

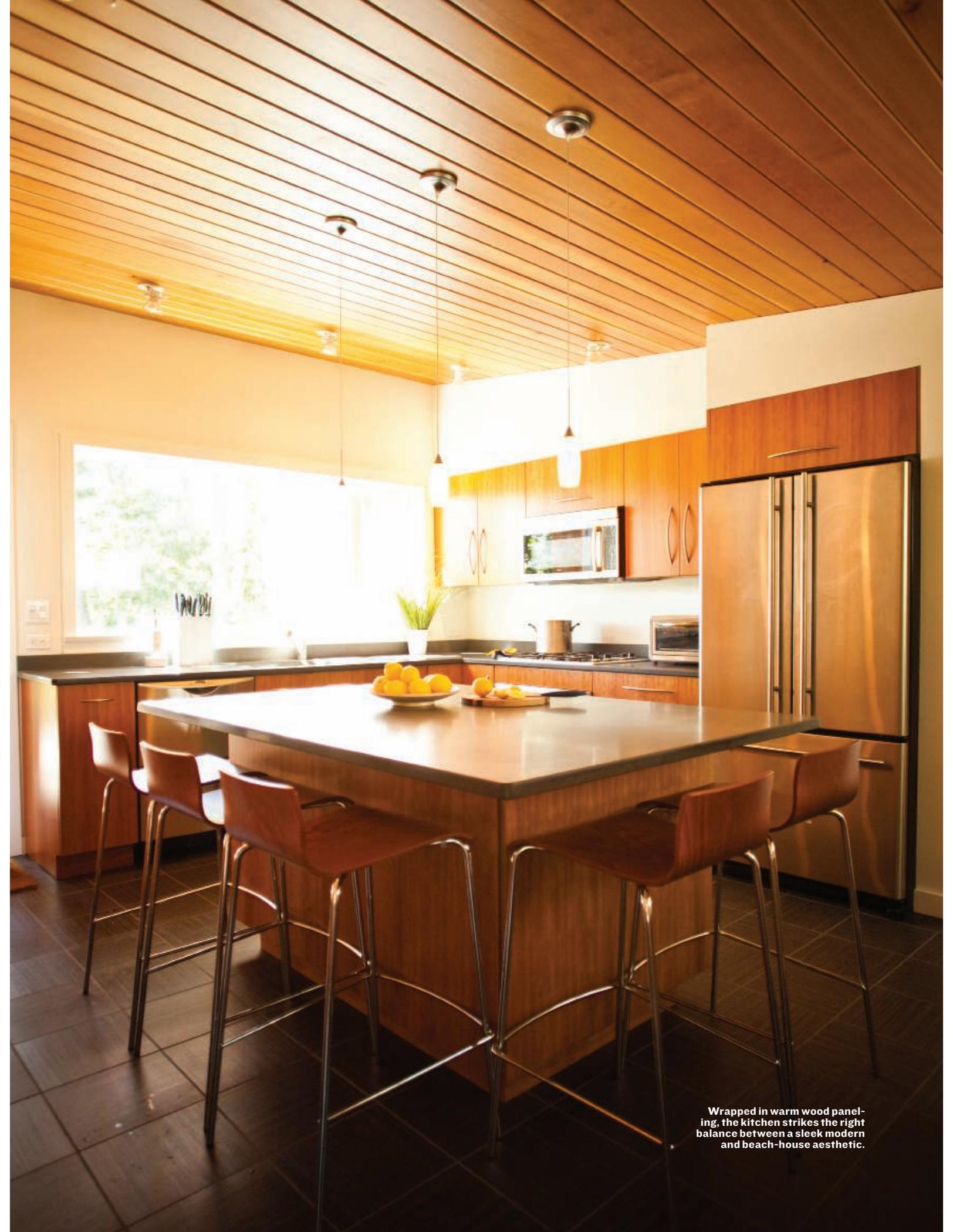
REPEAT HISTORY

TO SAVE A MODERN GEM ON
THE CAPE, AN ARCHITECT
BUILDS A KINDRED ADDITION.

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WITH ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL LYONS
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A new second-floor
deck is great for pond views
and morning coffee.



Wrapped in warm wood paneling, the kitchen strikes the right balance between a sleek modern and beach-house aesthetic.

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HE ONE DOWNSIDE OF OWNING a summer home (other than midweek longings when you're stuck at work) is that at some point, you'll have to drain the pipes, unplug the fridge, and close it up for the winter. And if the house in question is on the Cape, that means spending six months out of every year waiting for warm weather.

But what if you didn't have to say goodbye come October? That was the question that nagged Rick and Ellen Grossman when considering the beloved Truro property they'd owned for 30 years. Originally built in the early '50s by architect Henry Hebbeln (who studied at Cranbrook Academy of Art under Eero Saarinen), the residence was a modern gem—a classic midcentury house connected by a breezeway to a small, simple building that once served as a World War II army barracks.

Rick, who co-owns Boston's high-end Ligne Roset furniture store, and his wife, Ellen, a Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater board member (and the business manager of Newton boutique W.O.W., where she works alongside the couple's daughter), adored the house's wide swaths of glass, butterfly roof, built-in furniture, and tongue-and-groove siding. They cherished it so much that over the years, they'd replaced the breezeway with a kitchen and rebuilt its 50-year-old windows. They also knew the location couldn't be beat. It overlooks Slough and Round ponds inside the Cape Cod National Seashore Park, about a mile from a secluded beach.

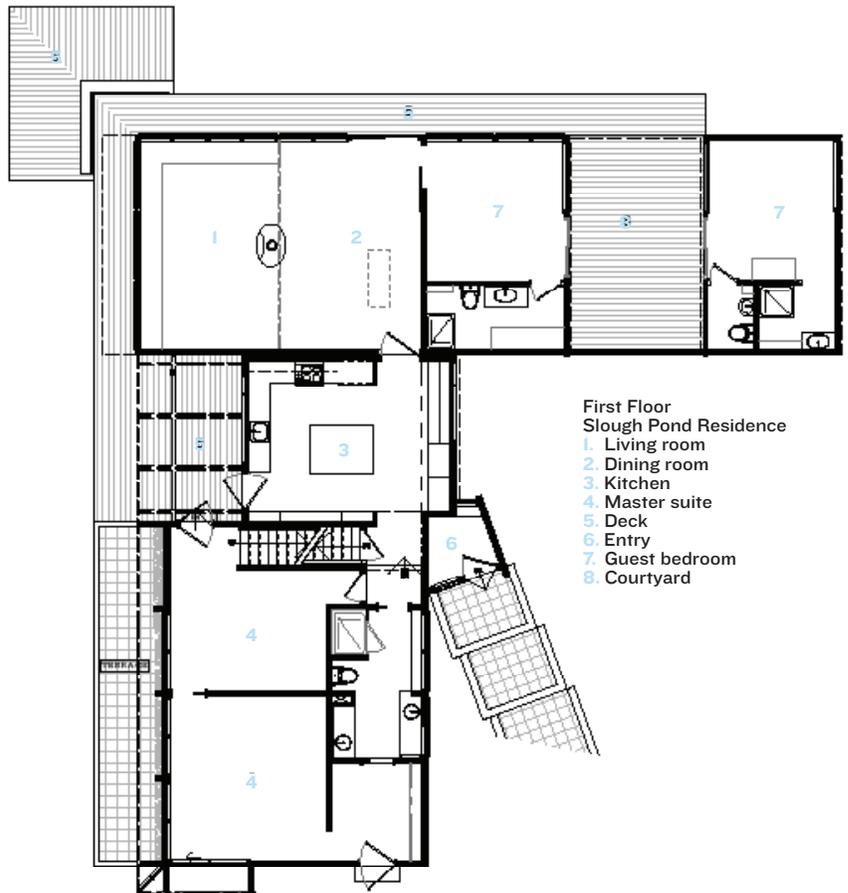
"Because we're in our sixties, we knew it was the last time we'd really be comfortable making this change for our future. We didn't want to have to do it again in 20 years," says Rick. Even so, they worried that winterizing the bright and breezy beach house



A nook in the custom cabinetry is perfect for displaying art.

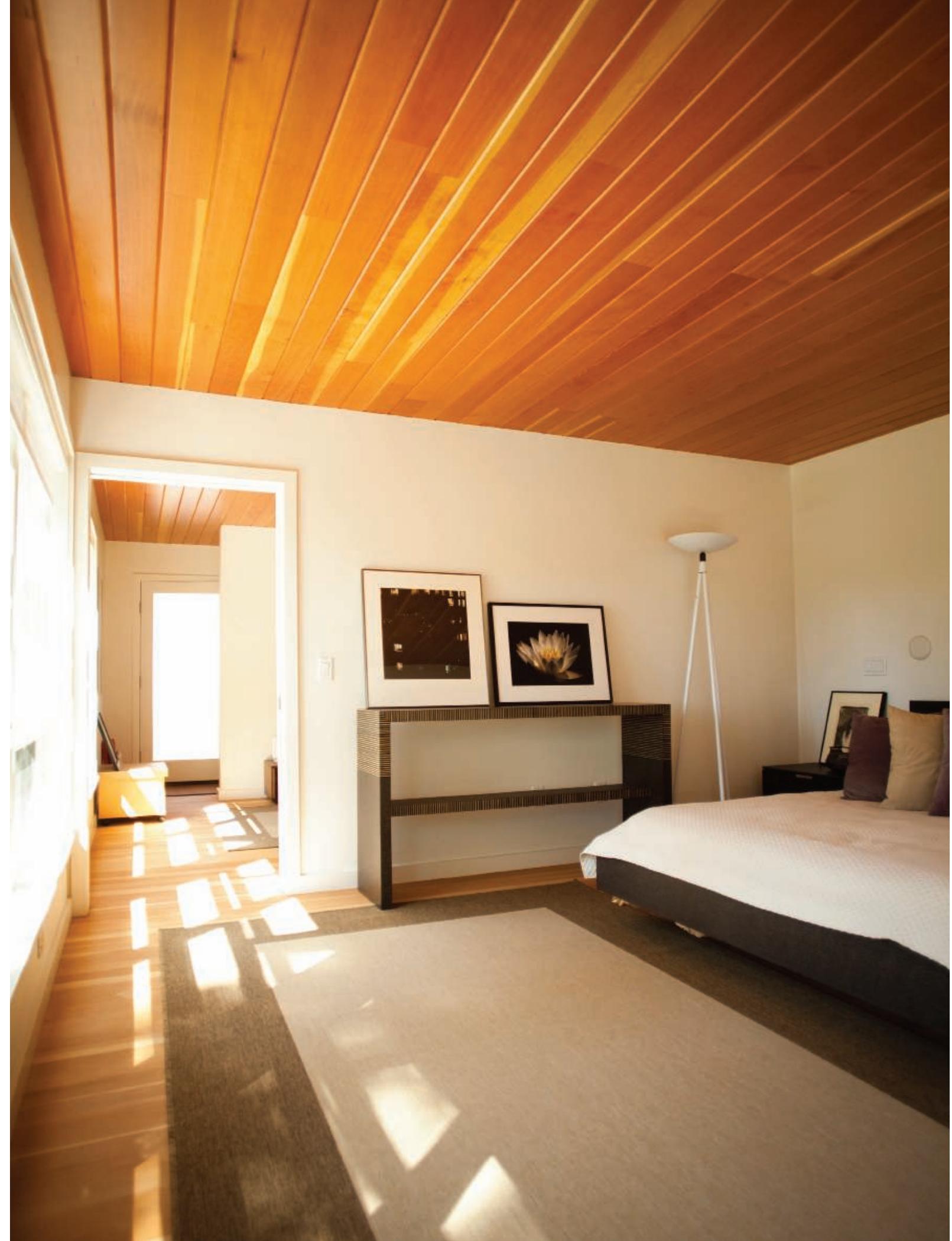


Above, the deep, cantilevered built-in sofa in the Hebbeln wing seats plenty of guests. Below, the plan shows the original house running across the top, with the new kitchen, entry, and master suite below.





A floating hearth is now the centerpiece of the living room.





Above, the addition, with its trellis and second-floor porch, complements the original architecture. A bevy of native plants and ancient pines shields the home from summer sun. Opposite, the master suite features a bedroom that opens to a sitting room, separated by a pocket door for extra privacy when guests arrive.

would destroy its midcentury spirit, so they turned to friend (and neighbor) Mark Hammer, of Cambridge-based Hammer Architects, for help.

As a young man in the early 1970s, Hammer was so smitten by the modernist style that he worked for the Architects Collaborative in Cambridge, a firm founded by Bauhaus leader Walter Gropius. "I grew up on Long Island, where all the houses looked exactly the same. I'd never been exposed to anything like it," Hammer says of the cantilevered roofs, oversize windows, and vertical wood siding characteristic of Boston's midcentury homes. When he bought his own Cape house, he found that dozens more had been built here by his design heroes, including Marcel Breuer and Eero Saarinen. In fact, he ended up renovating several such cottages in the area.

With the Grossman project, Hammer says he set out "to respect and honor the best of what was there and take away some of the worst pieces." Instead of winterizing the Hebbeln

structure (which he agreed would have seriously compromised its appearance), Hammer made a case for replacing the adjacent crumbling barracks with an all-season, 1,300-square-foot two-story addition. A large door between the old and new spaces would allow the Grossmans to close off the uninsulated Hebbeln wing from the rest of the house once it got too cold to heat efficiently. They could then live exclusively in the addition, which includes a remodeled kitchen, a master suite, and a study and large deck upstairs.

Since the Hebbeln wing was "a jewel in that setting," says Hammer, it required very little updating. He kept the L-shaped built-in couch and updated the windows with custom-designed, top-hinged transoms.

The only Hebbeln design feature that the Grossmans and Hammer could replace without remorse was the concrete fireplace in the living room. Cemented to the floor, the bulky, cylindrical hearth was something of an eyesore. (While removing it, they

discovered that the interior had almost completely corroded.) In its place, Hammer installed an elegant steel unit that hangs from the ceiling and pivots. Called the Fire Orb, it comes in a black powder finish and floats above a new base made of concrete and beach pebble. "It's all you need to heat the entire space through November," says Rick, referring to the Hebbeln wing (the addition has its own radiant heating system). Being able to heat that area deep into the fall, and close it off once the temperature dips, gives him and Ellen everything they need to weather many a Cape Cod winter.

The Truro house has become the Grossman's year-round getaway, a place where they hope to spend many more years together with friends and family. "We plan to be carried out boots-first from that house," says Rick. "It's what we want to pass on to our kids." n

ARCHITECT Hammer Architects, Cambridge
CONTRACTOR Augustus Construction, Truro



The two-story addition is linked to the original Cape home, at right, by a new entry.



From top, deep overhangs and awning windows shade the original structure; wainscoting makes for a beachy bathroom; the new trellis invites climbing vines and hanging plants, which thrive in this sunny location.