

# Decor Maine

ISSUE NO. 3

LIVING BEAUTIFULLY IN MAINE

## the stylish getaways issue

**CHECK INTO  
THESE 5 LUXE STAYS**

*From Industrial Glam to Vintage Nostalgia*

A Colorful  
**JOHN CALVIN  
STEVENS**  
Restoration  
on Cushing Island

An Unbelievable  
House Built  
**ON A BRIDGE**

Everything  
We Love  
in Searsport and  
Belfast

**& MORE!**



# FIRST PLACE

MANY SECOND HOUSES NEVER GET A CHANCE TO BECOME A REAL HOME. **HERE'S HOW** ONE HIGGINS BEACH COTTAGE STOLE A FAMILY'S HEART—AND THE SHOW.



BY **ALEXANDRA HALL** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **LIZ DALY** ARCHITECT **MOBILE STUDIO DESIGN**  
BUILDER **BOWLEY BUILDERS** INTERIOR DESIGN **JADE CUNNINGHAM** CABINETMAKER **DEREK PREBLE**



Lindsay Lorraine's plans for her family's Higgins Beach cottage were anything but the usual. Though it was a second home, Lindsay and her husband Shaun knew from the outset that they wanted to make it into something far beyond your typical vacation retreat.

In part thanks to Lindsay's lifelong connection to the area, the couple had ambitious plans to make it into a second home with first-home style and functionality. "I grew up in South Portland," she says, "and grew up going to Higgins Beach my whole life." She and Shaun had been renting a weekend bungalow in the area when they had their son in 2013. "Our other house was in New York, but our hearts were here," she reflects. "And we thought, 'How can we make Maine a bigger part of our family routine?'"

The Higgins Beach cottage they bought soon after had just the square footage they were looking for, a beautiful backyard, and proximity to the ocean. After moving in, they took their time deciding how they ultimately wanted to live on the property. "We knew the kitchen wasn't working for us," Lindsay says. "And there was a really



Lighting from Lostine crowns the kitchen, and a Blu Dot chandelier punctuates the dining area. **OPPOSITE:** Kids enjoy all of the home—indoors and out. **PREVIOUS SPREAD, RIGHT PAGE:** A neutral palette pervades the house, starting with windows from Sierra Pacific.



**TOP:** Minimalist wraparound windows add a dash of contrast to the room's soft grays and light woods in black trim. **ABOVE:** More white and airy space, with subtly patterned wallpaper by Rebecca Atwood Designs. **OPPOSITE:** Light neutrals in the bedroom are enhanced by window treatments from The Curtain Shop.

big bathroom upstairs, but it wasn't efficient. There was a basement that could've made a great kids' playroom, but it wasn't finished."

Moreover, she says, there was the overall feel. "We didn't want anything too precious," she says. "We wanted a place where no one's worried about wet feet. Where everyone's so comfortable, they want to be here as much as possible."

Enter Jessica Jolin, principal architect at Mobile Studio Design in Biddeford, and interior designer Jade Cunningham of New York. The first order of business was to help the family decide whether to renovate or tear down and rebuild. The local character-based zoning code presented lots of limits on newly built residences. And so? "To prevent moving the house away from the street and the water views," Jessica explains, "the family decided to retain the existing footprint and general massing."

And so the mission became clear: To renovate the same building into a place that felt as easygoing and airy as a beach house but functioned as efficiently as a primary residence—one that accommodated the family's flow, could get a little messy, feel lived in, and as a result, get used all the time.



1



2



3

Space is made thanks to a cleverly turned bunk bed, covered in a quilt from Blanche + Mimi in Portland.



4

1. Light fixtures mimic the light woods found in almost all rooms. 2. The kitchen's white quartz counters are from Morningstar Stone & Tile. 3. An outdoor shower adds to the home's appeal as an easygoing beach house. 4. The kitchen's dining table looks out to the yard, with landscape design by David Maynes Studio and installation by Terrapin Landscapes. 5. Even when color is on display, it's hushed, as with these quiet tones. 6. The upstairs hallway leads to a softly lit bed. 7. Details around the house bring in outdoors with natural elements. 8. Brass fixtures and white-on-white materials by Rejuvenation make for a streamlined effect.



5



6



7



8





**ABOVE:** The Higgins Beach neighborhood was loved by the family for decades before they bought there. **BELOW:** Even the home's entryways have a light and clean-lined feeling, while still being highly functional.



The structural process, which took eight months to design and about a year to build, entailed very little expansion of the house. “The only thing that was extended was the rear, for the kitchen,” says Leah Schaffer, project architect at Mobile Studio Design. “Other than that, it was about playing around with existing space.” That meant modulating the windows to open things up, and reimagining the staircase area. “We left the stairs in the same spot, but reconfigured it to have a fully open railing system so the house didn’t feel so enclosed,” she says. “We realized we could change a few step locations and remove the walls and make it as see-through as we could.”

Upstairs, they moved the large bathroom and expanded an office space to become one of the children’s bedrooms, effectively consolidating the family quarters on the second floor, and making more room for guests elsewhere. And the aforementioned basement was finished and saw a half bath added, resulting in a play space and more sleeping options.

That said, the home’s overall aesthetic—from materials to color palette—would need to mirror its new flow and functionality.

“When Lindsay said in the first phone call that she wanted a family house that embodied the style of ‘Scandinavian-Montauk,’ I knew it would be a fun project,” recalls Jessica. “[She] wanted everything to feel fresh and light, but have classic cottage elements like black windows and cedar-wrapped shingles. With such young children, sand, and water we thought her color choices were very brave!”

Of course, having an interior designer who’s also a dear friend with longtime knowledge of the family doesn’t hurt when it comes to facing down such challenges. “I knew this was a house to stay in the family for generations,” Jade explains. “So the design needed to be kept timeless. Nothing too trendy, so it felt light and spacious but not overdone.”

And it would need to be able to stand up to regular use. Jade leaned into that balance with layers of neutral-toned, natural elements made of user-friendly materials. For example, the new kitchen’s delicate-looking white quartz counters, set against warm wood and a handmade zellige tile backsplash. “But actually,” —reveals Lindsay— “those counters are so hardy, we can cut limes directly on them.”

Asked about the final result, Lindsay concludes, “We spend time here in all the seasons and when we’re here we feel lighter and more relaxed, yet rooted. This amazing team helped us create a home that evokes that very feeling.” ■