

Clem Labine's Period Homes

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New Shingle Style

Austin Patterson Disston Architects creates a timeless design on a rocky ridge in Rye.

BY MARY GRAUERHOLZ

ABOVE: The site is a stunning one directly overlooking a rocky Long Island Sound inlet. High ground posed an ideal location for this new 6,100 square-foot house. Designed in the shore Colonial Shingle Style, the house features many classic shingle details: curved roofs, rope frieze on the front windows, porches, and windows seats, all designed with the intent of encouraging a relaxed informal lifestyle. Photos by Jeff McNamara

RIGHT: Upon entering the house, a series of columns draws the visitor to the water view and porch. At the same time the columns clearly define and divide the living room and dining room without creating separate enclosed rooms. Oval steel mesh elements with roped design add design interest.





Native Connecticut stone in irregular rectangular cuts form the base of the screened-in porch, one of the favorite spots for the homeowners to relax and enjoy water views. Large circular portal windows add light and design interest to the space. "I always recommend a screened-in porch, very popular in the 60s, for its comfort and insect-free practicality," notes architect Patterson.



If houses could talk, some would be boisterous and others would barely utter a whisper. A new Shingle style home on a rocky ridge in Rye, New York, resonates with a lilting language all its own. The architect, McKee Patterson, AIA, of Austin Patterson Disston Architects in Southport, Connecticut, achieved a delicate balance of subtlety and grand presence through finely wrought details that allow the homeowners' art—and the stunning waterfront setting—to shine.

Substantive yet graceful, the two-story home reveals the details slowly, over time. Patterson was

pleased to hear the homeowners, who entertain frequently and host book club gatherings, relate little things their guests have discovered about their new home. "They like the detailing, and enjoy hearing quiet conversations about it," Patterson says. This aligns perfectly with the philosophy of Austin Patterson Disston Architects, which has a second office in Quogue, Long Island, New York: "It's having the right sensibilities to work through forms and be true to them," Patterson says. "It's also playing with subtleties that people discover more and more as they are there."

Set back from the street and positioned about

six feet above the grade, the award-winning home greets visitors in gracious style, appearing smaller than it actually is. "On the street side, we're hiding the massing," Patterson says. Working with the builder, Paul Tallman of Tallman Building Company in Fairfield, Connecticut, Patterson and the project manager, Gabriella Albin, took care to save old-growth maple and oak trees, giving the home a longstanding air.

The classic Shingle style exterior is perfect for displaying small touches: a rope frieze on the front windows; portal windows with decorative lacy framework that bookend the house; and diamond-



With décor by New York's Capellini Design Associates, a coffered ceiling and tall board-and-batten paneling, the dining room allows the homeowner's collection of Audubon prints to shine.

pattern windows over the attic. Garlands of grapes stamped in zinc hang above a trio of window frames over the front door, a nuanced reference to the owners' appreciation of wine. In back, a spacious screened-in porch set above a fieldstone foundation complements the exterior beautifully, while also giving the homeowners a comfortable way to enjoy the fresh air and another view of Long Island Sound.

The bright spirit continues inside, starting at the entry, where Patterson designed a center hallway colonial setup, with a series of columns standing to each side. The elegant colonnade connects and separates the living room, on the right, and the din-

ing room, on the left, and leads the eye toward the water directly ahead. High on the walls, between the columns, are screened portal openings, another artful touch. An etched apothecary light, reflected in the shining dark oak floor, creates a bit of ornamentation.

"There's a fine line between something looking too ornamented and not ornamental enough," Patterson says. "It's tricky to know where to stop and where to go." Patterson and the homeowners agreed that the home should strike a balance, encouraging an easygoing pace without sacrificing beauty. As Patterson says, "It's hitting the right balance of trim

and décor, being welcoming and not stuffy."

The setting, a rocky ridge with spectacular views, had held a ramshackle house where the homeowners lived while they raised their children. The structure, which originally had served as a pool house for a large estate, had outlived its purpose. "It made no sense as a house," Patterson recalls. "It was all one story and was a piece of this, a piece of that, added together. None of it made sense."

The couple brought their dream to Patterson: a home that would be cozy enough for the two of them, but large enough to accommodate their children and grandchildren, who visit for several





1: The front foyer stair is indeed both elegant and complicated as it winds its way above the hall entrance to the guest quarters. "We didn't want to take space from the adjoining living room to create an entrance," notes project manager Gabriella Albini, "so the solution was run the stair above the arched door with many twists of the mahogany rail."

2: What better place to sit and take in Long Island Sound than from the open porch that spans the length of the rear of the house.

3: A soaking tub overlooks the water in this ample master bath with simple cabinetry, double sinks and classic gray marble countertops.

4: With water views from all the main rooms of the house, a nautical focus for the kitchen was in order. Mahogany beams and trim are reminiscent of the interior of a finely crafted yacht.





ABOVE: Applauding the site and its views, the rear of the house provides access to its porches and terraces on both the first and second floors. Two gambrel wings with large portal windows balance and add dimension to this class shore Colonial.

RIGHT: Heavy timber beams, a double-height ceiling and large portal window lend an informality to the family room which complements interior designer Jane Capellini's comfortable furnishings. Full height windows and transoms connect the room to its stunning setting.

weeks in the summer, spending long days swimming, sailing, and kayaking. They also wanted space to hang their art collection. Overall, a relaxed air was important to them, but so was elegance. "It was all about getting the right proportion of house to fit their program and fit on the lot, and not make the lot look small," Patterson says. The gambrel rooflines of the 6,100-square-foot home gave Patterson a way to "sneak in some attic space," which houses a children's playroom, as well as storage.

The family spends a lot of time in the kitchen, breakfast room, and family room, a perfect place for the homeowners to express their love of clas-

sic boatbuilding. Thin mahogany columns, paired with cream-colored cabinetry, recall the work of Nathaniel Herrshoff, the iconic yacht designer and innovator.

In the kitchen, counters beautifully interpret the mahogany-and-cream combination, especially set against the ribbing above the stovetop and the stained-oak floor. In the circular breakfast room, deep windows and the thin column forms add depth and show off the water view. Off the kitchen, hidden by beaded panel doors, is a boot room where visitors can leave their outerwear. The kitchen, boot room, and family room all lead to the terrace,

where a bracing water view awaits. All the rooms on the waterside—living room, family room, kitchen, breakfast room, and several bedrooms upstairs—offer views. After all, in this home, Patterson says, "it's all about the water."

It is about the water—mostly. The couple's fine art and antiques collection also has plenty of light and space to shine. The bright living room, with a high coffered ceiling and built-in shelving next to the fireplace, is a perfect setting for paintings and art objects, working with the balanced ornamentation to hit just the right note. As Patterson says, "The intent was to not overdo it, but to make it sing." ■

