plans, calculating dimensions that dovetailed so tightly there weren't even inches to spare.



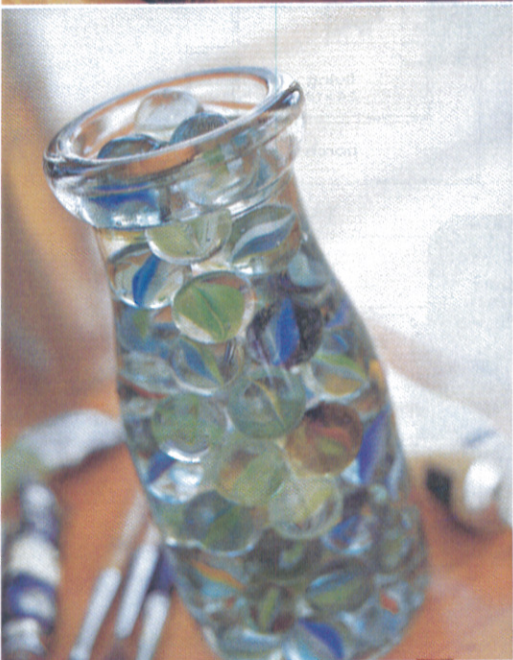




color influences



"Color just thrives in this constant light," says Barbara Lally, "and we'd seen a Victorian house up the coast with brilliantly painted floors that lit up its plain interiors." The whimsical idea was the perfect remedy for the "battleship brown" upstairs floorboards. Choosing hues was a bit of a challenge because Barbara likes the whole spectrum in her painting and quilting projects. Daughter Kate, an artist, narrowed choices by sharing some offbeat gum wrappers in hues of raspberry, lemon, orange, and mint. "Those tones worked so well together that we figured we'd use them—even on the stair risers," says Barbara. In high-gloss enamel, they reflect softly off the warm white bedroom walls. A staircase in apple green with white half-moon treads looks like sculpture next to the open living room.

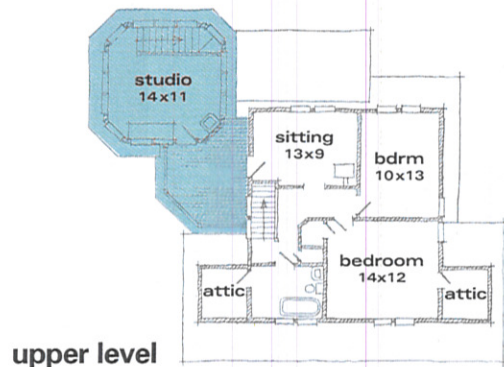
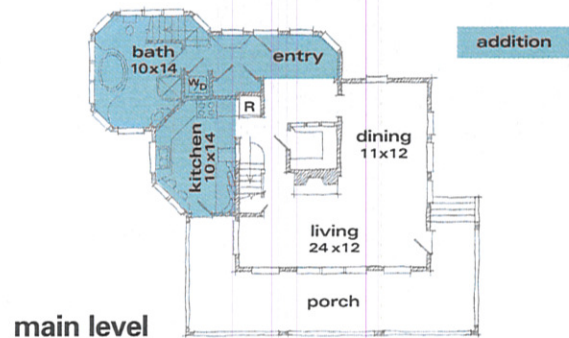




OPPOSITE: The idea to use vibrant colors started upstairs, where the old floorboards were dingy fir. In the bright sunlight, floors painted raspberry, lemon, mint, and orange reflect as pastels on the warm white walls. **ABOVE:** Fifteen windows permit a 360-degree view in the new tower, a perfect location for Barbara's painting studio. She stores her art supplies in the roomy window seat.

Moving the kitchen out of the house's dark northeast corner was a top priority. Malcom pointed out the northwest wall "with a view plunging to a pretty cove where flocks of eider ducks raft up," as he describes it. They all agreed to bump out the wall for a new kitchen and add windows for the view. Sensibly, they left the opposite end, the old kitchen's dark side, as a pantry at the core of the house. Not having much room, they conceptualized the bumped-out space as a boat interior and asymmetrically angled in countertops, a slate sink, a breakfast bar, and a desk.

Barbara relegated the refrigerator to the hall to make room for a daybed opposite the view. She had to talk a few unbelievers into the unconventional built-in with pull-out drawers, but it's now a favorite spot: "It's where family and friends sit and watch us cook," she reports. "And all of us take turns relaxing and watching the tide come and go." Because Barbara liked the light-reflective quality of the blond maple floors throughout the main



floor, bird's-eye maple became the accent of choice in the kitchen. Malcom subsequently used it as detailing throughout the house's old and new sections to help tie together the architecture.

The two-story tower wraps around the house from the northeast to the northwest corner. "We wanted to make an eighteen-foot-diameter tower for a bedroom-aerie," says Tom, "but the building restrictions put us three feet short of fitting a double bed." Instead, the upper floor of the tower serves as an observatory and studio where Barbara paints. Inspired by a Victorian five-window bay, Tom suggested extending windows around the turret. The ceiling was raised high with steel reinforcing rods, connected to a lightning-rod system buried in the earth below. He calls the space "The Church" for its peaked roof.

One floor below, a spa bathroom features a new shower, sink, and whirlpool tub and an early-20th-century toilet, which Tom chose in part because its upright size suits the room's scale.

Bright colors liberally painted on the walls, floors, and doors knit together the old and new parts of the house. Barbara loves color, and she knew it was a must in the sun-washed cottage: When she first saw the house, she was so dazed by light reflecting off the water that she had to sit under a tree to recover. "Traditional allover white in a seashore house can look sterile," she says.

The interior painting was completed in 1997, signaling the end of renovations—and the beginning of a push to spend every spare moment by the sea. Now that Tom has retired from his work as a radiologist, not even bad weather can keep him and Barbara away. And now they have another incentive to spend time at Brookmont-by-the-Sea: Tom rigged floodlights below the porch so they can "see the waves shatter to atoms on the rocks," he says.

Summer brings back their three daughters, who unanimously vote it their favorite place in the world. "There's nothing like falling asleep to the sound of the waves outside your window," says the eldest, Jeanne Lally, who was recently married on the rocks out front. "It's only a short time I can spend," says Kate Lally, the youngest, "but my fondest memories are of here."

Tom and Barbara's renovation and addition hold to the Brookmont ideals of simple summer beauty and a daring position above the sea. And the couple is continuing the tradition of love begun by the first owners of the captivating cottage. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO THE BUYING GUIDE ON PAGE 122.



architectural influences

"We looked for architectural elements to push the feel of the old house into the additions," says Tom Lally about pieces garnered from as far away as Washington State. Among the salvaged elements: a Gothic window panel that determined the dimensions of a bump-out wall in the kitchen; a slate kitchen sink; a narrow door that enabled Barbara Lally to fit a daybed in the kitchen; door hardware; the stairway newel post; and frosted-glass panels to let more light into the dark pantry.

The Lallys found these accent pieces early in the process, so it was easy to incorporate them into the construction drawings. "They were perfect for marrying the old architecture to the new," Tom says. "What we all wanted was for the additions to meld so well you couldn't tell where the old stopped and the new started."

