

Coastal Clarity





A seaside gem embraces a purpose-driven design.

With panoramic views stretching across Pleasant Bay to Chatham and the Atlantic shimmering beyond Nauset's barrier beach, this newly built custom home in East Orleans embodies smart design. Set on land once stewarded by a founding member of the Orleans Conservation Trust, the property is cradled by protected woodlands and bound by a deed restriction that limited the home's total square footage to 3,000 square feet.

For the homeowners, a couple who envisioned the property as a permanent Cape Cod retreat and a welcoming hub for children and grandchildren, the size constraint became a guiding force rather than a setback. They partnered with Cape Dreams Building & Design and Ryder & Wilcox to refine their vision and optimize every square foot.

"To me, the biggest challenge was fitting all the elements that most people want in a home these days into a smaller footprint," explains Paul van Steensel, President of Cape Dreams. Intentional design was the solution, with every detail calibrated for functionality. The result is a layout that feels light, spacious, and deeply livable—elevated by custom millwork crafted by Cape Dreams' in-house team, multi-functional spaces, and uninterrupted sightlines to the water.

Oriented to frame views from nearly every room, the two-story home is thoughtfully positioned to embrace its natural surroundings. A deep red front door opens to a striking black-framed slider, instantly revealing postcard-worthy views of the bay. Throughout, black-framed windows punctuate white shiplap walls and wide-plank hickory floors, channeling a timeless coastal vernacular with a modern edge.

The kitchen centers around a generously sized island topped with leathered granite. Just beyond, the dining area features a 70-inch walnut table, designed by the homeowner and Ashley Bradford Interiors and built in-house by Cape Dreams, comfortably seating eight without sacrificing elegance or ease. The open-concept plan fosters connection, while each space is scaled to feel both expansive and intimate.

*Builder Cape Dreams Building & Design
Architectural Design Ryder & Wilcox / Landscaping Sorbello Landscaping
Pool Viola & Associates / Interior Design Ashley Bradford Interiors
Hardscape Materials Sourcing Stonewood Products
Photography Mike Crane Photography / Writer Maddie Brisbane*



"We set out to create a home that feels effortless and enduring, and I think we accomplished exactly that."

Paul van Steensel, President of Cape Dreams Building & Design





Tucked above the garage, a primary suite offers a private escape, complete with a Juliet balcony and an upper deck with dramatic views of whales breaching in the distance and ships navigating the Atlantic. A second primary suite on the main floor supports aging-in-place design, while upstairs guest rooms make clever use of every square inch—custom built-ins tuck into attic eaves, eliminating the need for excess furniture.

"We maximized every possible storage space," notes van Steensel. "It was all about making the house work harder without making it feel crowded."

Both inside and out, the home's connection to nature is both immersive and intentional. A three-season porch, clad in warm mahogany, feels like a treehouse suspended among the pines. Just beyond, an 18-by-36-foot saltwater pool, installed by Viola Associates before construction began due to the site configuration, anchors the outdoor

living area. It's surrounded by thermal blue pavers and natural thin stone veneer in an Ashlar pattern—materials sourced from Stonewood Products that reflect the surrounding coastline.

Sorbello Landscaping designed the grounds with conservation in mind, using native plantings and layered privacy screens to preserve and honor the land's ecological legacy. Thermal bluestone paths, granite steps, and black cobblestones—also from Stonewood Products—encourage a slow meander through the landscape, merging built beauty with natural grace.

"This was one of those projects where everyone—from the design team to the homeowners—was aligned," says van Steensel. "We set out to create a home that feels effortless and enduring, and I think we accomplished exactly that." 🌿