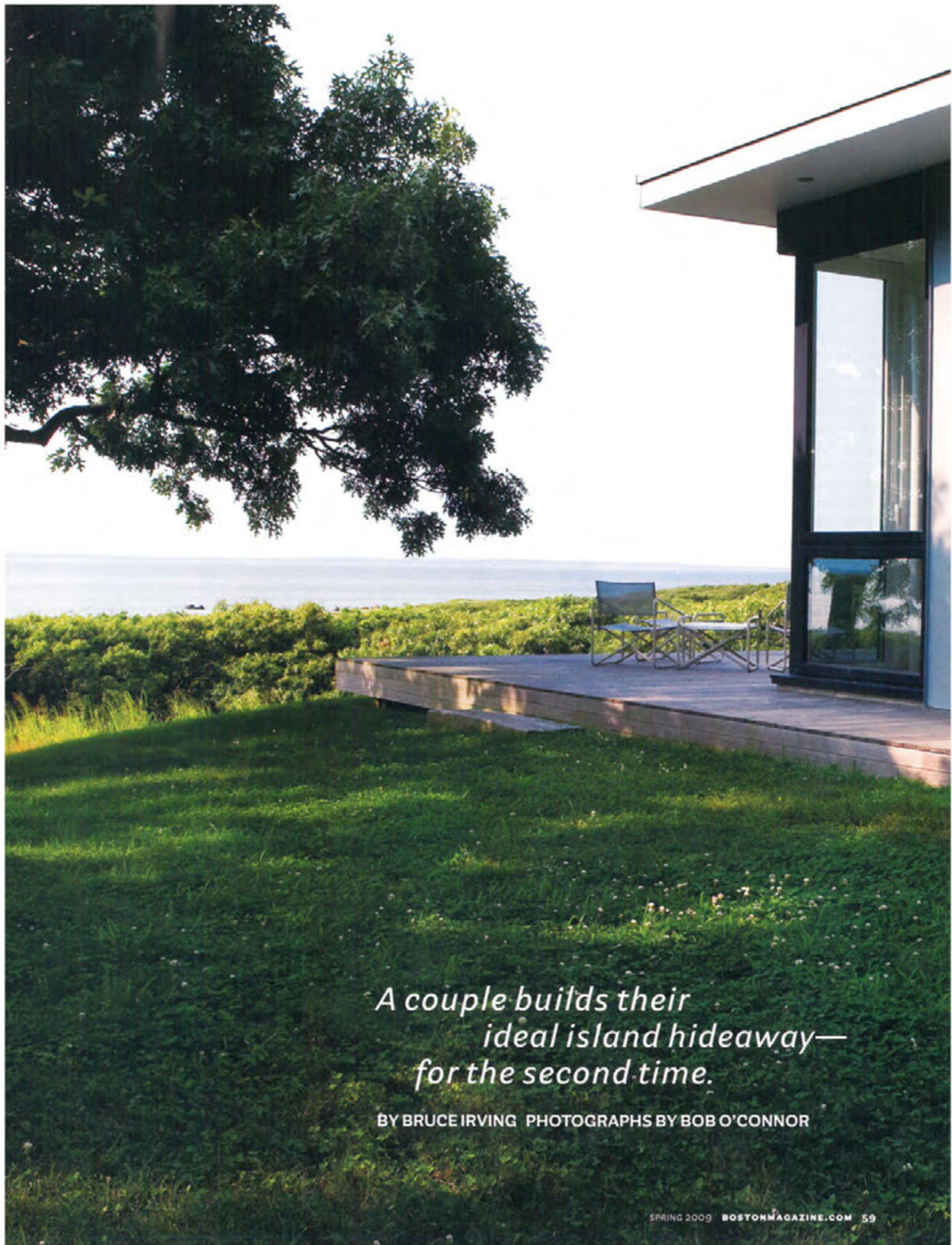


VINEYARD



HEAVEN



*A couple builds their  
ideal island hideaway—  
for the second time.*

BY BRUCE IRVING PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB O'CONNOR

## Location, location, location:

The three rules of real estate rarely need repeating. Once was more than enough for the New York couple who built this Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, getaway on five acres overlooking Vineyard Sound and the Elizabeth Islands. They discovered the area in the early '60s and soon developed a deep love for the island's low and varied landscape. A decade later, the pair—she a museum curator, he a rabbi—purchased a piece of land and hired New York architect Richard Henderson and local builder Colin Whyte to build a simple summer home. "I have very fond memories of that first house," the curator muses. "But after almost 30 years, we looked forward to starting over and making ourselves a place where we could retire." Instead of building elsewhere, though, the duo decided to create a new home on their existing plot.

This time they chose New York firm Architecture Research Office (ARO) and gave the designers two directives: celebrate the property's astounding views and provide a space that calms the soul. But creating a dream retreat wasn't as simple as drawing up plans. First, they'd have to take down the house they'd already built. "We've torn down a few of our old houses before," Whyte, the original builder, says, "but this was the first time we've done it for the same client!"

ARO principal Adam Yarinsky wanted the water views to edge into the home, reflecting the slow decompression the busy New Yorkers experience when they reach their Zen-like getaway. "The old house was a long box, with every room facing the water," Yarinsky recalls. "Our challenge was to make the new house and its site an experience." To develop this narrative, Yarinsky positioned the 2,700-square-foot home parallel to the slope of the land and diagonal to the ocean views. He then worked with landscape architect Michael Boucher of Freeport, >>



The living room focuses on the basaltina-clad chimney, which doubles as a china cabinet on the opposite side.





The master bedroom is furnished with simple wood pieces. Opposite, the dining area features Alvar Aalto chairs and ash-veneered cabinets.



Maine, to design a large courtyard hidden behind a 5-foot-high wall of tightly set cut granite. Guests now slip between the house and this wall to discover a "secret garden" carpeted with native bearberry and adorned with a single hawthorn tree.

Inside the house, precisely crafted materials—basaltina, glass, zinc, and American white oak—interlock with each other, like the mechanism of a watch. Likewise, the exterior wood wall crosses through the glass into the interior spaces. Made of flush boards, the pieces were custom milled and locked together with shiplap joints. They form a textured, shadowed surface inspired by the property's gnarled, lichen-covered scrub oaks. "We spent a lot of time getting that wall treatment right," says Yarinsky, recalling the firm's use of a laser cutter to construct a full-size wood mockup.

The rest of the walls are simple painted plaster, except where panels of vertical-standing-seam zinc appear, echoing the building's exterior. "We love the way the house works with differing textures rather than strong colors," say the owners. "It's serene and calming." To further keep the attention on the architecture, the owners opted for furniture in a neutral palette, with a midcentury modern sensibility. The pieces' quiet elegance, combined with the home's careful design, complete a contemporary picture—a thoughtful, restful escape for a couple who can finally, after several decades, retire. ■



**ARCHITECT ARO CONTRACTOR** Martha's Vineyard Construction Company  
**INTERIORS** Jennifer Hanlin, New York

The entryway passes through a contemplative courtyard, framed by the home's wood-clad walls. Opposite, top, the same wood detailing is brought inside; bottom, Yarinsky finished the master bath in shimmering glass mosaic tile.





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## TRADE SECRETS

INSIDER TIPS ON WHAT MAKES THIS SPACE GREAT

### 1. CLEAN AND MODERN

To maintain continuity, the kitchen was designed using the same materials as in the rest of the house, including honed and filled basaltina countertops, ash-veneered cabinets, and a stainless steel backsplash. Hidden fixtures above the cabinets wash the ceiling in a soothing light, perfect for evening entertaining.

**2. SET IN STONE** The hearth and chimney are studies in basaltina, built on-site over several weeks by an Italian craftsman. Below the mantel, the stone is bush-hammered to achieve a rough texture; above, it's smooth. Yarinsky hung the coil drapery screen on a stainless steel rod.

**3. STEPPING DOWN** Concerned about getting light into the lower level, Yarinsky mounted low-lead glass panels on seed-blasted stainless steel supports.

**4. ROOM FOR ONE** The guest bathroom features a rougher glass tile. "We like to establish a field rather than a decorative pattern," says Yarinsky, who likes the tactility of the irregularly cut material. "It gives off the sense of having been made by hand."

**5. PRIVATE SCREENING** At the main entry, Yarinsky ran the exterior wood wall into the foyer to bring the outside in. "By seeing the wall partly deconstructed on the inside, you start to understand how it was built," he says. The interior wall screens the coat closet and master suite.

**6. NICHE MARKET** "Cutting openings and wrapping them in tile shows the depth of the wall," says Yarinsky, who kept the bath simple. "The house is on a beautiful site. It's not about hanging out in a luxurious bathroom," he adds.



