

quiet time

vineyard haven

more relaxed, less formal, lower maintenance. That's the secondary motto architects bear from clients commissioning vacation homes. But it wasn't that simple for Boston's Brad Walker, 64, of Brad Walker Architects, when he started an addition and renovation on Martha's Vineyard, Mass. His clients had asked him to transform their 23-year-old weekend retreat into a full-time residence for the two of them, while still maintaining a vacation feeling for visits from their grown children. Walker had to balance the practical needs of a permanent residence with the happy-go-lucky ambience of a beach house—along with all of the other complications surrounding being...

He rolled up his sleeves and got to work. The original site plan included a main house and separate master suite, sited just on a bluff about 30 feet above Vineyard Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Walker designed a new wing for the master bedrooms, placing it along the same east-west axis as the main house. "Before, the master suite was located on the more public part of the property," he says. "It was the first building you saw when you pulled up the driveway."

The current version gives the owners more privacy and a better view of the water from their bedrooms. Local home- and finish-builder Jeff Robinson, who built the first house 20 years ago, came back for the project. He applied the same cedar-shingle siding and roofing he used the first time around on the new addition but added the weatherproofing factor with a rubber roof membrane. Walker turned the former master suite into a home office for the clients, who are both therapists. Its location, close to the property's entrance, allows the owners to conduct business without sacrificing the separation between home and work.

Meanwhile, the original main house underwent a makeover of its own. Walker replaced an attached greenhouse that blocked the southern sun from fully entering the home with a deck. He also moved the kitchen from the north end of the main house to its own suite in the building's north-south corner. The move opened the corner of the house for a combination living/dining room, still maintaining the kitchen's proximity to these areas.

The reworking didn't end with the floor plan. Walker joined with Peapack, Massachusetts landscape architect Michael Bruchler to integrate a series of decks and terraces into the site, each one carefully placed to maximize sunlight and views for certain times of the day or year. "The clients had very active lives, and the old house didn't facilitate that," says Walker. "They needed better ways to get outside."

The new distribution of spaces helped Walker achieve the duality the owners wanted. When it's just the two of them, they have access to every thing they need in a full-time home. When they have guests in the main house or in the office's upstairs bedroom, the house offers ocean views, access to the outdoors, and the sunny luxury of an open floor plan. It's a vacation home inhabiting the body of a full-time residence—or maybe it's the other way around.—J.M.



Walker used cedar shingles and rubber roofing and waterproofing to create the new wing with this view. All roof structures took the form of the original house.



project
Five 100 residents
location
Brad Walker Architects, Boston
landscape architect
Michael Bruchler & Landscape Architects
Peapack, MA
builder
Jeff Robinson, Vineyard Home, Mass.
view before renovations
1,200 square-foot main house
view after renovations
1,700 square-foot main house and addition
construction cost
\$1.6 million



The master bedroom in the main house is now a bedroom with a bathroom, a living area, and a terrace. The deck extends to the outdoors, creating a special place for the couple's private moments.