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AT A MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMPOUND, STEVEN GAMBREL AND TOM KLIGERMAN HAVE MADE A GUEST RETREAT SO GOOD, VISITORS MAY NEVER WANT TO LEAVE.

BY **MERCEDES KRAUS**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RICHARD POWERS**



The great room of a guesthouse on Martha's Vineyard designed by Kligerman Architecture & Design with interiors by Steven Gambrel. Custom modular sofas; wood side table, Avery & Dash; industrial side table, Mantiqes Modern; vintage elm chairs by Pierre Chapo; vintage ceramic lamp by Alexandre Kostanda; Holzstern chandeliers, the Future Perfect. Styled by Anita Sarsidi. For more details, see Resources.

When a large seafront parcel of land went up for sale on Martha's Vineyard, its neighbors, who had lived next door for three decades, immediately scooped it up. The husband and wife—who have grown children—seized the opportunity to expand their property and, soon after, to create a place where visiting friends and family could gather.

To bring to life their vision for a guest residence, the family enlisted the expertise of ELLE DECOR A-List Titan Steven Gambrel, who took charge of the interiors, and A-List architect Tom Kligerman, a longtime friend of the family who had previously worked on other buildings on the estate. Their goal was to conceive peaceful spaces that seamlessly meld with the landscape and the greater context of the historic island.



In the kitchen, the raked-edge countertop is White Macaubas quartzite. Terra-cotta backsplash tiles, Mosaic House; island sink fittings by Waterworks; vintage pendants, Ollier.

The house is a masterfully layered composition. “It’s one building, but it’s designed to look like two,” Kligerman says. To wit: What initially appears to be separate structures—a quaint, long-established saltbox and a nearby garage—are part of an expansive single edifice that subtly blends into the hillside.



The custom banquette in the dining nook is in a Jerry Pair leather. Oak table by Jonathan Field; vintage pendant by Florian Schulz.

Between the two “buildings,” an outdoor kitchen complete with a pizza oven is a crucial tool for the family’s annual make-your-own pizza parties. Guests easily flow from the screened porch, across the patio with its wide sea views, and into the great room and its kitchenette.

The upper floor is the heart of the home, where the family gathers most often. The great room serves as the centerpiece of the house. For the open-floor-plan space, Gambrel designed a custom suite of sofas and small chairs to create intimate, versatile clusters of seating, an arrangement that ensures the room is both inviting and functional, perfectly suited to entertaining.



At the top of the staircase, the 1950s textile cart is French, with a vintage lamp by Jacques Blin. Shades in a Pindler fabric; console (bottom of stairs) by RT Facts; vintage sconce by Adrien Audoux and Frida Minet.

On the ground floor, the meandering series of rooms includes a kitchen—the wife’s favorite space—which opens onto a massive wooden deck and a meadow beyond. The house also contains three bedrooms and an indoor gym and barre room.

Throughout, timber beams and rough-hewn wood floors—salvaged from renovations on the property’s main house—continue a theme of bridging past and present. The foyer’s wall of antique-glass windows further enhances the feeling that the house has a rich history, as if the old elements were always there, with the new construction thoughtfully built around them. “When you’re there, you’re aware of the craft of it,” Gambrel says. “It’s obvious that there was a great deal of consideration put into all the surfaces and how they meet.”



A cozy corner of the living room is anchored by a custom daybed. Carved wood chair by RT Facts; sconce by Circa Lighting.

Another such detail: The stone countertops throughout the house feature a raked edge crafted by Lido Stone Works. Gambrel aimed to celebrate the mine-cut edge that results from chiseling a row of holes—like perforations—to prepare a stone for cutting or breaking.



Beside the antique terrazzo sink in the powder room is a 1930s adjustable French sculpture stand. Vintage Italian mirror; 1940s sconces by Guillerme et Chambron.

One surprising element of the design is the attention paid to one's experience of sound in the space. (The husband, an avid guitar player, first visited the island in his 20s to see a musician friend and fell in love with the place.) A music room on the first floor is a hot spot for jam sessions and more; both it and the great room were tuned by a pair of acousticians to ensure the best sound quality. In some ways, it was the husband's love of electric guitar—his collection is housed in the music room—that was the inspiration for the entire project. "Music is a thread that runs through it. My husband has to have his guitars and amps and have a place to play them," the wife says.

"There was a great deal of consideration put into all the surfaces and how they meet."

—STEVEN GAMBREL

The landscape, too, is integral to the experience of the house. The architecture was designed to meld into this environment—an intention that extended to the interiors, according to Gambrel. “After a weekend here,” he says, “hopefully you’ve experienced all the pieces: stone into bronze into restored glass into rough-code plaster, as well as the sand and trees outside.” Everything should have a profound sense of patina, as the landscape does, so he sought elements that showed the maker’s hand throughout, from the wire-brushed wood of the kitchen island and cabinets to the intricate stitching details on sconces in a bathroom.



In the den, the custom daybed is in a de Le Cuona fabric. Custom Jacques Adnet-style desk; Chatwin chair by Richard Wrightman; wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries; custom area rug.

Gambrel’s attention to detail here is acute. Every surface, finish, and piece of furniture is rich with detail, texture, and layers. For these spaces—ones made to keep kith and kin relaxed and happy for indefinite periods of time—every choice matters. “It’s all gently cajoling you,” he says, “into a very pleasant experience.”