

New England HOME

CT

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High- Impact Design

Styles may differ, but the
goal is the same: livability
and visual punch



Happily Ever After

A sweet carriage house—part gardening room and part garage—helps these newlyweds pursue their passions together.

As if gardens, by their very nature, aren't romantic enough, the picturesque carriage house that sprang up on this Durham property really is the result of the stars aligning. Zoom back to the beginning, and the owner is a contented bachelor living in a handsome center-hall colonial. With help from designer Lisa Davenport he's finessing the place room by room. Then he meets the love of his life on a blind date and a year later carries her over the threshold.

A passionate gardener and an animal lover, the

bride brings along her dog and a burgeoning collection of plants. The husband, wanting her to feel at home, is delighted. But to ensure the place is as much hers as his, he enlists Davenport to design a special structure—a garage for his prized Porsche on one side and a pretty, practical garden room for his lady on the other. At the same time, the home's deck was due for an overhaul.

Davenport devised a two-phase plan: for phase one, she designed a freestanding carriage house with a brick and bluestone terrace along with stone

The south-facing carriage house welcomes light into the garden room through a generous bank of windows. Pots of colorful flowers line up on the adjacent patio and overflow onto the bluestone staircase, which leads the owners to their raised beds.

| TEXT BY MEGAN FULWEILER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL LANDINO |

Special Spaces



stairs cascading to the lawn. In phase two, the existing deck on the main house was reworked, and a fleet of above-ground planting beds was added with help from landscape designer Nancy DuBrule-Clemente from Natureworks, a Northford company, and Torrison Stone & Garden, a Durham firm responsible for all the project's hardscape.

Today, at either end of the home's new deck, stairs carry the owners to an inviting sitting area with a fire pit centerpiece. A rounded patio of stone and brick complements the curve of the built-in bench. And mere steps away, raised beds framed with concrete timbers fairly burst with everything from cabbages and tomatoes to chives and corn.

The carriage house is a dream come true. Working with builder Tony Cuomo of Cuomo Construction, Davenport included all the features any green thumb could ever want. The garden room is framed in easy-care Azek, for example. The wife need never worry about splashes, mold, or mildew. Excess water is ferried away by drains set around the perimeter of the bluestone floor. The deep soapstone sink is framed in galvanized steel with an Azek cabinet below.



“BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO ANTIQUES AND OLD ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS TO DO,” SAYS LISA DAVENPORT.

And there's a handsome cupboard—designed by Davenport and crafted by Brunarhans in Woodstock—that incorporates a cabinet with chicken-wire doors to provide a spot for must-haves such as all-natural fertilizers and peat pots. “Items like that have to be ventilated,” Davenport explains.

The cupboard's age-evoking crackle finish, like the timeworn but handy shelf (once part of a dresser) that Davenport mounted on the wall, lends the space character. “I found the piece in Texas at the Round Top Antiques Fair, and knew it would be perfect,” the designer says. “Breathing new life into antiques and old architectural elements is one of my favorite things to do.”

In this same vein, she incorporated an aged scale that can be loaded with plants and hoisted toward the skylights for an extra dose of sun. Grand old

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The well-equipped garage, like the garden room, is heated for year-round use. In addition to Azek walls, the garden room includes a durable bluestone floor. The wife changes the old scale's cargo of plants every season, keeping the display looking fresh and decorative.

Special Spaces

The main house sports a new deck with tiered seating options. A well-choreographed lighting plan by RLI Electric transforms the pretty-by-day garden into a magical scene at night.

PROJECT TEAM

Interior design:

Lisa Davenport,
Lisa Davenport
Designs

Builder:

Tony Cuomo,
Cuomo
Construction

Landscape design:

Nancy
DuBrule-Clemente,
Natureworks



chestnut beams span the vaulted knotty-pine ceiling, and a rustic pulley fan with wooden blades stirs the air. But maybe most engaging is the antique copper roof and weathervane on the carriage house's cupola. "Imagine the history if they could talk," says Davenport with a chuckle.

On the new building's street side, an energy-efficient faux cedar door frames the one-bay garage. Like the wife's garden room, the space is functional and good looking. The walls are clad in durable knotty pine, and Davenport has designed a personality-filled tool bench using finds from antique shows she



LEFT: Incorporating a planting bed behind the deck's built-in bench allows room for a stand of leafy palms. **RIGHT:** The carriage house's faux cedar garage door matches the building's character but is energy efficient and—despite its swing-out appearance—opens vertically. The antique copper weather-vane and roof atop the cupola once crowned a Massachusetts barn.



attended in Brimfield, Massachusetts, and Texas. A gallery of Porsche photos brings some extra charm. And vintage metal wall cabinets make way for tools.

Of course, Davenport's designs not only allow the couple to better enjoy their interests, they've also given them more reasons to stay outdoors. Alfresco

meals and starlit nights by the fire are just the beginning. Recently retired, the husband has discovered he has a knack for cultivating vegetables. Two dedicated gardeners will make for one beautiful, happily-ever-after garden. ■■■

RESOURCES : For more information about this home, see page 158.