

MARTHA STEWART Living



After 30 happy years in the Hamptons, Martha has sold the 19th-century shingled cottage she bought in 1990 and lovingly renovated and furnished. While packing up this past summer, she reminisced about decorating the place, riding her bike everywhere, and throwing parties—lots of parties.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIETER ESTERSOHN | TEXT BY DAN SHAW

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH BY NOE DEWITT



| PEACEFUL PALETTES |

A majestic stuffed tarpon hangs above an 18th-century Swedish console in the living room. Martha collected several of these antique fish and sent them to Skylands, her home in Maine, to be displayed there. Originally painted white, the walls are now a warm yellow, and the wainscoted ceiling has a rosy hue. The curved linen sofa hugs the room's bowed windows, and the wrought-iron coffee table

with a sandstone top stands on sisal carpeting from Safavieh, which flows through the house. **Opposite:** For years, the home's trim was teal, to complement Martha's rose garden. When she moved the rosebushes to her farm in Bedford and replaced them with deep-green shrubbery and burgundy Japanese maples, she switched to a biscuit color that blends in better with the new plantings.



| SHINING SURFACES |

Above: The Dutch door in the front hall has its original paneling, balustrade, and built-in bench for sitting to remove shoes. "The stairwell, which is big enough for a queen-size bed to fit through but not a king, goes up to the third floor, and at each landing there are very pretty clear leaded windows," Martha says. **Right:** Venetian-style shell chairs flank an antique Swedish table on the second-floor landing, where she hung a large mirror to amplify the natural light. Beneath the table, a long woven basket used for holding quail at a shoot is "an oddity" she purchased at a local tag sale. **Below:** In front of the entrance hall's fireplace, Martha paired cane chairs from a collaboration with Bernhardt Furniture with an antique game table for playing cards and competitive rounds of Scrabble with friends.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO, Martha's daughter, Alexis, encouraged her mother, newly single after 29 years of marriage, to spend weekends in the Hamptons, the string of venerable beach towns on the eastern end of Long Island. "She said, 'Mom, it's the place to come for a social life,'" recalls Martha, who dipped her toe in as a regular guest at the Sagaponack home of her friends writer Kurt Vonnegut and his wife, photographer Jill Krentenz.

Within a year, Martha had rented a small cottage of her own on a quiet lane near the East Hampton Library. "I brought in all this cute furniture and gave dinner parties and met people that way—it was so much fun," she says. "And then Alexis said, 'You have to buy a house.'" So Martha called a broker and looked at a slew of places, including a dignified but woebegone 1870s shingled cottage, one block from the ocean on tree-lined Lily Pond Lane, known as one of East Hampton's most gracious streets. "It was the oldest house on the block and a total wreck," she said. "I decided I had to have it."

Her renovation hewed as closely to the original as possible, but Martha's practical, polished aesthetic made it fresh. Working with renowned local contractor Ben Krupinski, she enclosed a covered porch off the kitchen to create a dining area; wainscoted many of the ceilings; and knocked down walls to create a larger living room and luxe primary suite.

"It's an old-fashioned house, but it has a clean, pristine vibe," she says. To furnish it, she shopped at yard sales and antiques stores, gradually filling the space with collections of mercury glass, McCoy pottery, and jadeite dishes.

Martha loved everything about the coastal haven dotted with potato farms and cornfields. "I'd get up in the morning and garden, go to the beach or take a swim, drive to Southampton for lunch, come back, and then go to Amagansett or Montauk for dinner."

Her favorite way to get around: a bicycle. "We'd ride everywhere—to Nick & Toni's, to the Clam Bar on Montauk Highway, to the ferry to Shelter Island."

And as her daughter had predicted, she was very social. When the Clintons rented a house down the street, Martha spotted Hillary taking a morning walk and invited her in for a cappuccino. Another day, Martha found herself chatting with Nancy Pelosi at a neighbor's house. She also hosted bona fide bashes: dinner for 100 on the wraparound porch; her 50th birthday party for around 150 on her front lawn. "We had the Cutchogue Fire Department from the North Fork do a chicken barbecue, and the Blue Parrot restaurant in town did a margarita bar," she says. "All my neighbors came: Billy Joel, Lee Radziwill, and Mort Zuckerman, a one-time boyfriend."

But over time, the tranquility of Maine beckoned, and Martha began spending most of every summer at Skylands, the place on Mount Desert Island she bought in 1997. "And that's why I am moving on," she says. "It hurts, because I love the beach in East Hampton. And even though the area's changing, it is still one of the most charming, beautiful places on earth. But I can always come back!"





| COOL COLLECTIONS |

Clockwise from above: Martha enclosed an open porch off the kitchen to create a dining area; the chairs are vintage Grange painted pale green, and the floor is made from teal-blue Mexican cement tiles, while Martha's trove of aqua McCoy pottery is displayed on mahogany shelves above American-made shop-style metal cabinets. Mounted fish taxidermy and an old bar cart add whimsy to the servery (aka butler's pantry). A selection of jadeite dishes, amassed by Alexis when she was planning to open a diner in the area, fills a hanging mahogany cabinet; below, Martha painted the lids of antique glass canisters to match the metal cabinet they sit on. In the laundry room, cake stands line the top of a cupboard original to the house, which holds more dishes, cookbooks, and cleaning supplies in its cabinets.





| TIMELESS TREASURES |

Above: Martha spent countless hours studying in the library, where she kept her vast collection of gardening books. She installed black roller shades to prevent the sun from fading the volumes, and added wainscoting to the coffered ceiling. She bought the yellow-and-green glass chandelier in Cuba, when she was covering Pope John Paul II's 1998 visit as a correspondent for *CBS This Morning*. **Below, from left:** A collection of mercury-glass vases shares the living-room mantel with antique church candlesticks (Martha surmises that the mantel, added in the early 1900s, came from Sears.) A gilt-framed mirror hangs behind an Aesthetic Movement table with an inlaid pink-marble top that is earmarked for the pink-granite ladies' powder room in Maine. Pink Venetian glassware is showcased in a narrow cabinet that's original to the house.





“
Everybody walks and
bikes on Lily Pond Lane.
They scream, ‘Hey,
Martha!’ as they go by.”
—Martha

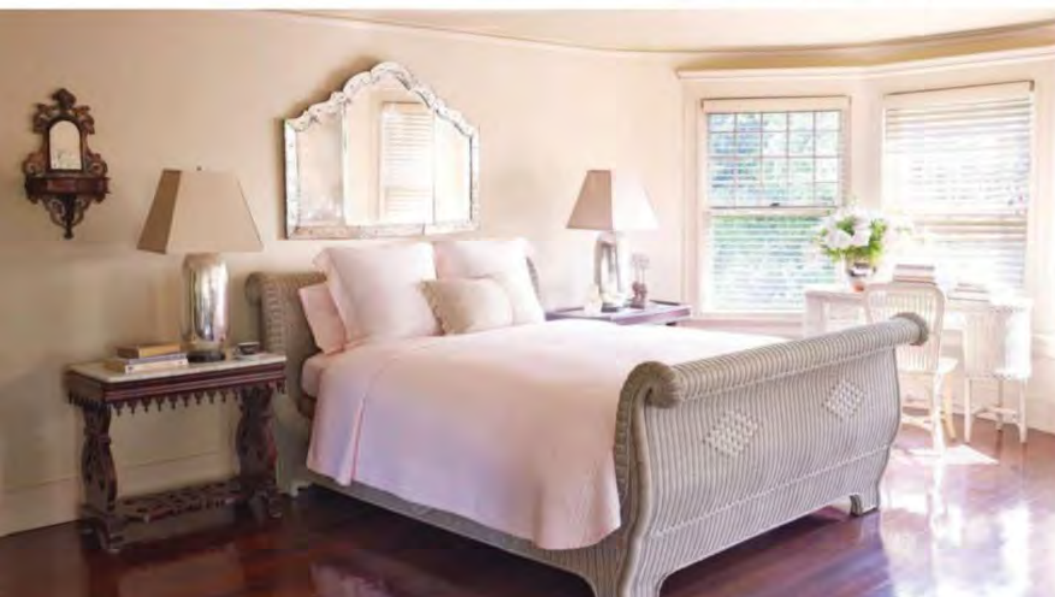
| DIVINE DETAILS |

The dining room is home to one of Martha's all-time-best finds: a pink-and-yellow Venetian-glass chandelier she purchased for \$250 at a Connecticut consignment shop in the 1990s. Antique cane chairs surround a pair of drop-leaf tables from her collaboration with Bernhardt Furniture; when pushed together, they accommodate seating for 24. The column and dentil moldings were probably added to the house in the early 1900s.



| REFINED RETREAT |

Above: Martha combined three small rooms to create her spacious bedroom suite. In the primary bathroom, she installed wainscoting on the walls and hired a local artisan to make the custom marble vanity and baseboards. **Below, from left:** A Venetian mirror hangs over a wicker bed that Martha found at an East Hampton antiques shop and painted a pale, taupe-y pink; fittingly, it's been moved to the pink guest house in Maine. Peonies from the garden grace a writing desk—"I was lucky that I never had to buy flowers here because something was always blooming—peonies, roses, lilies, hydrangeas," she says.



| ARTFUL ACCENTS |

Martha moved the antique wicker chaise below out to her driveway and sprayed it dusty rose, to match the bedroom's walls. "I learned that the secret to spray-painting is applying multiple coats of thin paint, instead of one thick layer," she says. On the pedestal next to another Venetian mirror, a wrought-iron urn holds *Rodgersia* from the garden.



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