

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1997

Custom Home

THE ART AND CRAFT OF CUSTOM HOME BUILDING / A HANLEY-WOOD, INC., PUBLICATION

SHINGLE REVIVAL

BIG DEALS BUILDING THE BIG ONES



Shingle Revival

THIS PROJECT WAS ADRIFT UNTIL
THE RIGHT TEAM CAME ABOARD.

Sometimes almost everything can go wrong on a job and it can still turn out right. Just ask custom builder Andrew Flake. When he signed the contract to build this ocean-front custom home in Martha's Vineyard, the project was running aground; its first architect was on the way out and the window order was irretrievably in motion.

Fortunately for clients Tom and Barbara Israel, Flake is very good at navigating rough waters. With 20 full-time staffers, a cabinetry shop, and a lock on some of the area's best subs, he's able to take on the toughest high-end jobs. But his extra boost came from his association with architect Mark Hutker, and it's what saved him on this job.

Although they maintain separate businesses, Flake and Hutker combine forces in ways that make them a kind of hybrid design-build firm. For the right client, one who isn't suspicious of such a close architect-builder relationship, their lock-step understanding of each other can

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY



Steel strengthens the arched windows in the living area and adjacent dining area, allowing Hutker and Flake to open the room to three sides of ocean view.



speed the designing and building process.

On the Israel house, the tight deadline had the architect faxing design details to the site just as the carpenters were lifting their hammers. "We were running to keep in front of Andrew," says Hutker. The 6,500-square-foot project comprised a total renovation of the original structure facing the ocean and the incorporation of a new addition of almost equal size directed toward the street. "Although we had to live with the footprint, the foundation, and the window order, we were able to stand back and make some decisions," he says.

One of the most important of those decisions affected the streetside elevation. "We pulled the gambrel shape into the addition. For curbside appeal, it really made the house," Hutker explains. "It brought the scale down from a three-story facade to two stories."

He also made sure to establish strong visual links between

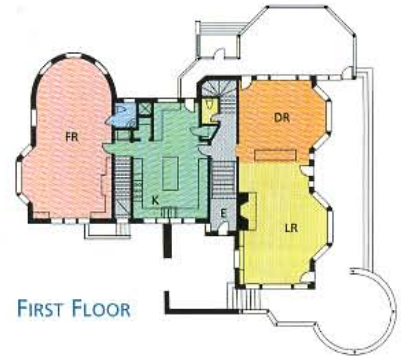
any exterior flourishes and their corresponding interior rooms. "All those Shingle-style shapes and swoops—like turrets, for instance—were based on space-making. When you get inside those shapes, you need to be rewarded," he says. The turret, therefore, creates a lovely second-story bedroom for the Israelis' son. Although located toward the street side of the house, the rounded shape grabs a water view. Inside, the room's details are both pretty and practical, especially the unpainted beaded board wainscoting that Hutker says, "allows for movement between the width of the board. It's a low-tech solution to the shrinkage and expansion of wood in waterfront houses."

"Moisture is a big issue on the island," Flake concurs. "I tell my customers up front, for instance, that 5 to 10 percent of all doors will warp." Where dimensional stability is critical, the builder uses steel. In this house he ran steel in the arched window openings of the living

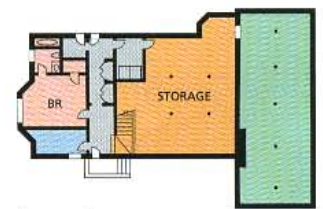


SECOND FLOOR

0 5 10



FIRST FLOOR



LOWER LEVEL

Details: Built-in Charm



Finely detailed built-ins are among the most lovable characteristics of Shingle-style homes. For the Israel house, Hutker designed two especially charming pieces. Raised up high and pushed into the view, his window seat for the master bedroom (above, right) seems to float above the water. He located two discreet reading lamps in each corner of the alcove. Meanwhile in the son's turret bedroom, he solved the problem of furnishing a round room by designing a built-in stepped dresser (above, left). Tucked into beaded board wainscoting and decked out with brass drawer pulls, it strikes a nicely nautical pose.—S.C.C.



"The Vineyard is about house-guests—having family and friends around," says Hutker. The family room has a window seat that doubles as a single bed.

On Martha's Vineyard, the Shingle style is not just an affectation, says architect Mark Hutker. "Like the feathers on a duck, the shingles kick the rain away."





room and dining room. On a site visit a year later, he admired the results. "There's no sign of movement at all," he observes.

Through those arches lies the best view in the house. On the second floor, the master bedroom, master bath, and guest room share a similar vista. But because the house sits on a point, other rooms sneak a pretty peek as well. Even so, says Hutker, straining for every glimpse of water is not always a good idea. "A large portion of the time you're awake is after dark. That glass becomes cold surface with no view. There needs to be an equal emphasis on other areas in the house." In this case, he designed a large family room at the back of the

house. Interior designer Paula Perlini chose dark colors to reinforce the insular feel.

Perlini, too, joined the project already in progress, but counts it as one of her favorite professional experiences. "Everyone worked so well together," she says. "Even though we had to hustle, every element went into place. It's the most fun project I've worked on with that many people—builder, architect, landscape architect."

Flake describes the Israel project in superlatives, too: He had the perfect clients, the perfect architect, the perfect landscape architect. He almost forgets that all that perfection arose from the most imperfect of beginnings. ■

Project Credits:

Builder: Andrew A. Flake, Inc., Vineyard Haven, Mass.
Architect: Mark A. Hutker & Associates, Architects, Inc., Vineyard Haven
Interior Designer: Paula Perlini, Inc., New York
Landscape Architect: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.
Living Space: 6,500 square feet
Site Size: .5 acre
Construction Cost: \$225 a square foot
Photographers: Exterior and detail photographs, Peter Vanderwarker Photographs; interior photographs, Peter Vitale

Resources:

Bathtubs/toilets: Kohler, Circle 169
Bath countertop: Corian, Circle 170
Dishwasher: Bosch, Circle 171
Microwave oven: Sharp, Circle 172
Range/oven: Viking, Circle 173
Range hood: FiveStar, Circle 174
Refrigerator: Sub-Zero, Circle 175
Thermostats: Honeywell, Circle 176
Washer/dryer: Maytag, Circle 177
Windows: Marvin, Circle 178

Working Relationship



Although their companies are separate on paper, Andrew Flake (left, sitting) and Mark Hutker have a kind of New-Age partnership with each other. "We share office space, office help, a common philosophy, and a mutual respect," says Flake. And when the conditions are right, they often share a custom home project. ■ Still, not every Flake project is right for Hutker, and vice

versa. "Some of my clients are suspicious of a builder and architect 'in bed together,'" says Flake, who builds about two homes a year for \$3 to \$5 million in annual volume. "But others see the advantages—they can come see both of us at once." ■ Hutker's firm, which may have 15 projects on the boards at any given time, takes on many smaller jobs that aren't appropriate for a boutique builder like Flake. But for the single ultra high-end home the architect may do a year, there's no one better. "It's so great to work with people who want to achieve the goal of the house," says Hutker. ■ Perhaps those suspicious clients wouldn't be so skeptical if they truly understood how much a cooperative architect and builder benefit the project. Says Flake, "We do things for each other we wouldn't do for anyone else." —S.C.C.