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SPRING 2009

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Spring 2009 Issue \$4.95

\$4.95US \$5.95CAN 9 1 >



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A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE ALL AROUND
ALLOWS FOR A PERFECT ENDING.

A Waterfront Gambrel Grows Up



DESIGN: SPB DESIGN | GENERAL CONTRACTOR: SULLIVAN BUILDERS, LLC

TEXT: JENNIFER KAIN DEFOE | PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: JENNIFER ELDRIDGE STELLO

When Vic and Miriam Gilbert purchased their waterfront home in 2005, they knew they would be doing extensive renovations, so their real estate agent, Cheryl Torme, presented them with a copy of *Home Remodeling Cape Cod, the Islands & the South Coast*. Lucky for us, Miriam noticed our request to readers to contact us if planning a remodel and they decided to share their adventure.

GETTING A QUALIFIED TEAM IN PLACE

After a lengthy search, the Gilberts found a small 1940s Gambrel perched on a hilltop acre-plus lot overlooking Buzzards Bay. Their remodel started with Shawn and Peter

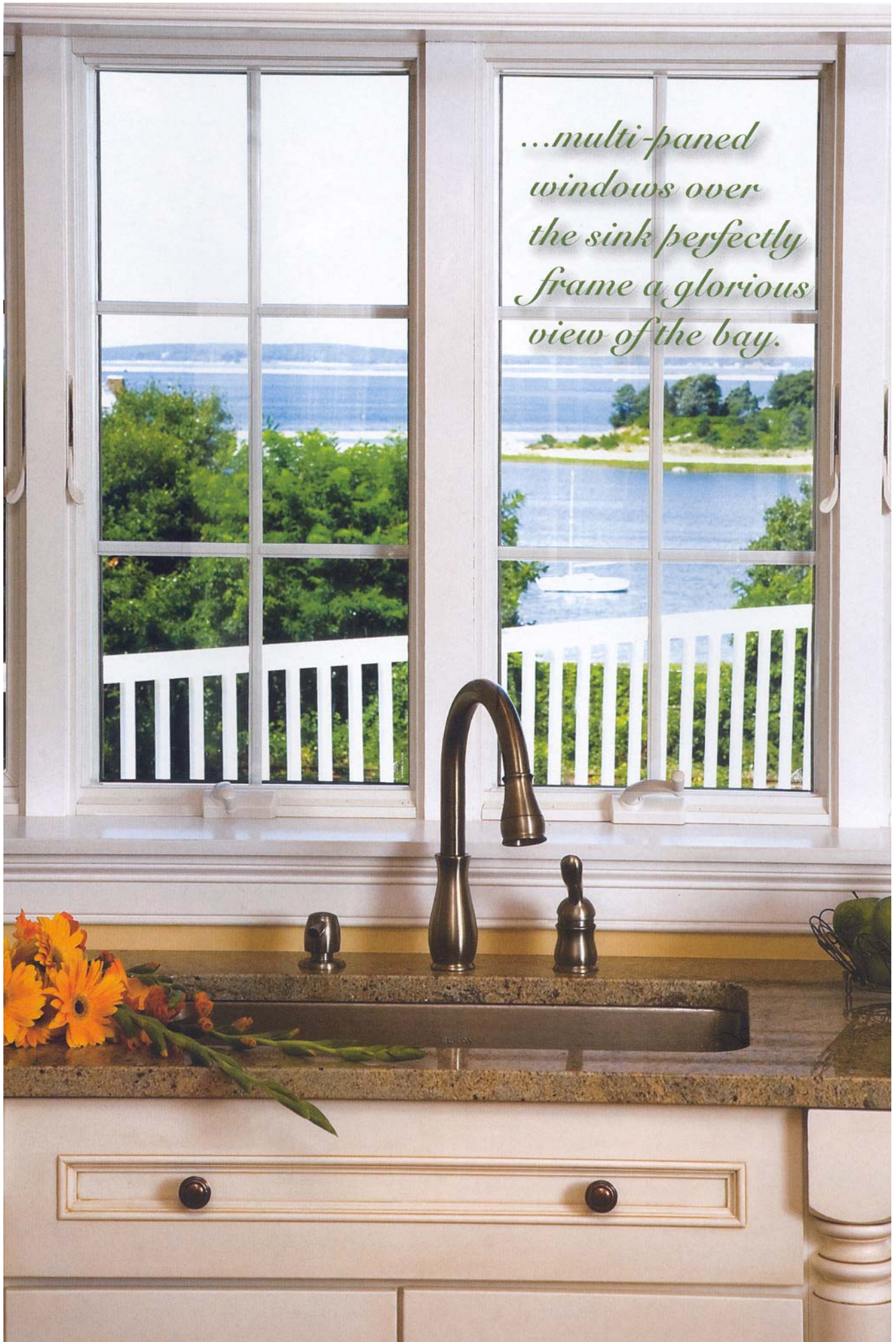
Bissonette, brothers and owners of SPB Design in East Falmouth, who came up with plans to raze a 1970s family room addition that had been tacked onto the side of the house where new construction became the open kitchen Miriam was looking for. Additional changes involved reworking the first floor layout and then adding a second floor to the one-story back of the house, creating space for a master suite with water views.

"We suggested adding on the second floor for the master suite because the only way to add (a master suite) to the first floor was by going across the back, taking up all those water views," said Shawn.

Plans for exterior alterations to the front of the home were



*...multi-paned
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kept to a minimum. “The front roofline was unchanged,” said Vic, “but we did add a small portico with columns to the front door.”

Shawn led the Gilberts to builder Walter ‘Sully’ Sullivan, the founder of Sullivan Builders, LLC based in Bourne. “Shawn gave us three names, Walter’s and two others, and I liked Walter from the moment I shook his hand,” said Vic.

Sullivan has a lot of remodels under his belt, estimating eighty percent of his business is remodeling, and this wasn’t the

The Gilberts stayed flexible not only with construction changes, but when it came to finances too.

Gilberts first attempt at renovating a home, so all were open to making up the rules as they went along, so to speak, creating a flexible environment when construction began in 2006.

The Gilberts stayed flexible not only with construction changes, but when it came to finances too. “We didn’t really have a budget in mind,” said Miriam, so when changes were suggested they were considered for aesthetics rather than dollar signs.

CHANGES ALONG THE WAY MAKE THE REMODEL

One of several mid-renovation tweaks is just inside the new main entrance that opens into the kitchen. The original plans had called for the island Miriam requested. But the Gilbert’s

kitchen designer, Barbara Spaulding of Cataumet Kitchen & Designs, suggested curving the front of it, really opening up this primary entry space. Just beyond the island, multi-paned windows over the sink perfectly frame a glorious view of the bay.

Miriam took a very active roll in planning ‘her’ kitchen, working closely with Spaulding. “We worked that winter, from ’06 to ’07,” she said. She initially had reservations about having granite counters, deeming them “too noisy”, but here too she remained flexible and ended up compromising. The counters along the walls are a warm tone of granite called ‘Kashmir Gold’. On the top tier of the island, richly stained wood creates the feeling of a table.

A newly installed steel support beam has opened up the kitchen to the adjacent great room and, although neither room is especially large, by using the same paint color on the walls in both, it feels like one expansive space. Paint colors throughout the house are Benjamin Moore in the tones of “sea and sand”, as Miriam put it, with ‘Mohave Desert’ on the walls in these rooms.

In the great room, it’s Vic who put his talents to work. “My father taught me woodworking,” he said, and he put that long-ago learned skill to good use by refinishing the original mantle

Preceding pages: The home in full flower. Inset: Breakfast is served in the great room’s nook. At left: A well placed window over the kitchen sink offers brilliant views. This page: A gentle curve to the island’s top makes for comfortable dining.



and surround on the existing fireplace and then creating custom built-in cabinetry around it, complete with pocket doors to hide the TV.

The white crown moldings used in the great room, and in much of the house, are another example of a mid-construction mind-change. “The original plans didn’t include the wood-work, but it was coming out so nice, they added the two-piece crown molding,” Sullivan explained, and they really pop

A new set of sliders on the water-facing side of the great room created the perfect alcove for a small breakfast table where the Gilberts enjoy many meals. Like most of the furnishings throughout the house, the maple dinette set is one bought many years ago. “Every piece has a story,” said Miriam of the couple’s well-loved vintage furniture that helps give this snug house a well-loved, comfortable look that clearly says it is a house to be enjoyed, not an untouchable showcase.

Beyond the great room, to the front of the house is the downstairs guestroom. Attached to the guestroom is a new full bath, occupying space that had once been a mudroom, creating an additional first-floor master suite option.

To the rear of the house is a good-sized family room. Four sets of sliders take up nearly every inch of exterior wall space letting in sunlight and water views. A new gas fireplace has

A second story was added to make way for a luscious master suite complete with private waterview deck.

four comfortable cottage-style chairs arranged in front of it.

Upstairs are two more small bedrooms, one used for an office that has an adorable window seat, showcasing more of Vic’s woodworking expertise, and a small full bath decorated with a whimsical sailboat theme. And then there’s the master suite. And what a master suite it is.

ONE SWEET MASTER SUITE

The master runs from the front of the house all the way to the back. The spacious bathroom vanity with his-and-hers sinks incorporates the same cabinetry and granite as the kitchen. A glass-walled shower is tucked into one corner and much of the remaining space is devoted to a massive jetted-tub.

The master bedroom features a cathedral ceiling, gas fireplace, private deck and walk-in closet with a washer and dryer. Mid-construction design changes here were numerous. First off, the space for the walk-in closet, located directly above the first floor bath, didn’t exist. It was initially supposed to be one story, but Sullivan suggested adding a second to expand the closet space and add the laundry area.

Shawn Bissonette suggested putting an additional gas fireplace in the master. But then even after they said yes to it, Vic and Miriam opted to move the fireplace to the opposite of the bedroom to allow for more windows, creating space for one of the bigger modifications, a spacious deck just off the master.

“After we framed up the bedroom, they just had such great views - the best in the house,” said Sullivan, and so they went for it.



Top, left: A shaded spot on the lower level deck is the homeowners' favorite; right: This view of the home's front shows off the low maintenance perennial garden and new three car garage.



Lower, left: A new arbor leads to a courtyard patio area with an inlaid sundial; right: A gas fireplace, added to the master bedroom, offers a comfy reading spot.





Shawn P. Bissonette
Phone/Fax 508-495-2881
shawnsbdesign@yahoo.com

Architectural Design, Drafting, Permitting and Consulting

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The original front door gained a sense of presence by adding columns and a small, pitched roof.

The finishing touch for Vic and Miriam Gilbert's home is the low maintenance landscaping designed and installed by Brian and Nichole Litchfield of T.N.B. Landscaping of North Falmouth.

In the small fenced-in space in front of the house, a blend of ornamental grasses, along with several varieties of lilies in shades of yellow, and Japanese painted irises in purple hues will provide color throughout the growing season. White fencing and a low-maintenance driveway of asphalt topped with gravel that's then pressed in with a roller create a finished but not fussy look in the remainder of the space.

The Gilberts own previous remodeling experience and choosing a team they could really work with allowed them to enjoy the process; "I loved it!" exclaimed Miriam. Apparently so, because Miriam said she would consider selling and doing it all over again while Vic just rolled his eyes. ☺

Project Overview

Expect to Pay:

\$550,000 – \$600,000

- Raze 1970s addition and build new kitchen
- Open up floor plan on first story
- Add second story to rear of home to create master suite
- Create a low maintenance landscape to complement home