

COASTAL LIVING

A Sea Change

TOM DESIGN STUDIO
INFUSES A CONNECTICUT
HOME WITH ELEGANT
COASTAL STYLE.

Part of a past renovation,
the cedar shake exterior and
robin's-egg blue accents
lend a cosy cottage vibe.
Lantern sconce, Bevolo.

Produced by Stacy Beggs



Design TOM DESIGN STUDIO

Photography PATRICK BILLER

Text LISA VAN DE GEYN

SUMMERTIME REIGNS SUPREME in Branford, a quaint shoreline town in Connecticut. While charming shops and restaurants seem to be around every corner, it's the stately manors dotting the water's edge, and the laid-back cottages and New England houses that give this place its cool, coastal vibe. On sunny days, Kevin and Rebecca Aniskovich hike greenway trails and stroll the waterfront. Later on, back at their 127-year-old home, the firepit draws good friends and great conversation.

"We immediately saw its potential when we bought the place years ago — it had good bones," says Kevin. "We love the peninsula; our house is on the corner of the one road that winds through it and ends at the shore," adds Rebecca. Still, there were obvious challenges to overcome: the floor plan of the 2,500-square-foot, three-bedroom house lacked function and flow, and the design was due for an upgrade. "We had pieces of art and furniture we loved, but our home didn't feel unified and welcoming," says Rebecca. "We wanted something more intentional and cohesive."

Drawn to TOM Design Studio's relaxed yet elevated aesthetic the couple had seen in magazines and other Connecticut projects, they enlisted designers Tommy Smythe and Lindsay Mens in 2021 to lead the renovation. "Seeing how the designers could successfully marry that New England beachy feel with

Muted tones and blond wood give the family room a relaxed, beachy vibe. **Lantern, armchairs, bench,** The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **mirror,** Avery & Dash Collections; **mantelpiece,** The Door Store.



Homeowners Kevin and Rebecca Aniskovich.



"We wanted to create a moment of arrival in the foyer," says designer Tommy Smythe. **Wallpaper** by Quercus & Co., Memo Showroom; **pendant, dresser, mirror**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **tile**, Cercan Tile.



TOP LEFT: An unused living room was transformed into a cosy library-cocktail lounge. **Table lamp**, Fairfield County Antique & Design Center; **cabinet**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **chaise**, Lee Industries; **hardwood flooring**, Coswick Canada; **large artwork** by Marco Gallotta.

BOTTOM LEFT: "The range is one of the first things we bought when we moved in," says Rebecca. "We fell in love with the look and knew we'd build the rest of the kitchen around it." **Faucet**, Herbeau; **range**, La Cornue; **runners**, J&D Oriental Rugs Co.

"SEEING HOW THE DESIGNERS COULD
SUCCESSFULLY MARRY THAT
NEW ENGLAND BEACHY FEEL WITH LOW-
COUNTRY CHARM WAS A DRAW"

— Rebecca Aniskovich, homeowner



"The family room is where we spend the most time; it's the perfect place to entertain friends or just relax after work," says Kevin. The walls are covered in photos from their travels. **Armchair, coffee table**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery.





The casual dining room has two banks of windows that show off garden and ocean views. **Ceiling fixture**, The Urban Electric Co.; **dining chairs**, Polecek; **dining table**, Divine French Finds.

"There's something so regional about the palette in the library," says Tommy. "At certain times of the year, the sky turns the same shade as the sofa. There's also gold, amber and the colours of the ocean." **Drapery fabric**, Kravet Canada; **sconce**, armchair, Serena & Lily; **sofa**, Lee Industries.



OPPOSITE, TOP CENTRE AND TOP RIGHT: New window coverings, hardware, mirrors and lights were added to bring warmth to the principal bathroom. **Sconces**, Visual Comfort; **mirrors**, Lulu and Georgia; **faucets**, Waterworks.

OPPOSITE, CENTRE RIGHT: Board-and-batten walls are a coastal-country touch in the family room. **Sconce**, Visual Comfort; **mirror, console**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT: Bold and masculine, the home office is painted deep blue, reminiscent of the ocean. Oak louvres in the cabinets look like shutters, a nod to classic New England architecture. **Ceiling fixture**, Visual Comfort; **roman blind fabric** by Lisa Fine Textiles, Memo Showroom.

low-country charm was a draw," says Rebecca. "They also had an immediate vision of how we could rework our space to better fit our lifestyle."

Tommy and Lindsay, along with associate designer Haley Dermenjian, knew this project would be an exercise in space planning. "When we walked in to the house, it felt discombobulated," says Lindsay. "The layout had lots of unusable space, and it didn't flow." Adds Tommy: "Once we knew how the floor plan would work, the rest fell into place."

The design team focused on executing a more sophisticated New England seaside style, with their knowledge of and affection for the region as a guide. In the family room, they added warmth and personality with board-and-batten walls and brought in a handsome salvaged mantelpiece. "We liked that the mantel was a light, unpainted wood that felt coastal," says Lindsay, "and we loved that it was a found antique from The Door Store, one of our favourite dealers in Toronto." The library was papered in textural grasscloth and the vaulted principal bedroom ceiling was exposed and clad in painted panelling. "These are the charming elements you'd expect to find in a character home," says Lindsay. A wall of new windows was also installed along the back of the house. "Now we can see Long Island Sound from almost every room," says Kevin.

Captivating touches are found high and low: there's tumbled marble in the foyer, a Victorian bamboo coffee table, white oak floors, bobbin chairs, hues of pink and butter, an antique painted corner cabinet, as well as Tommy's signature English lantern in the family room and Lindsay's requisite chaise in the library-cocktail lounge. "Weathered wood, painted surfaces and brass accents help create that coastal feel," says Lindsay.

Now, every nook and cranny feels matched to Branford's casual yet sophisticated vibe — no small feat for a six-month-long reno. "When we toured the finished spaces, the blend of old and new and how our own pieces were used brought tears to our eyes," says Rebecca. "The final look and feel far exceeded our expectations." **H&H**



Designers
Haley Dermenjian,
Tommy Smythe and
Lindsay Mens (seated).



**"ONCE WE KNEW HOW THE FLOOR PLAN
WOULD WORK, THE REST FELL INTO PLACE"**

- Tommy Smythe, designer

"Exposing the vaulted ceiling in the principal bedroom opened up the space and changed the mood completely," says designer Lindsay Mens. **Bed frame**, Serena & Lily; **nightstand**, Ballard Designs; **artworks**, Avery & Dash Collections.



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