

I Come for **GOOD**

Life comes full circle with a new house in an old neighborhood.

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Wood-Mode cabinetry stained Vintage Shadow Gray. Blue Pearl granite countertops and navy walls give the kitchen the subtle nautical feeling the homeowners desired.

Twenty homes later and decades after leaving in the 1960s, Bill and Joan Farrell have finally returned to the place they truly call home: Newport, Rhode Island. The couple have known each other nearly their entire lives, attending the same kindergarten and playing together in the same neighborhood. After living all over the country for Bill's Air Force career, it was only fitting that they'd wind up building their dream home just blocks from where they both grew up.

Having lived in so many different residences over the years, the couple had a keen sense of what they wanted and, more importantly, what they didn't want in their forever home. This was the first time they were building a permanent home for themselves, and that was exciting, says Joan.

After purchasing the land from a subdivision, the couple focused on bringing their vision to life with the help of Paul Burke Architect, JPS Construction, Apex Kitchens & Baths and Walker Interiors. "We decided how we wanted to live and they created the house around it," says Bill.

For the exterior, cedar shingles and stone were a look that husband and wife readily agreed on. Hardwood floors throughout was another easy decision, and custom details such as coffered ceilings, crown moldings, unique light fixtures, built-in beds for their grandchildren, a walk-in closet and a custom shower were all considered must-haves during the planning process.

In terms of style, the couple opted for a subtle nautical aesthetic rather than something coastal, since their home is in a neighborhood, not on the sand, and they reside here year-round. "We want to celebrate the fact that we're by the ocean, but also living in town," says Joan.

During Bill's time in the military entertaining was more formal. This time, they decided to go with a casual, open-concept kitchen, dining and living area. Designer Kim Silvia of Apex Kitchens & Baths and Jamie Stebenne of JPS Construction worked with the couple to create a layout perfectly suited to their preferences.

The Wood-Mode kitchen cabinetry is stained Vintage Shadow Gray and the walls are the perfect shade of navy, according to Joan. The Blue Pearl granite countertops came about on a hunch the builder had that Joan would like them. Stebenne invited the couple to his own home to see these very countertops and, just as he suspected, they fell

in love with them on the spot.

"It's refreshing to work with a darker palette," says Silvia. She observes that while it's not everyone's idea of a traditional New England kitchen, it's just as beautiful as a white one, and the gray shades and navy still give it a nautical feel.

In the breakfast nook surrounded by bay windows, a large, round glass-topped table takes pride of place. The Farrells are loath to part with this cherished, custom-made piece where they habitually have their morning coffee and peruse newspapers. Switching it up in the evening, they frequently choose to have dinner at the peninsula bar. The peninsula houses one of Bill's favorite features of the home, a custom ice maker.

While the kitchen came together seamlessly in the end, the project was not without its challenges. One dilemma was where to put the 42-inch refrigerator and how best to make it a transitional piece that would blend in with the open layout. The solution was custom cabinetry and wainscoting that camouflage the Sub-Zero fridge and also hide a tall pullout pantry.

Adjacent to the kitchen, the living and dining room areas are divided by a double-sided stone veneer fireplace that can be enjoyed from both rooms. Cleverly, the television that hangs above the fireplace is framed so that it looks like a piece of art when it's not in use. The dining room, while not ultra-formal or closed off by doors, is just right for hosting Christmas dinner and birthday celebrations.

Both Bill and Joan say the building process was a most positive experience, and really enjoyed the collaboration with all the contractors. Stebenne and Silvia echo these sentiments, commenting on how pleasurable the homeowners were to work with.

So, what are the odds that after 10 years of searching, the land the Farrells played on as kids became available? As Silvia says, "The space waited for them to come back. It was meant to be." **H**

An island for cocktails or casual dining is a handsome transitional feature that houses an ice maker and an array of glassware almost equal in size to Bill's wine collection.

