

THE SUNNY PATIO  
of a home on Martha's  
Vineyard designed  
by Hutker Architects.  
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**Nature's Playground** • We all express our appreciation for nature in different ways. Some of us enjoy our surroundings by gazing at a well-framed view, while others prefer spending an afternoon sunning on the terrace or hiking through the woods. One thing, however, is clear: When good design makes the connection from indoors to outdoors logical and easy, we have the best of both worlds. For examples, just turn the page.





# LAY OF THE LAND



WHILE THE HOUSE has a modern vibe, simple materials — stone, glass, and wood — give it a sense of timelessness, says Phil Regan of Hutker Architects. “The homeowners wanted a place that was beautiful and settled in the land,” he says, “and this house is exactly that.”

## A SUMMER HOUSE BLURS THE LINES BETWEEN INDOORS AND OUT BY KEEPING A LOW PROFILE

▶ WRITTEN BY JACI CONRY / PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK • ARCHITECTURE BY HUTKER ARCHITECTS





**S**ITUATED IN A LUSH MEADOW SURROUNDED BY WOODLAND WITH stunning views of Cuttyhunk Island to the west and Harlock Pond to the north, this house on Martha's Vineyard is all about the setting.

"The location is on a hill, in a very secluded, nestled spot," says the homeowner, who shares the idyllic summer haven with her husband and three sons, ages 9, 13, and 14. "It was important to us that the house fit with the natural environment. We wanted to blend the indoors with the outside as much as possible."

The one-story structure was inspired by midcentury modernist sensibilities, which also translate into a house that uses natural materials so that the building appears to recede into the landscape. Located on 6 acres in Chilmark, Massachusetts, the house is

centrally located between two other family-owned properties linked by walking trails. "When we first spoke with the homeowners, it was clear that not only did they want to sense the landscape, they also wanted to be out in it as much as possible," says Mark Hutker, principal at Hutker Architects, which has offices in Vineyard Haven and Falmouth, Massachusetts. "The fundamental purpose of this house is to be aware and participate in the environment."

For Hutker, who worked closely with project architects Phil Regan and Angie Francis on the design, the best way to maintain the house's connection to the landscape was to create a collage of small linked entities. There are three distinct areas: the living spaces and guest suite, the bedroom wing for the three boys, and the master suite. "Smaller pieces have more opportunity for light perimeter," says Hutker. The configuration makes it possible to interact



intimately with the dynamic views as the house wraps around the natural contours of the hill. In addition, the alternating rooflines make for a dramatic play of light and shadow inside.

Floor-to-ceiling windows create an easy indoor/outdoor connection. In the living room, 8-foot-wide sliding glass doors are topped with clerestory windows, creating exterior walls made nearly entirely of glass. "The huge door and window systems really blur the boundaries of indoors and outdoors," says the homeowner. "It's like living in a tent; you really feel that you're outside." The horizontal clerestory windows open for cooling natural ventilation during the summer months. Wide overhangs on the exterior provide shelter from rain and sun so that doors and windows can be left open.

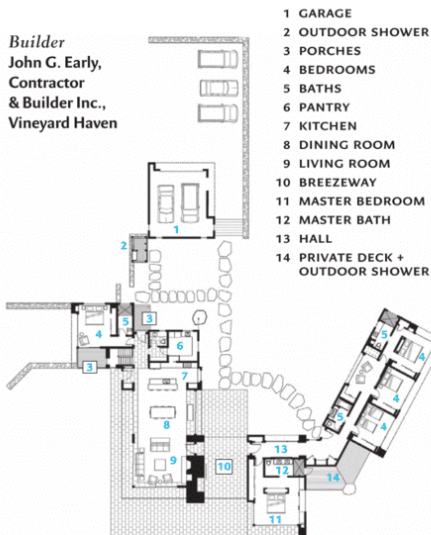
A bluestone patio just outside the living room seems to extend indoors with the bluestone border Hutker tucked around the edge of the room's bamboo floor. Reeds and grasses found along the property were replanted close to the buildings, and the plantings are the source of dried arrangements found inside the house.



ARCHITECT ANGIE FRANCIS designed the kitchen's steel-framed breakfast bar (ABOVE) with casters so it can easily be moved around the room or on to the patio when the family entertains. The stainless steel cocktail cart is also on wheels. Floor-to-ceiling windows in a bedroom (LEFT) reinforce the indoor/outdoor relationship. In the living room (FACING PAGE), expansive sliding doors offer views to Cuttyhunk Island and Harlock Pond.



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**THE OPEN-AIR BREEZEWAY**, which takes cues from midcentury modernist architecture, connects the living area with the master suite. Initially intended to be an enclosed space, it was left open to the outdoors by the homeowners and architects to create an opportunity to interact with the landscape.



#### DESIGN DECISIONS

### *Stone Hedge*

The homeowners felt that the site's large boulders were an integral part of the landscape. If it wasn't possible to keep the rocks in their original spot, as is the case with the two stones above, they looked for creative ways to use them elsewhere. The outdoor shower, for example, was designed around one of the property's massive rocks, which serves as the shower's platform, and there is a smaller stone where one can sit or place shampoo and soap. "You really feel as if you are part of the landscape," says the homeowner. "It's pure heaven." In another instance, the architects used boulders to help handle runoff from the house's flat roof. A chain is tethered from a corner of the roof to a boulder on the ground so that in a rain storm, the runoff cascades down the chain and over the stone to create a useful and dramatic design element.

One unusual feature is the open-air breezeway that connects the living area to the bedrooms. "It's the ultimate opportunity to experience the landscape. Just that small amount you walk outside from the main house to go to bed at night enables you to really be a part of the environment," says Hutker. "You see the stars, hear the sound of the waves, and smell the air." The breezeway is also used as additional living space, particularly for dining alfresco when the owners fire up the grill hidden behind a large sliding cedar door.

The house's facade is Western red cedar, which over time will weather to a hue that will blend in with the trees. Glacial boulders found on the site were kept in place or incorporated into the landscape as stone walls or decorative elements. The quartzite used for the chimney is not native, but was chosen by the architects because it looks as if it could have emerged from the surroundings.

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Although the house is large enough to accommodate a household with three energetic children, the homeowners opted to keep the footprint small. "We could have easily added a second story to the house. We probably would have a better view of the water that way," says the homeowner. "But that wasn't important to us. Above all, we wanted to respect the site. We wanted to be close to nature." 🏡