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SUMMER'S MOST stylish getaways

Summer, Unplugged

ONE COUPLE'S
OFF-GRID,
FULL-OF-LIFE ESCAPE

A RESORT REDONE
IN SOUTHWEST
HARBOR

ELEVATED
GUESTHOUSES IN
CASCO BAY

& A MODERNIST
RETREAT NEAR
ACADIA

A 1902 Cottage

FOR A MODERN
FAMILY ON
TOWNSEND GUT

Plus!
THE
ARCHITECTURE
OF UNWINDING



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ELAINE MURDOCH
CMKBD, CAPS

It was a particular pleasure to work on this project—a well-loved cottage that's had multiple additions over the years—with our creative clients and my talented coworker, architectural designer Randy Smith (**"THE FAMILY CAMP," page 48**). He and I played off one another on this, especially when our exterior ideas came together to define what could be done on the interior. Expanding an existing addition and changing the angle of the roofline seamlessly unified the new section of the wraparound porch with the rest of the exterior.



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TIM HARRINGTON
principal

Our complete renovation of The Claremont Hotel in Southwest Harbor incorporated vibrant patterns and maximalist interior design that I'm thrilled to share with Decor Maine readers (**"BEYOND JUST CABINS & CAMPS: VACATIONLAND GOES GLAM," page 62**). There is no better way to experience the design, lively atmosphere, and stunning water view than to book a stay at The Claremont.



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RANDY SMITH
architectural designer

At our initial design kickoff meeting, I learned that family is the most important part of these clients' lives (**"THE FAMILY CAMP," page 48**). Chris and Jim have four daughters and six grandchildren. During the summer, their home in Southport serves as a place of gathering. They purchased the home in 2013 and have been slowly renovating it ever since. Family time, especially meals, was the core driver for proposed improvements. Chris and Jim made me feel like family for the duration of our collaboration, and our friendship continues to this day.



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WILLIAM HANLEY
principal

One of the most rewarding aspects of restoring this 1962 Cooper Milliken masterpiece was the resulting continuation into the next generation of the Starr family (**"BEYOND JUST CABINS & CAMPS: VACATIONLAND GOES GLAM," page 62**). Integrating the old with the new, without erasing the past, was a welcome challenge and satisfying journey that we are delighted to share in these pages.



Summers are spent on the porch, watching grandkids and dogs running wild between water and woods. **OPPOSITE:** The house sits on a peninsula, "with a deepwater dock and protected moorings for our little fleet," says Chris.

The
**FAMILY
CAMP**

A couple's 1902 waterfront cottage is the setting for old-fashioned summer days with a rotating guest list of six grandkids and (sometimes) seven dogs

BY **ANNIE QUIGLEY**
PHOTOGRAPHS **ERIN LITTLE** ARCHITECT & BUILDER **KNICKERBOCKER**
LANDSCAPE **NORTON STONEWORKS**





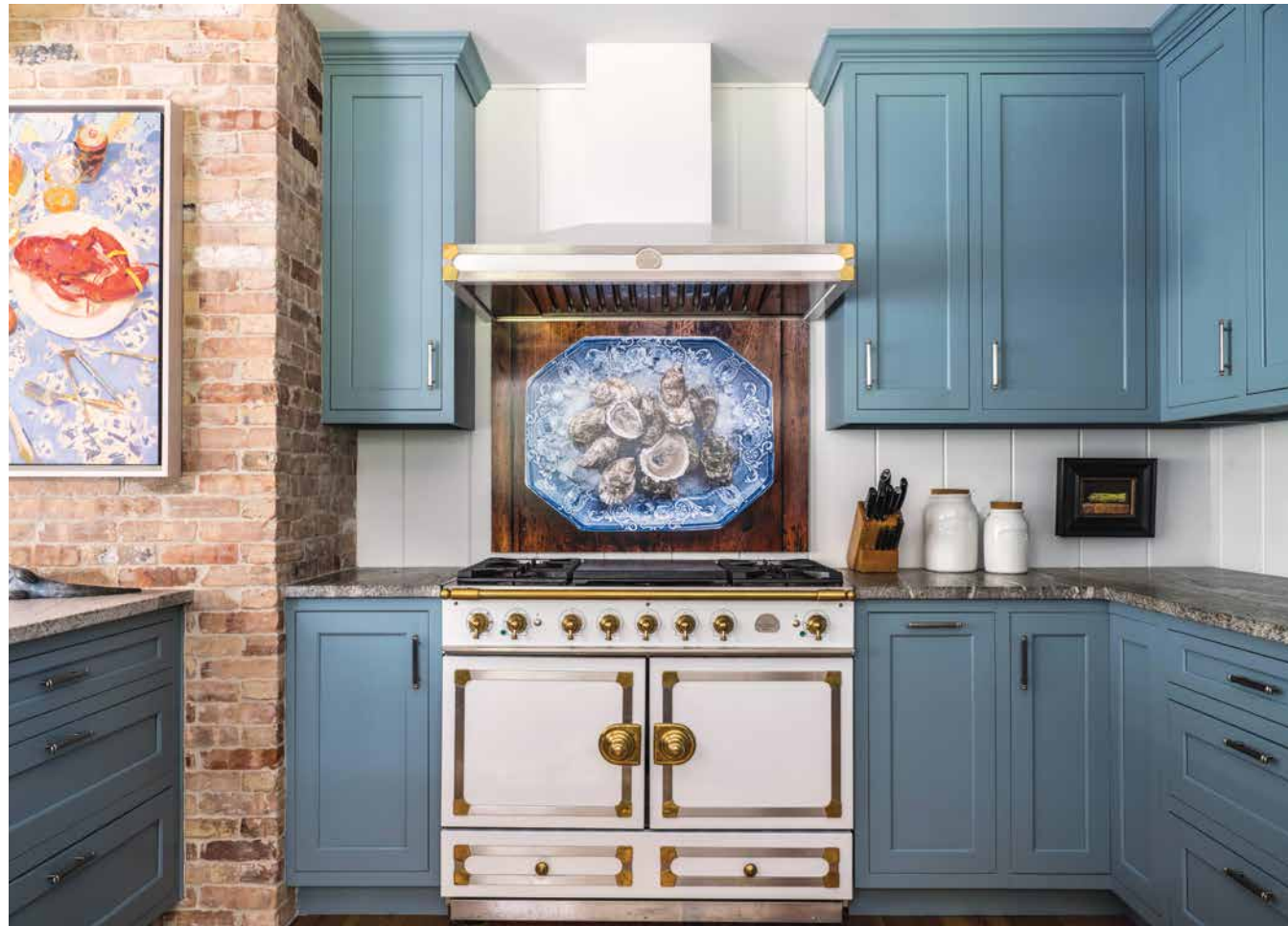
The dining room table is from Architectural Salvage in Portland, the chairs from Windsor Chairmakers. "They finished them so that they look worn and weathered," Chris says. **OPPOSITE:** Everyone makes use of the dock.



IT WAS BY BOAT THAT Jim and Chris Newton first found their summer house—though they didn't realize it at first.

It was 2012, and the Cape Elizabeth-based couple was at a family wedding, when Jim struck up a conversation with a friend about sailing the coast of Maine. The friend, Peter Holland, recalling his own childhood summers in Boothbay Harbor, mentioned that his dad still lived in the family home on Townsend Gut, a thoroughfare that connects the harbor to the Sheepscot River. It was when Peter started to describe the house—a peaked-roof cottage with a classic front porch, surrounded on three sides by water—that Jim realized he knew it well. "Sailing frequently to Boothbay, we'd pass back and forth though Townsend Gut and always remarked that the house was one of our favorites on the coast," the couple recalls. Before the wedding ended, Jim asked Peter to call him if the family ever decided to sell. A year later, they did.

"The house was built in 1902, and Peter's dad purchased it in 1940," Chris explains. "To the best of our knowledge, we are only the third owners." Upon inspection, they found the cottage was in good shape for a structure of its age. "Peter's dad was quite handy and kept it in good condition. That said, he lived alone in the house for a number of years, and it had not been updated in some time."



It was dated and in need of a refresh: “A lot of unpainted knotty pine throughout.”

The couple set about painting every room themselves and enlisted Knickerbocker Group to revamp the kitchen, add a pantry and laundry, and generally make the cottage practical for modern life.

At the same time, though they were updating it inside and out, the couple was also turning back the clock in some ways, creating an idyllic, old-fashioned spot for screen-free summer fun.

The Newtons have four grown daughters and six grandchildren; during the first summer of COVID, with summer camps shut down, their house became a stand-in sleepaway camp for the eldest kids while their parents worked. When the second summer rolled around and camps reopened, “two of the kids decided they’d rather go to Nanny and Grampy Camp,” the couple says. “So from mid-June to September, the house is packed with kids and dogs. There is always at least one dog, usually three, and at times as many as seven.”

It’s the ideal place for such a brood: There’s a deep-water dock, a newly expanded wrap-around porch by

Knickerbocker, plenty of beds, and lots of books within easy reach in the living room. “The house in the summer is nothing but chaos and laughter,” Chris says.

Days revolve around the water, “swimming, paddle-boarding, and boating,” the couple says, and puttering around in their two wooden boats: a 1969 Vinal Beal-built lobster boat and a Herreshoff-designed daysailer, built by Rockport-based Artisan Boatworks. “Our oldest granddaughter, Lucy, has her youth lobster license and hauls her traps from our small skiff while her sister Maddie rows. Grandson Nicholas goes on hikes at the Boothbay Region Land Trust preserves with Grampy. Evening brings a sitdown dinner and a gathering around the fire pit. When the weather refuses to cooperate: LEGOs, games, trips to Sherman’s Bookstore. Electronic entertainment is not banned, but we try to provide compelling and accessible alternatives.”

Inside, most everything about the house is laidback, hard-wearing, and kid-friendly. In the kitchen, what looks like a painting of a plate of oysters behind the La Cornue range is actually one of Jim’s photographs printed on aluminum: “It will stand up to the heat and grease

THE FAMILY CAMP

Inside, most everything about the house is
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 hard-wearing,
 and
 kid friendly.**

The couple painted a nautical-inspired “runner” on the stairs. **OPPOSITE:** “We wanted to get away from white cabinets and opted for Benjamin Moore’s ‘Province Blue,’” says Chris. The La Cornue range is her “dream stove.”





LEFT: Summer life is unfussy at the cottage. **RIGHT:** On sunny days, the couple's grandkids take the old skiff out. **BELOW, MIDDLE LEFT:** "The kids spend much of the day swimming off the dock and jumping from the top of the lobster boat," the couple says.



TOP, LEFT: The cheeky sign on the dock came with the house. "Jim keeps waiting for the 'fancy women' to sign in," Chris jokes. **TOP, RIGHT:** Bunk room floors are done over in gray floor paint. **MIDDLE, LEFT:** The couple commissioned the still life from Colin Page: "The small blue vase in the painting is from Chris's grandmother's cabin in western Maine." **MIDDLE, RIGHT:** Kids are encouraged to spend days out of doors. **LEFT:** The garden wall is by Norton Stoneworks. **(OPPOSITE) BOTTOM LEFT:** Cool-off dips are never far away. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A bedroom has hints of nautical red.



THE FAMILY CAMP

“The house in the summer is nothing
but **chaos** and **laughter,**”
Chris says.

The couple's
granddaughters haul traps.





"A friend suggested we leave the attic ceiling natural," Chris says. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** "The well-worn floors reflect years of family members loving this house," the couple says. "It just made sense not to have a formal look."



from cooking, and when we feel a need for a change, it's easily swapped out," Jim says. The attic has been finished into a nursery of sorts, complete with a crib for the littlest of guests. The couple used a few gallons of paint to update the interiors, painting over (almost) all of the knotty pine. Some of the paint choices feel unexpected: a striped blue and red "runner" on the stairs, painted eaves that leave the wood-paneled ceilings exposed for a nautical look. "Most rooms were last-minute weekend projects," the couple says. "Go to the paint store, bicker about colors, paint until we drop, get up the next morning, agree we don't like it, and back to the paint store." In true summer cottage style, there are five bedrooms and two bathrooms to be shared. "It can get a bit crazy in the morning," the couple says.

It's a testament to the subtlety of the restoration that the house has been so thoroughly updated for wonderfully filled summer days (and quiet, escapist winter weekends) yet still, from out on the water, seems virtually unchanged. "It's still the house we fell in love with 20 years ago," the couple says, ready for many more summers. ■

RIGHT: Among the seaworthy details throughout: carved whales by Wendy Lichtensteiger (shown) and by Mike Hanks and lighting found at architectural salvage shops.

