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TIMELESS

A NEWLY BUILT HOME ON MORRIS ISLAND
IS DESTINED TO BECOME A CLASSIC



Facing page: The majestic new home, which sits on a waterview hilltop, has a classic columned entrance and windows galore. At left: The living room features built-in bookcases and cabinetry, and a restful blue on beige palette. Below: The dining room, open to much of the living space on the first floor, is delineated with columns. It also has amazing views of the water.

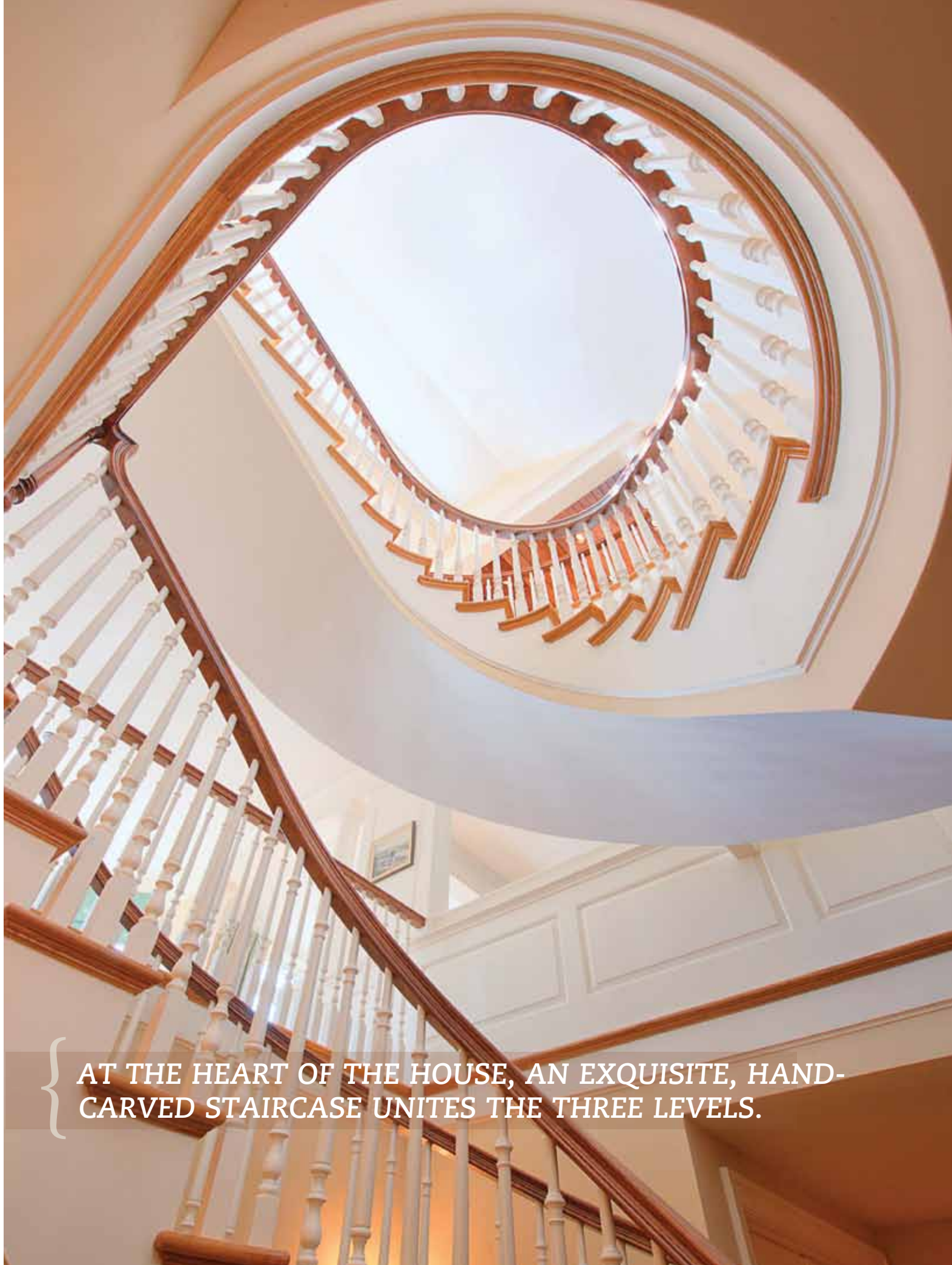
At the easternmost point of Chatham, Massachusetts, is Morris Island, a treasured refuge, famous for its unspoiled coastline and quintessential Cape Cod beauty. Poised on a hill overlooking the beach, this elegant home feels inspired by the natural surroundings:—timeless, beautifully crafted, and surprisingly complex.

The original house that occupied its footprint was less inspired. “It was not very well built,” says Ted Spencer, whose Chatham-based E.H. Spencer & Company has built homes, one at a time, on Cape Cod for thirty years. The clients, who had inherited the house from family, originally planned for a major remodeling, one that would maximize the home’s breathtaking location and complement their antique furniture. Soon into the work, however, the foundation began to crumble. “We realized we needed to take everything down and start from scratch,” says Spencer.

For the new house, the clients weren’t inclined to replicate the former residence, but they were restricted by the challenging footprint. Sited 15 feet from the coastal bank, conservation requirements did not allow for expanding beyond the original foundation. To make the most of the space, John Ingwersen and Peter Haig, principals of Architectural Design Incorporated in Orleans, Massachusetts, worked with the clients to design a home in three levels.

IN CHATHAM

BY CELIA PARSONS
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY: DIANE ANTON
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 BUILD: E.H. SPENCER & CO.
 CUSTOM TILE: THE ALLEN TILE COMPANY



AT THE HEART OF THE HOUSE, AN EXQUISITE, HAND-CARVED STAIRCASE UNITES THE THREE LEVELS.



At the heart of the house, an exquisite, hand-carved staircase unites the three levels. “It makes a connection between the living spaces so that you can live in the whole house,” says Ingwersen. Hand-crafted by Spencer’s team with cherry handrails and oak treads, the staircase almost forms the shape of a heart. “Three dimensionally, it ties the whole house together,” Ingwersen says.

The master suite and top-floor office share the one wing of the house; a second staircase here again connects the multiple levels for a private living area that doesn’t feel detached from the rest of the home. A cherry-paneled elevator will make the wing livable for years to come. With its grand water views, the library is a signature space, featuring custom-built cherry bookcases and a vaulted bead board ceiling that showcase the colonial-style woodwork for which Spencer & Company is known. A hidden doorway, built into one of the bookcases, takes a cue from old-world England, in keeping with the clients’ vision.

This page, from left: The coffered ceiling was painted in the same vibrant blue as the walls, allowing the wood-working to really pop. A secret door connects the master bedroom and the library. Facing page: Oh, that staircase ..this is functional art.



The tile work throughout the home is the picture of understated elegance, the perfect complement to the classic fixtures. This bath, in the lower level, is surrounded by glass tiles of varied size and topped with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. Built-in cabinetry in the bath gets a bit of an edge from contemporary pulls.

On the lower level, the home theater was another important room to the clients, who wanted an entertainment space with a state-of-the-art sound system. Spencer & Company's warm, coffered cherry ceiling enriches the room's acoustic experience and provides a striking visual. Taking advantage of the property's slope for the exercise room, full sliding glass doors let in the natural light and lead to a sunken patio. The exercise room is complemented by a sauna and luxurious glass and ceramic tiled bath, where Spencer & Company created a barrel-vaulted wooden ceiling above the tub. Here and throughout





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Allen Tile Company
 PREMIER DESIGN AND INSTALLATION
 Ted Thomas, *Proprietor*

the home, tile work by The Allen Tile Company in Wellfleet reflects the home's superior craftsmanship. Paying meticulous attention to the tile materials and installation, owner Ted Thomas and his team take pride in bringing out the best of a tile's beauty and longevity. "We build the spaces to the tile to give it its best look," says Thomas. "For example, we'll set the plumbing fixtures so they will always come through the crosshairs of a grout or the center of a tile. It's a subtle detail that makes for a spectacular result." Thomas collaborated with interior designer Susan Tuttle of Surroundings, Inc. in Orleans to determine the most pleasing layout for the tile work in each room—a specially cut border in the lower level bathroom exemplifies Thomas's eye for detail.

The home's exterior is no less magnificent. Landscape architect Allen Abrahamson drew the outdoor spaces together with private terraces planted with blueberries and beach roses. "It makes the house interesting, the way the levels relate," says Ingwersen. A stunning front entrance features a beautiful lead-coated copper arch flanked by columns for a commanding focal point that draws the outdoors in, and indoors out.