

HOME GARDEN TRAVEL + LUXURY LIFESTYLE

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GARDEN INSPIRATIONS

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FEELS  
LIKE  
HOME

The magnificent pool makeover includes Refine Landscape Architecture's towering chimney design, paired with dual log storage areas set against the company's all new landscaping.





Revitalizing a dated 1940s Cape Cod, Green Gables Design and Restoration teams with Maison, Inc. to transform it into the perfectly stunning abode.

WRITTEN BY DONNA PIZZI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID PAPAIZAN

WHAT BEGAN WITH Green Gables Design and Restoration working on a simple shared fence along a property line for a family of four, says owner Narada Fairbank, soon morphed into a total restoration of a 1940s Cape Cod house the couple purchased in the same neighborhood six months later.

There, too, the work seemed straight forward at first. Namely, reconfiguring the upstairs level, kitchen and family room. “What started as a cosmetic cleanup,” recalls the homeowner, “grew into a much bigger project when a pipe burst in the kitchen island.”

A developer might have razed the period home entirely to start over, but the owners felt differently. “The homeowners drove the extent of the remodel by being willing to take on a monumental renovation from the lowest level to the very top and completely renovating all of it,” says Fairbank. “Everything was modernized, all systems replaced, heating HVAC, mechanical, electrical and plumbing.”

Once the scope grew so large, the couple asked Green Gables for advice regarding the interior design. “I had met Joelle Nesen previously at a holiday gathering at their Maison, Inc. shop, but it wasn’t until we realized the scope of the renovation was so much more serious that we’d need expert assistance to get it done as quickly as possible. That’s when Green Gables recommended Joelle.”

The owners had never undertaken a full-fledged remodel before. “We had no remodel experience, just a mud or bathroom makeover, nothing of this size,” says the woman. “We were afraid without professional help the costs would go quickly out of control.”

After their first meeting with Maison, Inc., the homeowner recalls experiencing a huge sigh of relief. “I suddenly had this team completely dialed in with Joelle for the big picture, Emma focused on interior architecture and Margaret looking at floorplans that included furnishings, as well as architectural cabinet details.”

“The homeowner knew what she wanted and had a good vision for the house. Our job was to not only honor the architecture, yet also make it more fluid, and crisper for today’s lifestyle.”

— Joelle C. Nesen, Maison, Inc.



ABOVE Now with a newly revealed view to the West, the living room houses a custom sofa with Scalamandre fabric and two custom leather chairs. Victoria Hagan sheers frame the window and a lush carpet encourages bare feet and cozy family times. LEFT Set back from the road, a grassy area allows breathing space. Handsome black Marvin windows and doors throughout from Portland Millwork pop against the exterior and architectural composite roofing.

The newly designed family-centric kitchen is filled with appliances sourced from Eastbank Contractor Appliances, Waterworks plumbing fixtures, cabinetry from Eddie Murphy, and crisp Calacatta counters and backsplash.



Soothing wood-based furnishings are crowned by an Urban Electric chandelier. The Johnathan Charles table is surrounded by wicker chairs and French doors dressed with drapery open onto an expanded deck.

“When we learned Green Gables was on the job,” says Nesen, “we were delighted because we love working with them.” Nesen also found the homeowner easy to connect with. “She knew what she wanted and had a good vision for the house. Our job was to not only honor the architecture, yet also make it more fluid, and crisper for today’s lifestyle.” With that in mind, they knew that they needed to keep the home’s original intimacy by making comfortable spaces without opening it up too much.

In fact, even before Maison came onboard, Green Gables had already started to demo the damage that originated in the kitchen island, as well as having torn out all the cabinets, hardwoods, and damage that occurred on the floor below, including removing an awkward back staircase. “They took the house down to the studs,” says the homeowner. “The brick and chimney mortar were intact, but the interior walls also had to be taken down.” Happily, Maison was not only immediately ready to begin creating the necessary design, but the homeowner soon discovered how well the two companies



The family room is enrobed with the homeowner's favorite shade of green, "GC655" from Fine Paints of Europe. A peaceful 1911 Harold Flos painting glows against the wall color. The custom sectional and ottomans were sourced through Maison, Inc.

worked together. "They have such a nice rapport," she says, "and everything was done for a common good."

Green Gables acted as the family's architect, general contractor, and builder by calling on their extensive in-house team. "Typically, our relationship starts as early as possible in the process," explains Fairbank. "Most of our projects are large scale as builders, and we'll employ architects to work with homeowners in collaboration with their interior design team." When working with Maison on this project, Green Gables generated the floor plans, engineering and permitting of the façade changes. Maison handled all the interiors and space planning, then collaborated wherever the two teams' work intersected.

By working this way, the two teams avoided redundancy in the design process. "It helps the homeowner," says Fairbank. "As a service

provider, I feel it's a very important aspect of customer service, and," he adds with a chuckle, "prevents too many cooks in the kitchen!"

Another consideration for the team was accommodating the considerable height of the individual family members. "We kept the footprint," explains the homeowner. "But we're a very tall family – the boys are between 6'2" and 6'4" tall – so we started with minor changes inside to create height in our ceilings where we could, and to open up windows to widen our views, which makes the home feel more comfortable and beautiful, while still honoring the architecture of the house."

Maison made sure they also accommodated the boys' comfort by not making furnishings too precious. "The family room was entirely reimagined," says Nesen, "from the fireplace to the bar and every detail in between." A comfy, custom sectional makes room for the

whole family. Working hand-in-hand with Green Gables, they also created a series of not mere drawings, but actual crown molding mockups. "That way everyone," explains Nesen, "especially the client knows exactly what they're getting."

The top of the family's list before the damage occurred in the kitchen was to upgrade its view. "The Western elevation had a gorgeous sunset view," says the owner, "but with so much upper cabinetry

and only one small window, you couldn't see it." They also wanted to be able to eat casually in the kitchen, but a tiny little island without seating made it impossible. Maison gave their opinions on a new cabinetry layout and other design functions, including an island that promotes conversation, rather than four people sitting side-by-side.

The new, larger picture window is flanked by a pair of double hung windows with retractable screens. The addition of a Dutch door



The bar area features two stately custom leather Moore and Giles chairs. Along the wall are excellent accessories and handsome Armac Martin regency metal two-tone metal and glass cupboards for cocktail glass storage. Metallic hardware and plumbing fixtures complete the look.



The woman's boudoir features a classic dressing space with ample cabinetry for storage. The handy ottoman in a Pollack fabric provides seating, while 5-inch oak flooring creates a timeless look.

“The homeowners drove the extent of the remodel by being willing to take on a monumental renovation from the lowest level to the very top and completely renovating all of it.”

—Narada Fairbank,  
Green Gables Design and Restoration

enables the family's Labrador retriever to be safely kept outdoors on an extended deck replete with heat lamps for shoulder season. “We can also pass things through the Dutch door to the outdoor dining table,” says the homeowner. “It's a great way to bridge indoor and outdoor spaces that include an outdoor sectional which makes it a wonderful casual hangout zone.”

Overall, Maison's interiors helped maximize the view, one of the home's strong points. “The floor plan that had felt formal previously, now includes a conversation area, a place to enjoy one another's company while looking at the view. With the home down to the studs with new windows and doors everywhere, it has good flow,” says Nesen. “It's not a mansion, but it has comfortable spaces that respect the architecture.”

To soften the many angles found in the primary bedroom's ceiling, Maison suggested wrapping it elegantly with a luminous wallcovering in the same palette as the furnishings. The results, including the custom vanity, are divinely soothing, promoting a restful night's sleep.

“We maximized every inch in the homeowner's boudoir,” says Nesen. “Every piece of her furniture has storage, every panel opens, including a hidden door.”

An important part of the project was the transformation of the pool environment. “All that the previous homeowners had around the pool was a trellis structure, above ground hot tub and seating area,” recalls Fairbank. “We worked with residential landscape architect, Courtney Skybak's company, Refine Landscape Architecture, who designed the stunning, new fireplace structure as well as the landscape design to create a magnificent, full property overhaul.”

At 1100 ft. elevation, the original pool house, which was not heated, had seen considerable weather damage. Green Gables redesigned it to protect the equipment and new fixtures systems, while accommodating a small bathroom with shower, towel storage, wet bar and small refrigerator. The private mechanical room is at the back.



A pair of sconces join with natural light for better vanity mirror viewing. The custom stool upholstered in Kerry Joyce Fabric completes the soft and inviting design.

RIGHT A ruffled chandelier draws the eye toward textured Thibault wallcovering that softens multiple ceiling angles. A graceful bed frame ties to ridged table lamps and stately Mr. & Mrs. Howard bedside tables.





Green Gables' new multi-purpose pool house includes a built-in Hestan grill from Eastbank Contractor Appliances. Doors open to protect a versatile wet bar, storage and refrigerator. A dining area and chaise lounges by Amalfi offer a welcoming entertaining space.

"Looking back," says the homeowner, "we love being here and are so grateful for these spaces filled with kids, family and fun. It was so important to have a team we totally trusted, who wanted us to be happy."

"When you're tearing apart a home," she continues, "things might not always go perfectly, yet both firms stood by their work and always made it right for us. That was invaluable. We had a lot of laughter throughout the project. I admit I tend to overthink things a bit, but they had great humor about it, especially Maison. Truly, such great, talented people." ■

#### PROJECT SOURCES

INTERIOR DESIGN  
Maison, Inc.  
maisoninc.com

CONTRACTOR  
Green Gables Design and Restoration  
ggables.com

APPLIANCES  
Eastbank Contractor Appliances  
eastbankappliance.com

#### Describe your design philosophy.

We offer experiences beyond the ordinary, a sophisticated mix of classic design, fresh style, and a dash of the unexpected. We approach every project with passion and perfectionism. Our relationships with our clients are enduring; built on trust, respect, and imagination.

#### How has your business evolved over time?

This will be our 25th year. I didn't always see Maison, Inc. at the scale we are now. We started with a handful of us working out of 800 sq. ft. space on 21st Avenue. We now have 7500 sq. ft. for a work studio, retail destination, and trade program. We showcase the furniture lines we represent, new and vintage accessories, fine art, as well as to-the-trade design resources. We also have regular events hosting design luminaries from across the country.

#### How do you channel your passion for design into collaboration with contractors to bring a project vision to life?

All our designers are graduates of accredited design schools, and all have additional expertise and training. Technical skills and construction experience stand behind our work. I often speak about trust as it is essential. Every design firm has a reputation among material contractors and builders. With 25 years in business, we are understandably proud of our relationships. Clear communication is crucial.

#### Can you tell us about a collaboration integral to your work?

We are always delighted to collaborate with contractor Green Gables. They excel in project management and share many of our favorite tradespeople. Their exemplary professionalism, easy communication, and top-quality work is something we can depend on, and that is invaluable.

#### You have a reputation for unparalleled customer service; how do you approach problem-solving?

Design is—fundamentally—problem solving. I'm usually the first in the office every morning. I surround myself with hugely talented designers and creative thinkers. As we prep for projects, we each have a different perspective and innovative ideas that flow. Having deep relationships with master craftspeople that can address anything we can come up with, that's why people hire us.

#### You are known for curating luxury home furnishings, what are the best materials to splurge on?

There is something subtle about true quality and the cerebral effect it can have: leaning into down pillows sewn locally in Italian fabric that you can disappear into; when you close a door solidly, with a handle that moves fluidly and with weight. There is a physical response when you touch a silk velvet that is different from touching polyester. In other words, quality isn't visual, it is something you can feel, and it contributes in so many elemental ways to the experience of comfort.

#### What does "timeless" design mean to you?

It's about ingenuity and the overall mix. It's not about a label or a trend. We tend to shy away from the mass-produced and the ready-made, in favor of the tailor-made. We are also enthusiastic



Joelle C. Nesen, president + lead designer  
Maison, Inc. | [www.maisoninc.com](http://www.maisoninc.com)

about incorporating the work of craftsmen and designers from other eras, and the objects collected by our clients over time.

#### What is next on the boards?

I'm really excited to finish my building across the street from Maison, Inc. and to welcome Terris Draheim Outdoor to the neighborhood. The energy is going to be off the charts!