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convenience + charm

Renovating a big family's Spring Lake vacation home, a designer makes it more practical—and much more fun.

Text by **Marisa Sandora**
Design by **Anthony Passanante**
Photography by **MemoriesTTL**

With custom details such as a large blue hutch in the dining area, designer Anthony Passanante succeeded in turning a dated house into a more current and inviting home that functions well for a busy family of five. "The house gives me the relaxed feeling I was going for," says the homeowner. "It's a pretty space. If the weather is bad and you're stuck indoors, it's just a wonderful space to enjoy."





After renting in Spring Lake for several summers, a North Jersey couple knew they'd like to own a second home there one day. That day came in 2010, when they spotted a house with great bones just one block from the beach. The only problem? The interior was dated, and the space wasn't laid out well for their family of five.

"We knew we were going to have to add some bathrooms and renovate to make it work for our family," the wife says. But they made the purchase and enjoyed the 4,000-square-foot home as-is until 2017, when they turned to Anthony Passanante of Anthony Albert Studios in Waldwick to renovate. He had done a renovation for the homeowner in a previous home, and she loved his work.

"He's easy to work with, and he's really good at knowing what I want when I don't really know what I want," she says. "As soon as we were ready to renovate the Spring Lake house, there was no question in my

mind that I was going to use him."

The homeowner gave Passanante carte blanche to design the space, and he created all of the custom cabinets and millwork in addition to finding all of the tile, lighting and fixtures. "She was fun to work with because she kind of looked to me to pick everything," Passanante says. "She trusted me and let me do my thing."

The homeowner requested an open-concept entertaining area in the home, so Passanante designed a unique bar area open to a casual family room where the former formal dining and living rooms were. "It's definitely the room where we spend the most time," says the homeowner. "At the end of the evening, after we've been out to dinner or when we come off the beach, everyone ends up in the bar area, so it's nice to have that room to entertain in. We love it."

The former family room was turned into a casual dining area located off the kitchen, where Passanante

This page: "It's a really fun space for entertaining," says Passanante about the bar room. There are five stools around a high bar, which features a sink, a dishwasher, a wine fridge, a kegerator (which refrigerates kegs), a microwave oven and lots of storage. Adjacent sits a game table area.

Opposite page: In the kitchen, custom cabinetry goes all the way up to nine-foot ceilings, providing lots of storage, while crown molding ties the space into the adjacent dining area. The working island holds the microwave and provides even more storage. The leather finish on the quartzite countertops "tones them down a little bit and gives the kitchen a more relaxed feel," says Passanante.





designed and built a striking blue hutch that houses refrigerator drawers, a TV and extra storage to minimize clutter. Mirrored cabinets reflect light back into the room, and aged brass nautical light fixtures from Hudson Valley Lighting add interest. Passanante also re-stoned an existing brick fireplace. "I love the warmth and texture stone brings to a room," he says.

The adjacent kitchen was updated with new custom cabinets, natural quartzite countertops with a leather finish and a marble subway tile backsplash, which Passanante brought up and over the window above the sink. But the designer's favorite detail is the custom zinc hood. "It brings in charm and character because it's handmade and has little imperfections," he says.

The kitchen also features an eating area with a soaring cathedral ceiling, which Passanante revamped with shiplap detailing and an oversized light fixture from Visual Comfort. "The kitchen and the dining area are great because now when we have a house full of people, everyone has a seat at a table," says the homeowner.

To create even more space for the large family, Passanante added bathrooms to two upstairs bedrooms and reconfigured the basement, adding a bedroom and bathroom there as well. "My daughters entertain their college friends a lot, and now there's plenty of space for everybody," says the homeowner. "We made every inch of this house work for us."

This page: Passanante created a sitting area in the master bathroom, enlarging and lowering the windows to maximize the gorgeous water views. A beadboard ceiling and a crystal chandelier from Hudson Valley Lighting complete the space. Opposite page: New railings and detailed molding breathe life into the staircase and landings, as does an oversized lantern from Troy Lighting. Passanante gave the homeowners a coffee/wine bar in a second-floor corner near the master bedroom so they wouldn't have to go far for a drink while enjoying the view.

