

A Homestead

After the:

By Donna Scaglione

Photography by Steve Vierra

Grows



Jane and Peter Cutler enjoy the new space in their Yarmouthport home.



American philosopher Joseph Campbell once said, "Your sacred space is where you find yourself again and again." For Jane Cutler, that sacred place is an airy, sun-soaked great room she recently added on to her Cape Cod-style home in Yarmouthport.

It's not the trappings of the room that make it a special place for her, although family heirlooms are a treasured part of it. No, for Cutler, it's the large bank of windows overlooking her garden that makes it her favorite room in the house. And it's the window seat that allows her serene moments with a treasured book, or a lazy nap in the sun that any feline would envy.

children have moved on, a couple enlarge their "nest"



"I wanted to provide a home that everyone could come back to," says Jane Cutler of her and her husband's decision to add a great room to their 1830s Cape. Architect Sara Jane Porter varied the room's ceiling height to integrate the addition with the original home.



The Cutlers' kitchen, which was remodeled seventeen years ago, has a marble counter that Jane found in the remnant yard at Ricciardi Marble & Granite in Hyannis. They chose the tile backsplash and the wall paint based on the colors in the marble slab.



This Korean buffet was the first piece Jane bought to decorate the new great room.

"These windows are so magnificent," she says. "They frame the backyard and (its) changes with the season. ... There's always something flowering."

But the view isn't everything. Cutler and her husband, Peter, also wanted the addition for the increased space, which was always at a premium in their small, Greek Revival three-quarter Cape, with its tiny rooms and low ceilings. Before the addition, which was built by Jim LeBoeuf of Barnstable County Construction Co., the house contained 1,700 square feet of space.



A light-filled corner of the great room is Jane's choice spot for rug hooking.

The 1,000-square-foot addition includes the great room; a basement, something the Cutlers never had before; and a three-season room featuring, again, lots of windows.

The Cutlers take some ribbing about the timing of their home expansion, especially from their children. The couple moved to the house in 1980, six years after getting married.

They raised two boys, Jon, now twenty-seven, and Matthew, twenty-three, and built their addition after their sons had finished college and permanently left the nest.

"The boys want to know why it wasn't done when they were here," Jane says. "We tell them when they were in college, we couldn't afford it."

While the younger Cutlers might feel like they are missing something, the young men certainly figured into their parents' decision to finally add on to their home because they are thinking ... grandchildren.

"I wanted to provide a home that everybody could come back to," Jane explains.

The Cutlers are not alone, says Yarmouthport architect Sara Jane Porter, who designed the Cutlers' addition. She sees many clients, so-called empty-nesters, whose broods are gone, yet who want more room for when their offspring – and their offspring's offspring – return home to visit.

"People want a place for their kids to come with their grandchildren," Porter says.

"Some (empty-nesters) are having master bedroom suites done so they have a place to retreat to" during those visits, she adds.

Creating a design that suited the Cutlers' desire for more room yet didn't overwhelm the original house was challenging, but Porter welcomed the task.

She's been working with traditional Cape Cod architecture for twenty years and believes in maintaining a home's style and historical integrity. That was key for the Cutler home, which dates to 1830.

"I always loved the exterior of the



The addition, which is the porched-in section at left, respects the home's historical integrity.

When the Cutlers remodeled the dining room seventeen years ago, they retained the brick floor from the porch that was originally in the space. The punched-tin chandelier was made in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and the dining table was originally used in a church refectory in London.



house and one of the biggest challenges was integrating the kind of space they were looking for with the scale of the house," Porter says.

The great room is located off the kitchen, which has a ceiling height of 7 feet 4 inches, similar to the other ceilings in the original house. To give the Cutlers the airiness they wanted in the great room without creating a cavernous feel, Porter designed the ceiling with varying heights.

When you first walk into the room from the kitchen, the ceiling rises to 9 feet, then goes to 13 feet, then descends back to 9 feet.

"It was a big space," Porter says of the great room, which measures 30 by 24 feet with a 3-foot bump-out for the window seat.

"You certainly didn't want the whole thing open. It would be too big. It's good to have the variety of volume."

The Cutlers have room now not only for future generations, but for the occasional large party they enjoy throwing, like the one they had last Christmas.

"That's when I realized all the space we have now," Jane says.

"We had the tree. We had the same people we always have and we weren't tripping over each other. ...We so comfortably fit thirty or forty people."

In addition to fitting lots of loved ones in their home, the Cutlers have room for cherished family antiques in their new space, such as a black-and-white engraving of Pilgrims watching for a provision ship. After sitting in Jane's mother's basement for thirty years, it now hangs in a gold-leaf frame above the new staircase.

"That space needed something grand," Jane says. "I sure wouldn't have picked that, but once we hung it up, it was magnificent."

A large, handmade, wool-and-silk Sarouk rug, which belonged to Jane's grandmother, anchors the great room's décor.

"It's a one-of-a-kind rug and the colors really inspired the rest of the room," says Elliot Meyer, a design consultant

from Ethan Allen Home Interiors in Hyannis, who helped the Cutlers decorate and furnish the room. "It's great to have one thing that inspires everything."

Playing off the rug's palette of deep roses and blues is a custom-designed, claw-foot mahogany table with dark green leather-backed chairs that belonged to Jane's great-grandparents, and a Korean painted console from Peachtree Designs in Yarmouthport.

"We wanted the room to be very, very comfortable and just a wee bit elegant," Jane says.

"The room reminds me of an English kind of country house," Meyer muses. "It's not perfect, it's kind of funky and it's not Boston-sleek looking. And the bones of the room, the architecture is really good."

French doors off the great room open to an enclosed porch that has so many windows you feel like you're outside.

The room's porcelain tile floor, laid by Peter (who also laid the tile around the great room's fireplace), has earthy shades of rusty orange that pick up the tones of the adjacent mahogany deck.

Also off the great room is a white-oak staircase that leads to an unfinished basement used for storage and the occasional furniture project.

It's standard fare for those who take a cellar for granted, but a real gift for the formerly basement-less Cutlers.

"I always wanted a basement," Peter says. "We have an old barn out back but things didn't keep well out there."

"We actually painted furniture down here," Jane says, as excited as any of the first- and second-graders she teaches at the Ezra H. Baker School in West Dennis.

"It's really nice to have this space. I finally have a second refrigerator down here.

"I've always wanted to have something to put a watermelon in," she adds, already looking ahead to a party on the Fourth of July. ♦