

HAMPTONS BEACH HOUSE / NANTUCKET GETAWAY / VIRGINIA OCEANFRONT DESIGN

OCEAN HOME™

The Luxury Coastal Lifestyle Magazine

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ON THE COVER
Landscape architect
Dan Gordon and
Hutker Architects
collaborate to design
the ultimate Martha's
Vineyard getaway.

*EAST COAST
SUMMER*

ISLAND TIME

A CLEAN, CLASSIC LANDSCAPE DESIGNED FOR EASY, BREEZY VINEYARD SUMMERS.

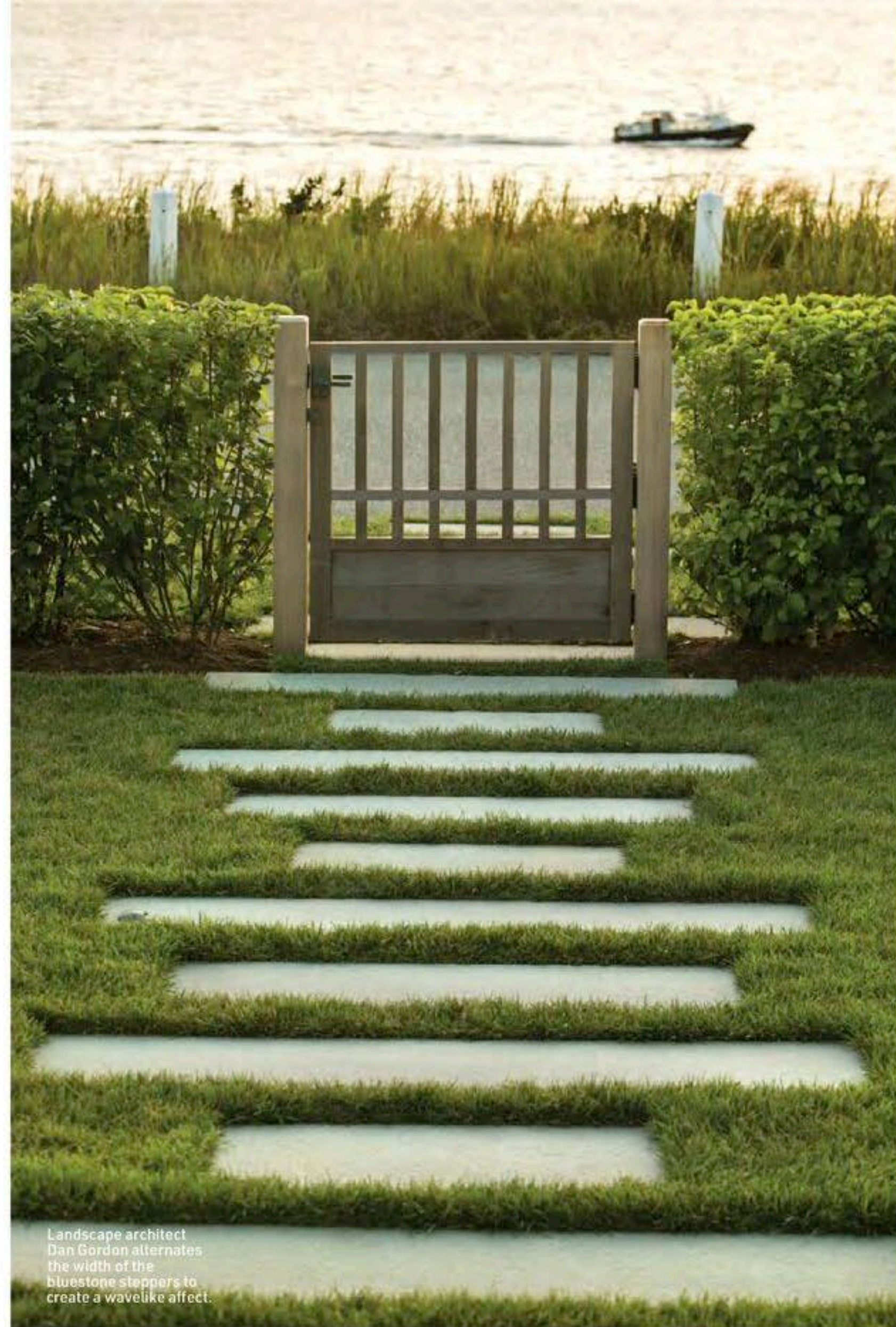
BY JENNIFER SPERRY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIL LANDINO

From its high perch on the bluffs of Martha's Vineyard, this coveted parcel delivers big views due east over Nantucket Sound. Dubbed "Big Bluff," the home sits near the tip of East Chop, the northernmost head of land in the town of Oak Bluffs. East Chop Lighthouse is just down the street, and East Chop Drive—popular with walkers, joggers, and bicyclists for its stunning scenery—winds around the property's outer edge.

The lot's original home was a beloved fixture in the historic neighborhood; however, it ultimately succumbed to lack of upkeep and weather exposure. When the property changed hands in 2017, the new owners tasked island-based Hutker Architects with designing a Shingle-style structure honoring the original's character. Meanwhile, they turned to Dan Gordon Landscape Architects to develop a landscape befitting the prominent site.

"It's a unique situation in that the residence is actually comprised of two buildings: a main home on the shore and a guest house to the rear," explains principal Dan Gordon, who collaborated with senior associate Patrick Taylor on the project. "Our job was to provide circulation between the parcels and tie them together with a connecting vocabulary," Gordon relates.

In between the main dwelling and guest home (called, you guessed it, "Little Bluff") is a low-use town road that presented a unique challenge to the designers' unification efforts. Their response was to create a strong central axis: a bluestone walkway that stretches from the guest home, to the rear of the main home, and lastly



Landscape architect Dan Gordon alternates the width of the bluestone steppers to create a wavelike affect.

across the front yard to the outer hedge. The only breaks in the walkway's continuity are the road and the main home's mass.

Alternating the width of the bluestone steppers created a wavelike pattern, a subtle nod to the seaside atmosphere. "We pushed and pulled the edges; it's a little playful, a little different," says Gordon. "Our goal was to strike that balance between a clean, classic look and something a little more contemporary and fun."

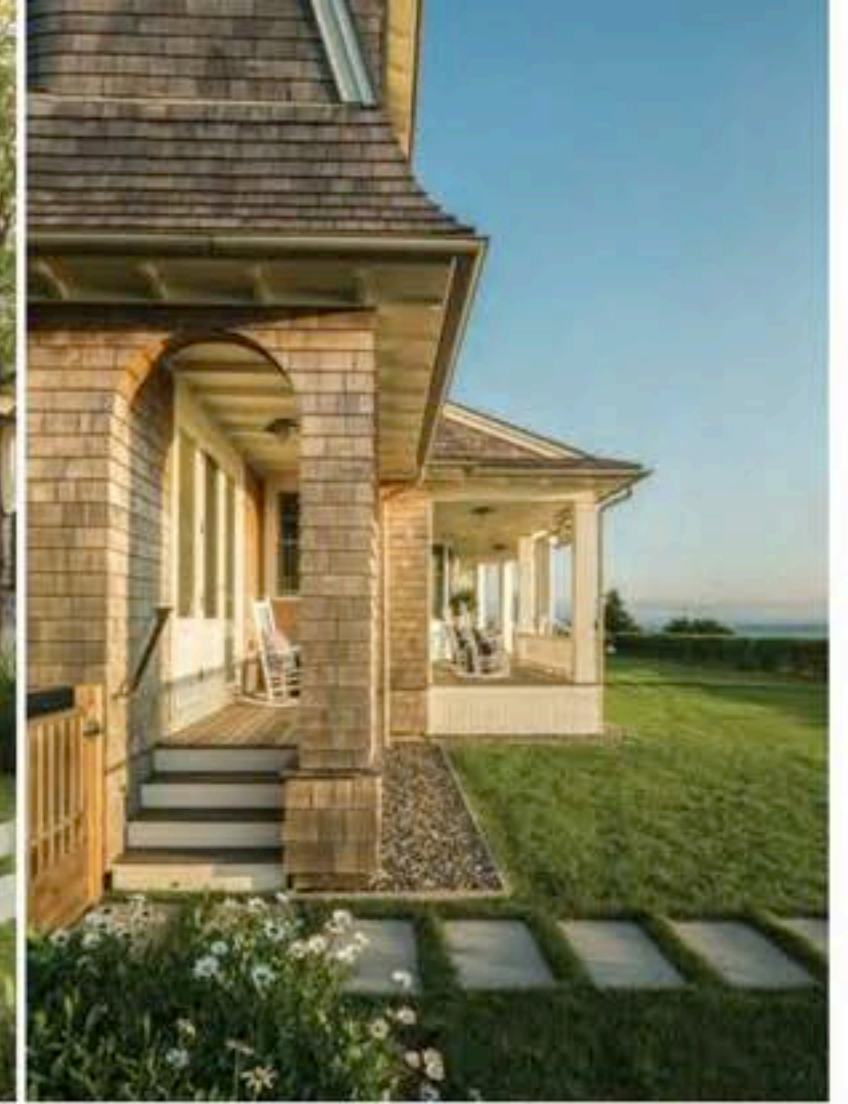
Twin arbor structures—crafted from western red cedar and placed on either side of the town road—further reinforce

the connection between the two lots. "They act as gateways to their respective houses," explains Taylor, "and their character complements the prevailing Shingle-style architecture."

For the main home, the landscape architects decided against elaborate foundation plantings, keeping the outline clean and uncluttered with a stone skirt. Then, open lawn sweeps out toward a neat viburnum hedge. On this coastal side, where the property is more visible, Gordon and Taylor came up with the idea of a secret garden, a surprise treat for passersby.

lifestyle

■ LANDSCAPE DESIGN



The owners wanted the landscape to reflect the beauty of the island, complete with cutting gardens and vegetable beds.



“We extended the hedge so that it spirals around a flagpole marking the lot’s northernmost point,” notes Taylor. Within the hedge outline, repeating riffs of Endless Summer hydrangeas, Russian sage, and Karl Foerster grasses form a classic summer palette. “It’s such an exposed site that it really lends itself to summer plantings,” he adds.

One of the clients’ special requests was to have gardens for cut flowers and veggies close at hand. The architects tucked these functional beds along the property line on the home’s more private side. Three beds with bluestone banding feature cutting-friendly perennials like Russian sage, *Verbena bonariensis*, and *Agastache ‘Blue Fortune,’* plus extra room for annuals of the clients’ choosing. Closer to the house are three vegetable beds, complete with a custom red cedar support for tomatoes and peas.

When the clients asked for plenty of bike storage, the architects delivered a custom bike stand: a large slab of bluestone with notches to stabilize the front tires. Sited at the base of the main home’s arbor, the bike rack reads as part of the hardscape, fitting in aesthetically while delivering practicality. “Downtown Oak Bluffs is just a short cycle away. The kids ride around on summer evenings; it’s very much a biking community,” notes Gordon.

Passing ferries, fresh veggies, colorful blooms, lawn games, sunsets, and relaxing on the front porch to take in the view—this coastal property is now an ode to summer living. It’s quintessential Martha’s Vineyard. ✦

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT dangordon.com; landscapeinc.com; hutkerarchitects.com; jgemv.com; perfectionfence.com

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