



Island Retreat

The owner of this island retreat loved her existing seasonal home, but the house was cramped, dark, drafty, and overdue for many repairs. Being a natural hostess, she dreamed of a better space in which to gather friends and family. The house held sentimental and practical value, so Richard Renner Architects and interior designer Krista Stokes used it as a “core” around which they placed additions to meet program needs, conform to coastal building restrictions, and take better advantage of views. The design creates a new first-floor master suite, giving the owner privacy and comfort when the house is full of guests. Living, dining, and kitchen are combined into a central space with dramatic views of the water and Mount Desert Island. Moving the main entry to the back of the house provides an efficient place to “offload” upon arrival, while also leaving the social areas more unified and comfortable to use.

Changes extend out into the landscape, where the new drive

location (moved away from the shore and now passing through the trees), a meandering walk, and the entry porch (a “lantern” at night) create an unfolding and welcoming arrival experience. Once inside, the living area is the perfect place from which to appreciate the views—rain, snow, or shine.

New windows, insulation (rigid foam outside and cellulose inside), and a new heating system transform the formerly seasonal house into a year-round model of energy efficiency.

Whether cooking for a large group or quietly leafing through a book, the owner will enjoy a house that has been given new richness and life while maintaining its link to the past. **MH+D**

Location: Swan’s Island
Architect: Richard Renner Architects
Interior Designer: Krista Stokes
Builder: A.B. & J.R. Hodgkins
Construction start: October 2013
Construction complete: June 2014

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