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NAUTICAL HOME DESIGN

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BY DESIGN

KIDS' QUARTERS

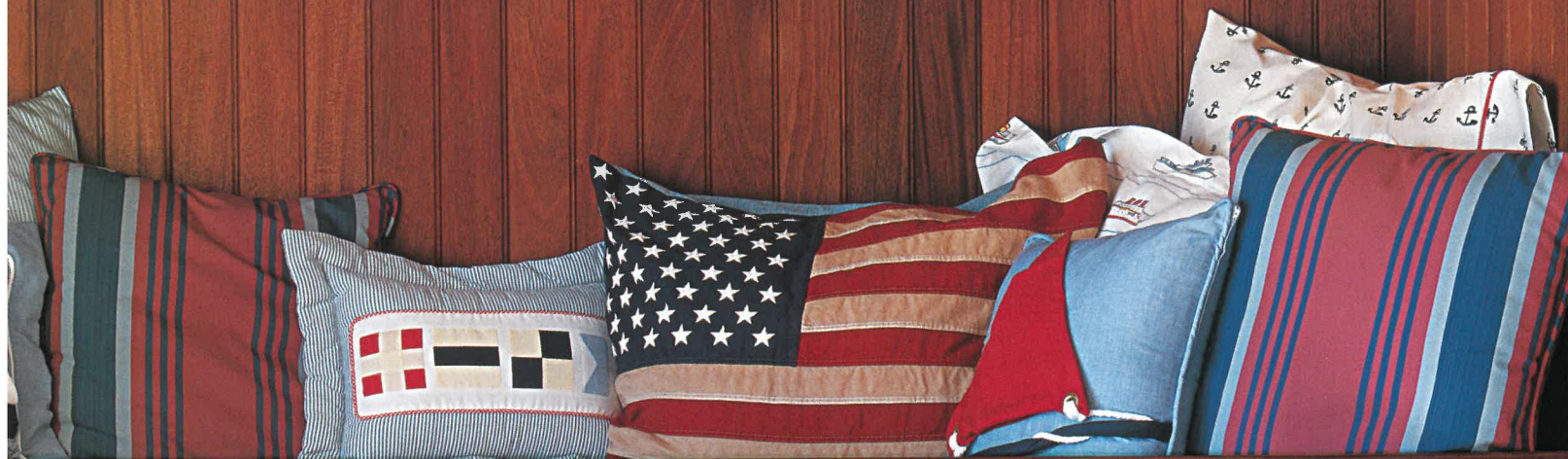
Nautically Inspired Rooms for
Small Sea Captains and their Crews

BY JANICE RANDALL ROHLF



BRENDA RAHMANN

■ The guest bedroom of this Nantucket home highlights the nautical theme, fully realized in the homeowner's son's bedroom.



Imagine being a child again
and setting sail on dream
voyages each night in a
bedroom equipped like a boat...



JEFFREY ALLEN

BY DESIGN Kids' Quarters

■ **ABOVE & OPPOSITE:** This boy's bedroom takes its cues from the yachting life—mahogany beams, berth-like trundle beds, a central pine mast, and a porthole for espying. Custom draperies, bedding, cushions, and pillows are by Donna Elle Interior Design.

■ **From aboard this bedroom,** this young man has views of lighthouses and of the sun rising and setting over the ocean. A dormer creates the perfect space for compact booth-like seating. Hand-hooked McAdoo rugs add their scenes to the sisal covered floor.

This is not an uncommon charge of designers of sea-side homes. No matter your budget, it's a breeze to find a rug adorned with anchors, curtains with sailboats, or a lamp with a lighthouse base. But for many people, boats are a more serious affair—you either love them or you don't. The owner of one on-the-water estate on Nantucket is deeply entrenched in the former category; she is enamored with boats. "Wooden boats," she is quick to specify. With a father who was a navigator in the Navy, it makes sense that she would grow up

around boats and eventually have her own, a Catboat. She raced her first in Pleasant Bay out of the Chatham Yacht Club and is now sailing her second.

Three years ago, when it came to creating a bedroom for her eight-year-old son, she naturally gravitated to a nautical theme. But the ideas of the homeowner and the professionals who executed them went far beyond predictable accents, architect Lisa Botticelli of Nantucket firm Botticelli & Pohl points out. This room is about as authentic a reproduction of a boat's interior as you'll ever see; you'd swear it was plucked





■ A third-floor attic space was recently converted by Dujardin Design Associates into this star-filled bunk room. Tiered twin beds offer plenty of sleeping space for the homeowners' two sons and their cousins and friends. The palette has the crispness of signal flags. Efficient use of space, as in the drawers built into the risers, frees up floor space for sleeping bags or play.

TERRY POMMETT

BY DESIGN

Kids' Quarters

from a vintage cabin cruiser and resituated here.

Picture being a child who, instead of running downstairs to watch morning cartoons, rolls over in bed, leans against a pile of pillows, and gazes sleepily out at a more spectacular show—sunrise. For the boy in this family, now 11, whose bedroom faces north and east and a little bit northwest, the setting sun can also be viewed from bed. It's not unlike greeting dawn and bidding adieu to the day from the berth on a boat, espying the day's new or waning light through the small aperture of a porthole. In fact one must pass through a door punctuated with a brass porthole to enter this second-floor bedroom and through another door with a porthole to access the adjoining bathroom. Even the air-conditioning vent has a porthole-shaped opening.

The story of this room begins on a summer evening in 1996, when the homeowners had rendezvoused with friends at the Nantucket Yacht Club. Upstairs in the club's Governor's Room, the wife took one look at the bar, turned to her husband and said, "This is about the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. Whoever built this should be doing nothing else." She quickly tracked down local builder Chris Fraker, the bar's creator, and proposed her idea. "She wanted her son's room to give the illusion that you were in the aft stateroom of a ship," says Fraker, who explains that he "appreciates wooden sailboats for their craftsmanship," even though he has never owned one. His first job on the island, where he's lived since 1978, was converting a tugboat into a house, and he later spent five years building Alerion Class

sloops for the Sanford Boat Company.

The homeowners had already been consulting with architects Botticelli & Pohl for close to a year on the design of their house, a guest house, artist's studio, garage, and swimming pool on the property. Fraker brought his finish-carpentry skills to the project. After a walk-through of the



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bedroom, he and the homeowner put their heads together, shared impressions, and Fraker got to work. The result, which is nothing short of breathtaking, is a “cooperative effort,” according to Lisa Botticelli, which included her and her husband, Ray Pohl, Fraker, and Lindsay, Inc., custom builders who stepped in to assist towards the project's end.

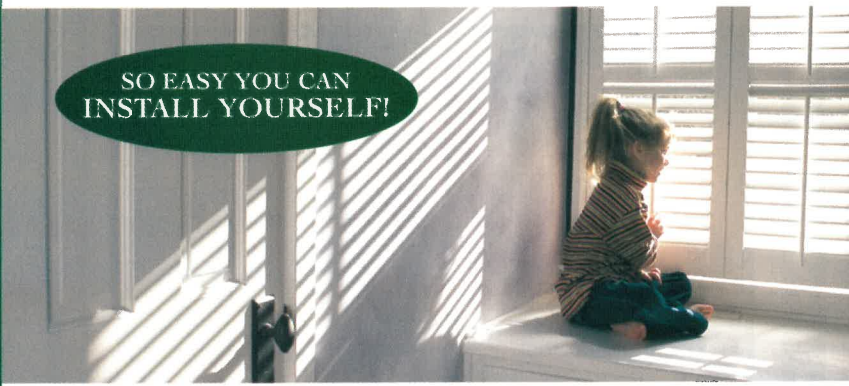
Beneath an arched beadboard ceiling with mahogany beams, more mahogany, teak, and holly figure in the construction of the room, whose focal point is two berth-like trundle beds separated by a yellow pine “mast” and aligned toe to toe beneath a window affording unparalleled views of Nantucket Harbor. At the homeowner's request, the spaces

created by two dormers are sitting areas, one resembling the snug dining section in the main salon of a ship, with a booth-type arrangement of three window seats. This vantage takes in an expanse of salt marsh. The other dormer window faces north toward the statuesque Great Point Lighthouse. A flat surfaced center section between the two beds is ideal for playing board games.

Nautical detailing defines the room. “I want people to feel like they're in a boat,” said the homeowner to Fraker at the project's outset. Bronze caged lights resemble fixtures on tugboats. Narrow strips of teak and holly produce “striped” surfaces like those found on the deck of a boat. The mahogany built-in bureaus and trundle beds sport recessed brass pulls, another nautical touch suggested by the homeowner, who wanted to avoid protruding knobs. Also on her wish list was a teak-inlaid floor, an idea that was scuttled by her young son who wanted a more comfortable surface for playing. They chose a sisal floor covering topped with a couple of theme-appropriate, hand-hooked scatter rugs from McAdoo. An idea that never got beyond the blueprint stage was to attach a gaff to the mast in the room and from that to hang a swing.

“The property is unique because you really get to experience the water from nearly every room in the

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house," says Lisa Botticelli. "It was an unusual piece of land to work with," she adds, explaining that the surrounding wetlands dictated the shape of the property, restricting the architects to an oddly shaped building area. "The house," Botticelli says, "nestles into the landscape."

The homeowner's love affair with Nantucket began in 1958, when as a young girl she came to the island with her family to stay in the Sea Cliff Inn. After a direct hit by a hurricane, her mother said "no more islands," and stuck to her word. Instead, they summered in Wellfleet. "I am equally passionate about the Cape, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket," says the homeowner. "I see what is the same about them—the smell, sounds, weather, topography—unlike most people who try to point out their differences." When she married and had children of her own (she and her husband also have a daughter), the family rented summer places on Martha's Vineyard and in Chatham. It wasn't until 1997 that they decided to buy a piece of property, but it didn't take long to become smitten with their current site. "I enjoy every second that I'm there, no matter what time of year," says the homeowner emphatically. No doubt her son, whom she describes as "a water boy," does too. Occupying a place of honor in his bedroom is a special gift from his grandfather—a proper boat compass, meant to be read upside down while lying in bed.

In another home on Nantucket, two boys ages 4 and 6 also revel in a sea-inspired setting. From their bedroom in the family's summer home, a spacious 1920s cottage design aptly named "Lucky

Stars," the brothers have one of the best views in the house, perhaps on the island. When the 1970s vintage home in 'Sconset underwent a total renovation in 2001, the third-floor attic space was transformed into the boys' bedroom with an adjoining play area and half bath. Asked to come up with a decorating theme, interior designer Trudy

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Dujardin of Dujardin Design Associates, Inc. in Nantucket and Westport, Connecticut, thought "nautical." "It was a no-brainer," she says, "the house is in Nantucket on the water." She points out that if a crow—or seagull—were to fly straight from this property over the Atlantic as far as it could go, it would bump into Portugal. "The boys have one

of the greatest views on the island. They can look out and see whales, the Gulf Stream—it's a view they'll appreciate even more as they grow older." More practically, "the room fits in a large number of children," explains F. Price Connors, a senior designer with Dujardin's firm. "And it also fulfills a childhood fantasy."

The bright, airy bunkroom sleeps six in three pairs of tiered twin beds. On the east end of the room, two stacked beds settle beneath side-by-side nine-pane windows. The other four bunks on the opposite side of the room straddle a wide four-step staircase. Two side-by-side drawers built into each stair riser represent an ingenious use of space. Marine-blue carpet was chosen not only for its appropriateness to the scene but also for its dark, forgiving color and its extra thick, noise-muffling padding—the parents' bedroom lies directly below. The floor can accommodate air mattresses or sleeping bags during frequent sleepovers, while two capacious, recessed, flat-panel bureaus, each with seven deep drawers, anchor the room. One was built in place; the other is movable but on safety chains so it can't accidentally fall forward, an example of childproofing at its best. The half-dozen wall-mounted reproduction brass passage lights carry out the nautical theme and also eliminate the need for table or floor lamps, which could be easily knocked over by rambunctious children.

The reds, blues, and yellows that typically define a nautical scheme are "fun and uplifting," Dujardin says. The primary palette used in the bunkroom carries over to the play area, where spatter-painted floors, a hallowed seaside style, "hide a multitude of sins,"

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according to Dujardin. "The family has a lot of friends who have young children. We designed the third floor in such a way as to take wear and tear." Coats of bright white washable paint cover the walls as well as the beadboard and poplar bunks, bureaus, and cabinets, all custom built on Nantucket. A local finish-carpentry company fabricated the pieces off-site and then built them in place according to the design specifications of Dujardin and Lyman Perry, AIA, the Nantucket and Philadelphia architect responsible for designing the whole-house renovation. As on a boat, the mattresses, custom sized at thirty-six inches, rest securely in boxed-in "berths." The decorative nods to seafaring are subtle and timeless. "The room is childlike but not babyish," says Dujardin. "It will grow along with the boys."

Several of the well-researched design details required some scouting. In the half bath, a large ship's port-hole painted red frames the above-the-sink mirror. Dujardin's team is so attentive to details that Connors spent hours on an Internet quest for just the right knobs for the drawers set into the stair risers—cast resin stars with a blue beach-glass finish. "It was important to me that they match the other stars in the house," says Connors. A small-scale bathroom sink came from Europe. Not only are the reduced dimensions ideal, but there is also a half-dollar size design of a blue schooner on the white porcelain.

Dujardin Design Associates created the custom-made bedding, including puffy white duvets and European-square pillow shams trimmed with red, yellow, or blue ribbon. Cranberry quilts appliquéd with white stars lie folded at the foot of each bed,

ready to be tucked under a child's chin when the sea breeze picks up. Pillows are important in the play space, too. An ocean-blue sectional couch that could be used to sleep two is strewn with patriotic-inspired pillows that depict the private flags of the Nantucket whaling fleet. "Each merchant had his own design," explains Connors.



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"We found an antique print showing the flags and translated them into contemporary pillow designs." Found in a shop in town, this inspirational print now hangs on a nearby wall.

With two small boys living in the house, and any number of young cousins visiting on the weekends, this aerie gets a lot of use. When not sleeping or at the beach, children clamber up to the third floor to relax, play games, or watch TV. Storage for books, videos, and board games is plentiful, most of it in a large four-door cabinet adorned with brass knobs in the shape of a ship's wheel. Cubbies built into the walls house other toys, and books reside on shelves built under the sloping eaves.

Children naturally love playing in small spaces—under a dining room table, in a walk-in closet, behind a couch. In this house, a favorite rainy-day spot for small children is a nook under the eaves originally designated as storage. But once the boys discovered it, there was no way around customizing the space just for them. Equipped with lighting and a carpeted floor area big enough for two sleeping bags, it's sought after, and maybe even fought over, when all the cousins are in town.

Since this active family loves kids, dogs, and company, the rest of the house is equally user-friendly in a handsomely appointed way. Sprinkled judiciously throughout are nautical accents,

such as antique Lenox plates depicting champion sailing vessels, wave-design tiling on a fireplace, and the kitchen's reproduction brass passage lights. Then, of course, there are the "Lucky Stars" that twinkle from carpeting, glassware, fabric, and drapery fixtures. Like the boys' room, each of the other five bedrooms has its own color scheme. Beautiful in their own right, they are easily passed over by the twelve-and-under set, who race each other up three flights of stairs for first dibs on the best bed in the boat room.

SEE RESOURCES PAGE 137

Janice Randall Rohlf is Managing Editor of Cape Cod Life magazine.

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