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Featured Homes

Pretty in Pink

A coastal home comes alive with a new color palette

The Living Room - The portrait over the fireplace is of Pam's grandmother

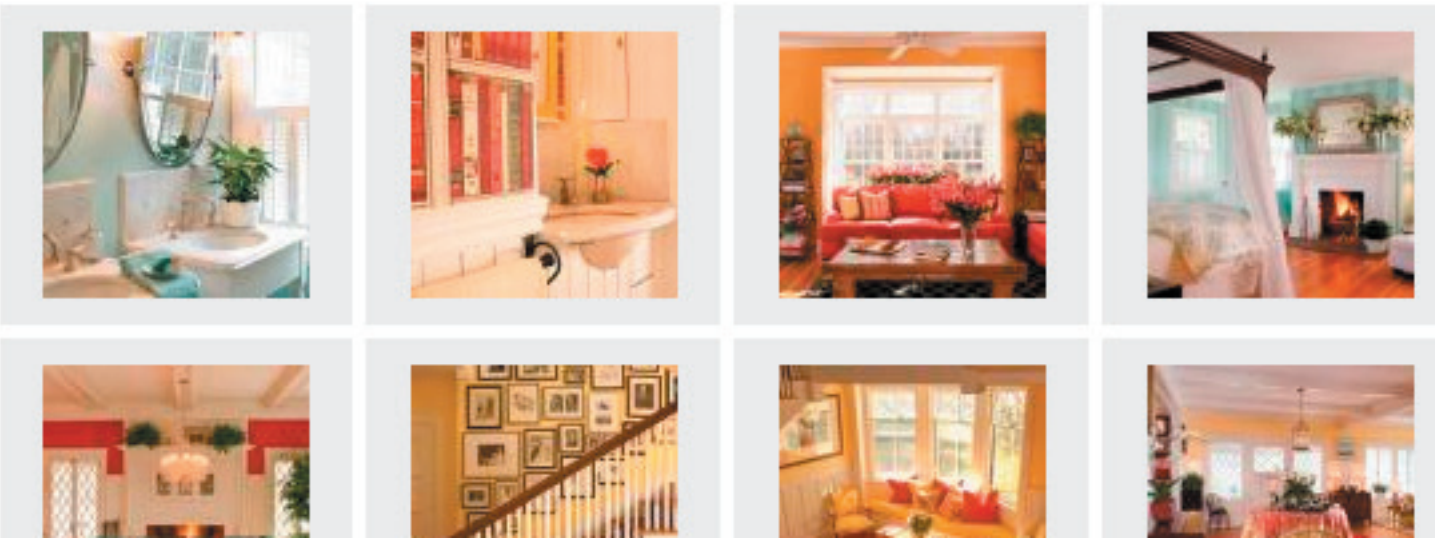
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Sometimes, by fate, dreams do come true. After years of living in Greenwich, Conn., Stuart McGuigan's parents retired to Stratham, N.H.—not far from the seacoast—and each summer, Stuart and his family would spend their vacation in the area. "We always said, 'wouldn't it be great if we could live around here,'" recalls Pam McGuigan. Fate intervened when Stuart was offered an executive position with Liberty Mutual in Boston and Portsmouth. The McGuigans sold their 250-year-old home in New Jersey and headed for the Maine coast with their four children.

The house they bought was one of several built in Cape Neddick around the turn of the last century as summer "cottages" for the moneyed from Boston, Hartford, New York, and Philadelphia. The Passaconaway Inn, with its fairytale turrets and broad porches, was the center of social life in the area. But other locations soon beckoned, and many of the buildings were left to fall into disrepair. Some burned down (including the inn), others were demolished. A small cluster of old classic homes remained in the York Cliff section of town. About fifteen years ago new owners began to gentrify the homes. They recognized why those who lived here so long ago were first drawn to the place. It's a beautiful location, with magnificent ocean views, abundant wildlife, and a prime position between Portland, Maine, and Portsmouth, N.H.

The house they selected, a three-story shingle-style structure, did not require massive renovation. As in many summer cottages, fireplaces were the major source of heat, so the McGuigans had a central heating system installed. Working with Robert Reed Associates of York, they also converted the porch into a four-season family room and restored the octagon-shaped and covered "lemonade porch"—a fairly common feature of coastal homes, especially in southern New England.

Most of the work was cosmetic—in particular the dramatic color scheme that brightens the formerly staid interior. "I'm a pink person," says Pam. "But as I've gotten older I've gone more into raspberry pinks and reddish pink, not baby pink" (except for daughter Katie's bubble gum-hued bedroom). "But then, there's this," she says, as she begins to talk about the master bedroom, which is as blue as a box from Tiffany. "We wanted the master bedroom to be light and to give the appearance of the ocean, and hoped the room could feel summery all year long." A striking four-poster iron bed with billowing side curtains provides visual drama. The couple converted one of the home's six bedrooms into a bath adjoining the master bedroom and continued the aqua color scheme there.

The century-old house on the Maine coast is now alive with bright colors and a spirit of exuberance, a welcome change from the somber mood created by the previous pale blues and gray-painted woodwork. "Before, it felt very cold," says Pam. Today the home and its colors (including crisp, white woodwork) are as warm as a Caribbean breeze—even on the coldest New England day.



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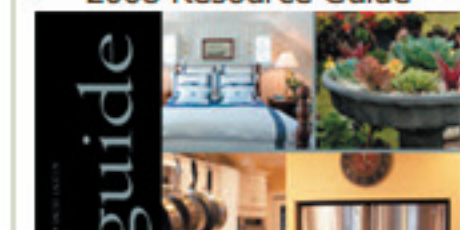
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Pam decorated the house herself, using many "found pieces." For, example, she discovered a Stark carpet with a large stain in the middle. She bought it for a song and had the stain removed. The carpet, which a friend said would cost "tons of money" if purchased new, now graces the living room, which features overstuffed, comfortable furniture. Many of the fabrics in the home were found at Loyd's Company in Rye, N.H. "Not much matches in the house," beams Pam. "We live in this house and our extended family often spends holidays here so we wanted it to be warm and welcoming."

Pam created what the family calls "The Wall" in the stairwell between the second and third floors. The collection showcases dozens of black-and-white photographs of many generations on both sides of the family, simply framed (she did the framing herself).

A set of twelve hand-painted English plates featuring different ships and a number of oil paintings of yachts recall Pam's great-grandfather, who was the first non-Crane family member to be CEO of the giant Crane Plumbing Company. He often sailed on the Great Lakes and designed his own yachts, including one that measured 180 feet long. The poker table, which saw a lot of action, and other furniture from the yachts are featured pieces. Several of his antique paintings of ships line the walls. A portrait of his daughter, Pam's grandmother, hangs above the fireplace.

The nautical theme continues in the breakfast room. The couple asked craftsman Dan Hubbard of Exeter, N.H., to create a table striped with teak and holly woods, much like the patterned wood used in yachts. They take most of their meals at

Pam McGuigan



The breakfast nook table was custom-made with teak and holly woods to give it a nautical look.



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in yachts. They take most of their meals at this table and its cushioned banquette. The kids fight over who gets to sleep on the banquette if company fills the home's bedrooms.

When they have dinner guests they eat in the dramatic red-and-white dining room. Woodworker Hubbard created an ingenious five-leaf mahogany cover that tops the room's pool table, creating a proper dining table that seats fourteen.

"I didn't want to give up a formal dining room," says Pam. "This way it can do double duty—dining and recreation."

The McGuigans were careful to take advantage of everything that came with the house. For example, they used lattice windows to create bifold doors between the living and family rooms. They found two old marble sinks in a pair of tiny rooms the previous owners had used as washrooms. They converted the rooms into closets and used both sinks in the master bedroom. They kept the blue tile in the kitchen and used a blue color scheme to complement it. The broad stairway remains, as does its striking bottom, which resembles a stack of hatboxes. They even kept the service board that was once used to summon servants to various rooms. It no longer works but is a reminder of a different era.

The guest bathroom—a faux library—provides a final fanciful touch to this hospitable home. It is covered with wallpaper that features images of the spines of books—some with real titles, others blank. The couple gives guests a pen with gold ink and asks them to give one of the blank spines a title reflecting an experience they had here. One fine Maine summer's day, they were hosting a champagne party when a house on the beach caught fire and burned down. A clever guest rushed to the guest bath and quickly inscribed "Champagne Inferno" as his title.

If the McGuigan family decides to inscribe its own title, may we suggest: "Pretty in Pink—With a Touch of Whimsy"?



Walls the color of cantaloupe and a large Audubon print welcome visitors.

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