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Beachside Rebirth

A Darien Captain's Georgian home gets new life from New England Artisans

Eddie Day was lured to Connecticut by longtime friend and construction partner Jay D'Apice six years ago. Rather than continue to churn out commonly requested basic building templates in Manhattan, where onerous building restrictions complicated many projects, Day decided to make the move to Connecticut and has never really looked back.

D'Apice had convinced him that building in Fairfield County would offer the opportunity to utilize their finely honed sense of craftsmanship and develop a higher level of quality control than in New York.

While their firm New England Artisans Remodeling and Design Group, LLC is able to provide a complete design-build process with their strategic partner architect Ann Day, they frequently collaborate and work in tandem with other professionals. Doyle Coffin Architecture is one their ideal firms for collaboration, as this recent Darien project completed together proves. Key to their smooth success was the careful communication delivered by all parties in order to realize the intended manifestation envisioned by client conception and architectural design.

This Georgian captain's house was originally built in 1926. A small renovation updated the home somewhat in the 1960s. It was purchased in 1995 by Debbie and John Aspinwall, who

especially appreciated its proximity to the beach and its lovely amenities, like Noroton Manor community tennis courts. The Aspinwalls completely modernized and restructured through a full renovation in 2007, which added 2,000 square feet. With no master bath in the original structure and a chopped-up kitchen not suited to today's lifestyle, the home would need to be dramatically renovated. Most importantly, they wanted to open up the house to the available outstanding water views.

"It seems as though not a single stone was left unturned through the elaborate renovation," states Day.

Architect John Doyle evaluated the project space by space. Essentially, Doyle Coffin Architecture's intention was to work on augmenting the back of the home, to create an intimate exterior space where entertain-

ing could take place on a pleasant terrace adjacent to a lovely entry to the kitchen/family room/sitting room area. The challenging project saw the entire roof taken off as well as the large addition added out back.

Outdoor living is exceptionally important to the Aspinwalls, who are avid sailors. They love to entertain casually and with a modicum of effort, enjoying the natural beauty afforded them by the spectacular Darien beach front and water prox-



LEFT Classic proportions anchor the Georgian Colonial design, with well-chosen windows and a widow's walk to maximize the beachside location.

RIGHT Clever lighting and technology allows modern functionality in this updated office.

BELOW The beautifully honed mahogany staircase handrail presents a graceful sweep into the formal living room.





imity. Doyle Coffin Architecture designed a glorious outdoor environment that retains the brick Georgian Colonial's tasteful presence without overwhelming the property lot or compromising its inherent beauty.

Cleverly, Doyle Coffin Architecture increased the flow within the house, while preserving the home's historical charm. For example, Michelle Myers, associate architect at Doyle Coffin Architecture, highlighted the character of the old brick while complementing the modern kitchen built-ins. New England Artisans perfected the design with expert carpentry and fine hand-finishing.

The more formal front of the house includes a traditional formal stair near gracious living and dining rooms. While each space is distinct, an eloquent dialogue goes back and forth between the home's more formal front spaces and its more relaxed back spaces. This intentional interplay marries well with the family's active lifestyle.

As the neighborhood homes are tightly situated, particular attention was paid to angling views carefully. This allows for maximization of water outlooks without infringing upon neighbors. For example, windows set up high subtly direct views toward the back, and when opened introduce pleasurable seaside airflow.

Exceptional attention was paid to the extraordinary masonry detail called for with Doyle Coffin Architecture's design. New



ABOVE Wide plank hardwood flooring in the renovated formal dining room complements traditional architectural details, including elaborate fluted molding, substantial columns and detailed chair rail. Windows frame picturesque views.



ABOVE The elegant kitchen features smart storage placement combined with specialty woodwork elements. Such carefully wrought detailing adds grace to the bathroom at right as well.



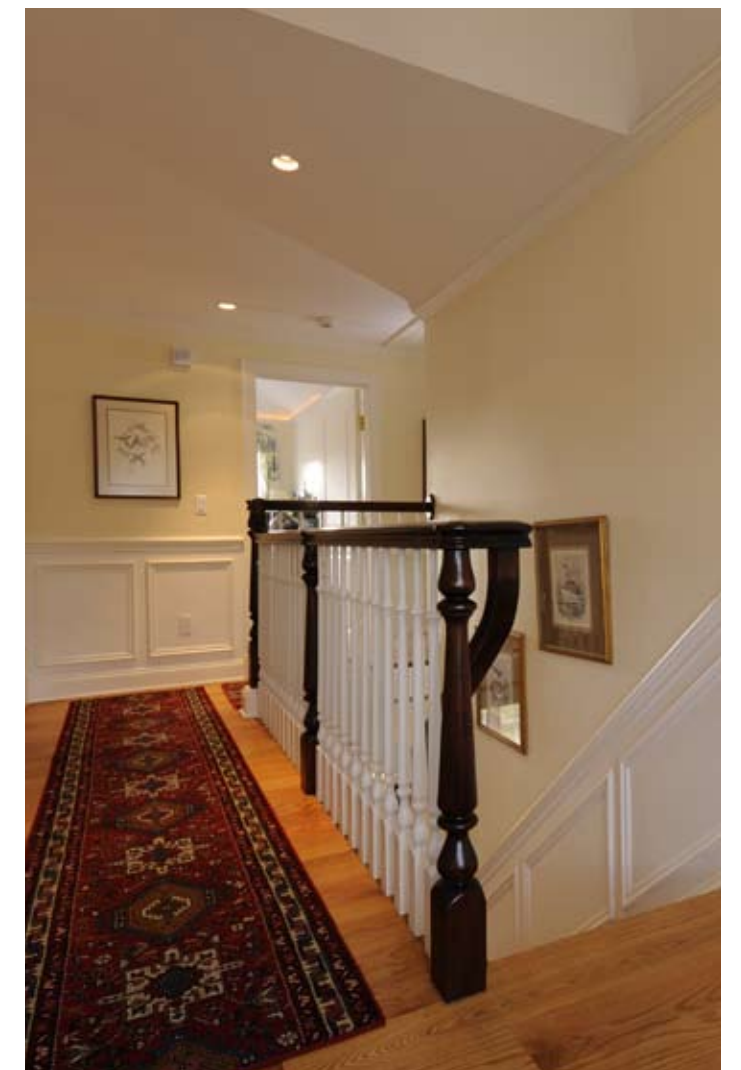
RIGHT The built-in window seat is a favorite aspect of the upstairs hallway, providing a perfect point from which to enjoy the delightful view.



England Artisans enhanced the proportional elements, such as master bedroom tray ceilings with fastidiously honed profiles. A corner of the master bedroom incorporates an elegant window open to the magnificent water view. This view is framed by a tree on the property, which adds a sense of serenity and privacy.

Debbie Aspinwall's own tastes clearly are reflected throughout the home. As a graduate of the New York School of Interior Design, this particular project captured her passion and realizes her personal style. Architect John Doyle and builder Eddie Day both considered her a major contributor to the interior aesthetic. Her input on color and design truly informed the end product, resulting in a pleasingly cohesive interior decoration plan.

The nautical inspiration delivers appropriate impact, enhancing the lovely charm of this traditional Georgian beauty. The extent of careful planning and time invested in this project draws dividends, as the Aspinwalls enjoy a delightful summer in their very special, reborn home. ■



RESOURCES

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