

Colonial Homes



**Houses of
Old Monterey
California's First Capital**

Dockside Living on Martha's Vineyard

**Garden Plans from Colonial Williamsburg
• Linen: Cool, Crisp, Timeless • Connecticut's**



Photography by Jeff McNamara Produced by Doretta Sperduto By David Manner

Vineyard Haven

Residents of Martha's Vineyard know that summer brings visitors—a new addition to this waterside house accommodates both a growing family and weekend guests



On Martha's Vineyard the defining element of life is water. The splashes, gurgles, crashes, hisses, murmurs, and thuds of moving water play ceaselessly in the background. The smell and taste of salt air is ever-present. And the interaction of sunlight and water colors every part of the landscape.

Preserving these elemental impressions is essential for anyone designing homes on the island. So when New York City-based Orsini Design Associates accepted a commission to remodel and enlarge a harbor-side summer home in Edgartown, it was with the understanding that their mission was to enhance what was already there. The result shows the firm's skill in manipulating light, color, and views in a house that now closely relates to its surroundings. The addition and remodeling capitalize on the scenery, bringing

OPPOSITE: The rear façade of the house—with the new three-story wing projecting to the right—faces Edgartown harbor. In the summer, the private dock is used for mooring the owners' yacht. **ABOVE:** The television room's best architectural feature is a bay window that overlooks the harbor. Furnishings include a green cotton chenille love seat and chenille-covered ottomans. The print fabric on the chairs and pillows is "Coquillage" from Clarence House; the diamond-patterned sisal carpet is from Stark. **RIGHT:** In another corner of the room, the armoire conceals the only television in the house





magnificent water views to the rooms most frequently used.

Although the owners, a financier and his wife, bought the Victorian-style cottage 15 years ago, it wasn't until recently that they decided the house just wasn't large enough. The number of their houseguests was on the increase and their three children were getting older and beginning families. The couple needed more places where guests could entertain themselves, or simply find quiet time apart from other visitors. It was clear that the 50-year-old house was going to need a substantial addition, as well as a thorough updating.

The couple had no doubt whom they could trust to work magic on their seaside cottage: They had enjoyed a 12-year relationship with Orsini Design. During that time, principal designer Susan Orsini had worked closely with the family and her knowledge of their likes and dislikes was almost intuitive.

Construction of the addition began at the end of the summer in 1993 and completion was scheduled for early summer 1994. The 4,500-square-foot, three-story addition almost doubled the size of the house and included a new dining room, a guest bedroom, and a study. The former dining room was converted to a billiards room. Orsini associates designed the plans for the addition and created new interiors throughout the house.

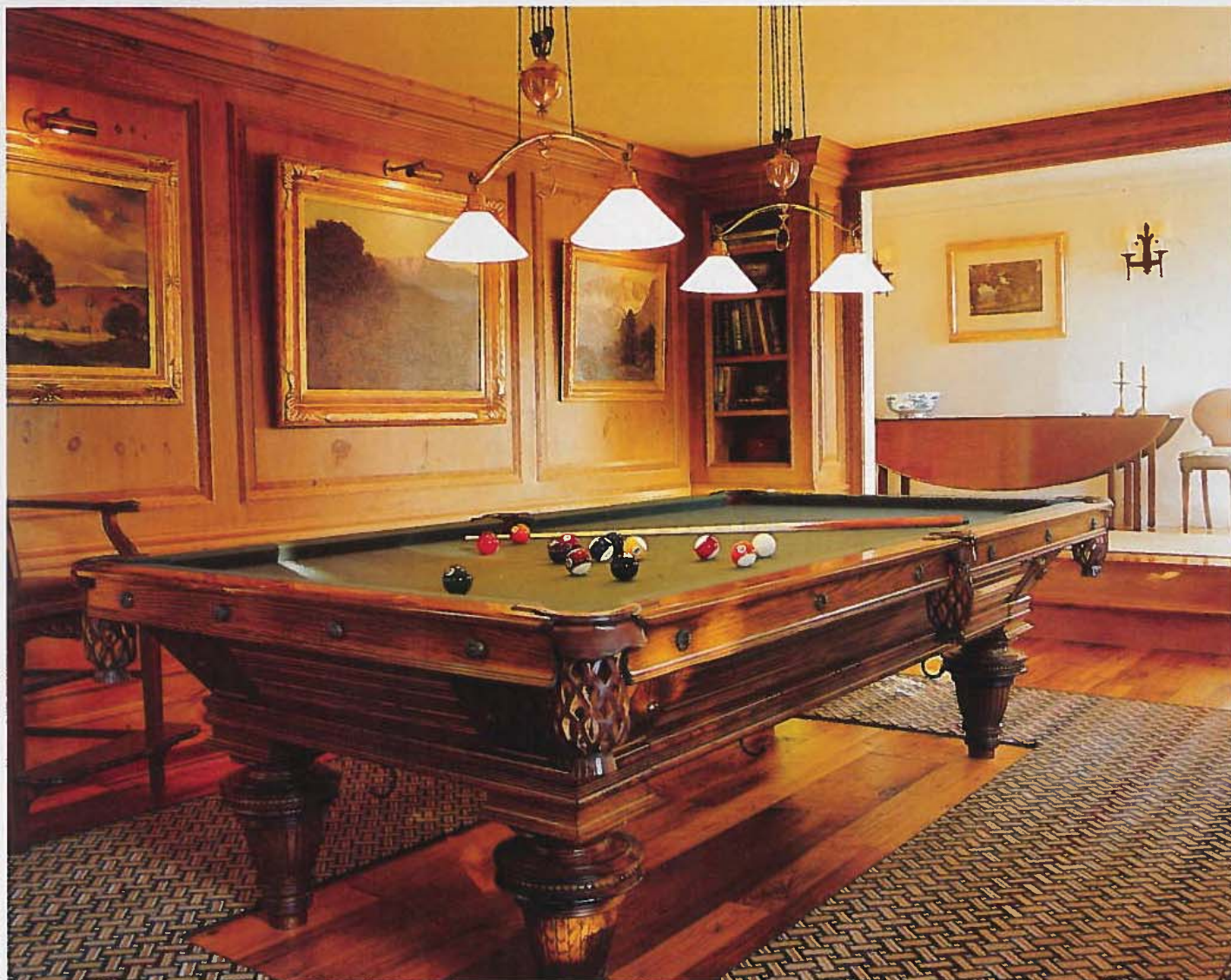
While the addition was going up, the designers were renovating the rest of the house. Changes included a new kitchen, new

wall treatments and moldings for several of the rooms, and an exercise room in the basement. One heavily rethought area was what is now the billiards room. The space, formerly the dining room, was expanded, and a new floor installed. Gypsum-board walls were replaced with pine paneling and bookcases. The room is now a favorite haunt of houseguests, who spend hours practicing shots on the vintage table.

Another important area is the new dining room. "The design was very important to the husband," says Susan "because he likes to sit around the table for hours at a time without feeling like he has to get up and move to another room." Accordingly, the level of comfort in the furnishings was a prime factor. Wicker dining chairs with down seat cushions invite guests to linger.

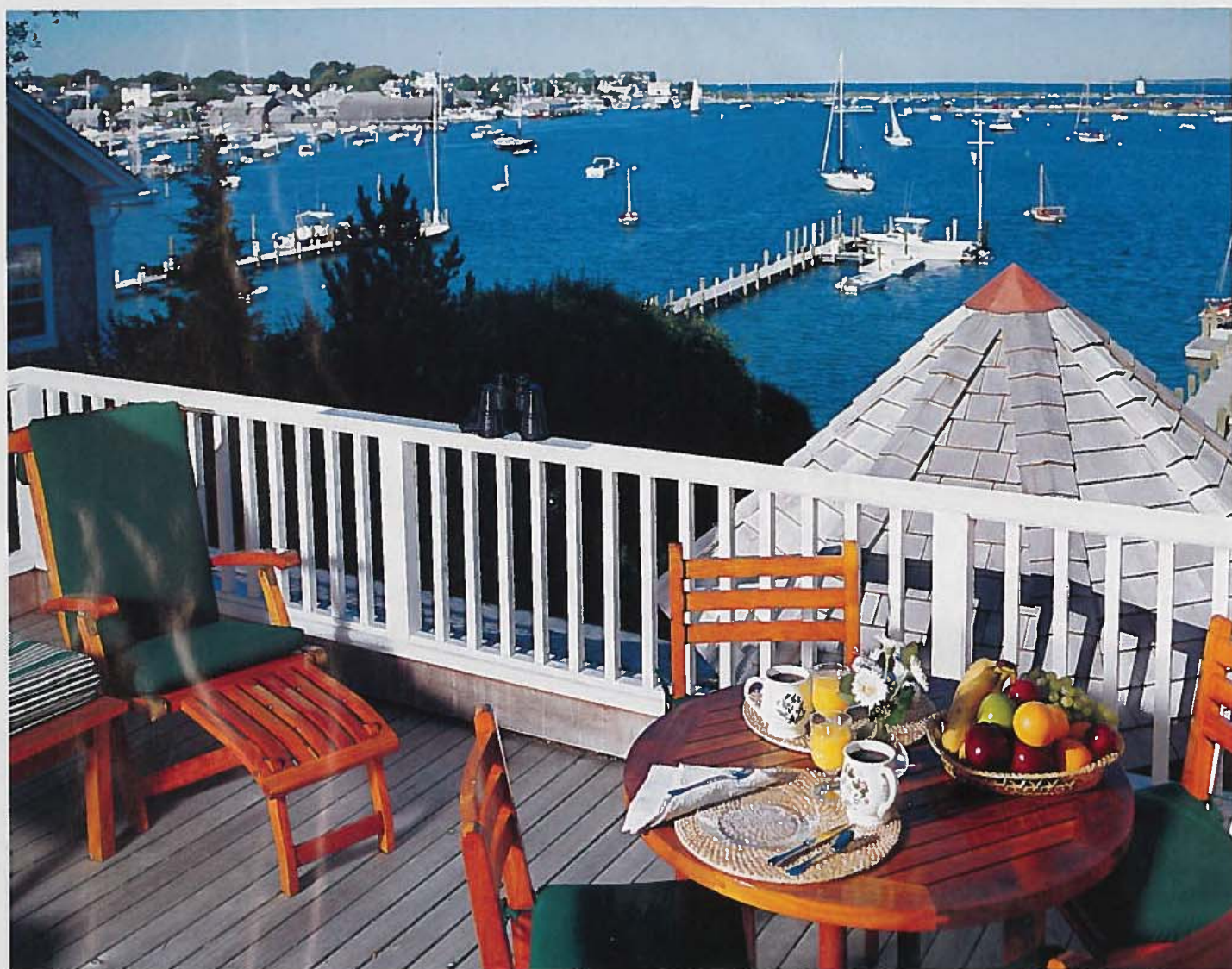
One of the most challenging areas to design was the study created in the third floor eaves. "We wanted to feature the eccentricity of this room," says Susan. "To give it a sense of the oddness and surprise of an attic." Designed to resemble the interior of a yacht, the room features bead-board walls, a port-like window and the same lighting fixtures found on the homeowners' yacht.

Overall, the new house has a more balanced and proportioned feeling than the old. And although it is unused for most of the year, the house prompts owners and visitors alike to consider remaining here after the ferryboat takes vacationers back to the mainland at summer's end. ❧



OPPOSITE: In the new dining room, strong architectural forms, plus a mix of comfortable new and old furnishings invite guests to linger for hours. The tall, 19th-century Scottish mantel is raised so diners can better see the hearth. An old Irish hunt table inspired the designers to create this 14-seat mahogany table, which is surrounded by barrel-shaped wicker chairs. The table is one of three produced for the client (two are in other homes). Above it is a pewter chandelier, below it a chintz rag rug. Place settings consist of dark-green woven-patterned English china, bamboo place mats, Irish cotton napkins, and antique English candlesticks and wine coasters. An antique Norman clock hangs over a small buffet, a family heirloom. **ABOVE:** Once the dining room, the billiards room was expanded and completely overhauled. Dominating the room is the late 19th-century oak billiards table resting on newly-installed, wide-plank chestnut floors. Above it is a custom light fixture created from antique gaslights. New pine paneling provides a warm backdrop for some of the owners' collection of American landscapes. The main entry hall is visible in the background, with the front door to the right. **RIGHT:** A walnut hall chair with tapestry seat is bathed by a shaft of sunlight in the entry. Next to it is a mahogany hunt table surmounted by two antique candlesticks. When the family entertains, the hunt table is often pulled out and set with hors d'oeuvres or dessert and coffee.





ABOVE: A deck outside a guest bedroom offers sweeping views of Edgartown harbor. Chappaquiddick inlet is just above the turret top, while the center of town is to the left. Reclining deck chairs and a small table with chairs—all of teak—offer guests a choice of snoozing or snacking. Here, the table is set for breakfast on a late summer morning. Additional quiet places for houseguests to relax apart from other visitors were one of the requests the owners made to Orsini Design.

LEFT: A bay window in the master bedroom is part of a tower on the outside rear of the house. The banquette is covered by a dark-green cotton chenille. A French armoire stands next to the bed, which is covered with an off-white, embossed cotton coverlet. Cream-colored paint covers a carved mantel and its mirrored overmantel.





ABOVE: Soothing colors flow throughout a guest bedroom, constructed from a combination of old space and new. An oatmeal Berber carpet complements dark cream walls with off-white trim. A tea-stained linen print from Brunschwig & Fils was chosen for the headboard, an armchair, the roman-pleated shades, and a pair of benches at the foot of the bed.

RIGHT: The study, on the third floor of the new addition, takes advantage of varying rooflines to create a space of quirky charm. The walls and ceiling are of mahogany beadboard, giving a warm cohesiveness to the angular space and suggesting a yacht's interior. A round window on the far end adds to the nautical feel. A leafy fabric and area rug add touches of color. The lighting fixtures are the same as those used on the owners' yacht, also refurbished by Orsini Design Associates.

