

Beach-town bungalow

Hammers are swinging at the 2018 Idea House, where advanced materials and building techniques are creating an updated Craftsman-style house with a staycation sensibility

BY JILL CONNORS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY TIEULI



TOP: Innovative sheathing materials and hurricane-rated windows form a weathertight building envelope as the bones of the Craftsman-inspired home take shape.

INSET: A rendering of the 2018 Idea House shows off such Craftsman details as a full-width porch under a deep roof overhang, exposed rafter tails, and tapered columns on stone piers. The steeply pitched gable and cedar shingles are elements typical of New England shingled cottages.

➔ **IT'S A CLOUDY SPRING DAY** in Narragansett, Rhode Island, and the building crew is busy nailing up the shingles on the sweeping roof, trimming out the front door, and installing the porch ceiling. A passerby stops and smiles, nodding in appreciation at the look of the house: Craftsman style has that effect on people. The early-1900s architectural style exudes comfort, warmth, and familiarity, and that is exactly the goal of *TOH*'s 2018 Idea House—to combine traditional architectural details with the most-desired features for today's informal way of living.

“We were inspired by traditional Craftsman bungalows,” says Union Studio architect Christina Carlson, who collaborated with The House Designers to create the plans for the 2018 Idea House. “The house has a unique roof that gives the appearance of one and a half stories, creating a nice scale and a sense of coziness even though there is a lot of living space tucked under that roof.”

Indeed, the 2,700-square-foot house will have four



bedrooms, three and a half baths, a kitchen complete with a butler's pantry, a mudroom, a living room that opens onto a screened porch, an office nook, first- and second-floor laundry rooms, and a basement with a home theater, a sauna, and an exercise room. A detached garage has upstairs space to accommodate a guest suite.

General contractor Jeff Sweenor is committed to building a house with the feeling of a classic beach bungalow—one of the state's best stretches of shoreline is just blocks away—but with advanced materials that will add durability and protection from the elements. “The old cottages from the early 1900s were built without insulation,” says Sweenor, who lived in this neighborhood as a college student at the University of Rhode Island. “We have modernized while being sure to give the house a traditional look.”

Characteristic Craftsman elements include a full-width front porch tucked under an overhanging roof, exposed rafter tails, tapered porch columns perched on



ABOVE: Contractor Jeff Sweenor (on ladder) and his son, Ryan, frame the vaulted ceiling in the second story above the freestanding garage, creating a dramatic space for a future guest suite.

LEFT: Using a chalk line, father and son check the alignment of the framing's sharp outside corners, which they made by ripping and mitering 3/4-inch plywood.

EXTERIOR WALL SHEATHING: ZIP System Sheathing & Tape
 ROOFING UNDERLAYMENT: GCP Applied Technologies
 COMPOSITE ROOF TILES: DaVinci Roofscapes
 WINDOWS: Andersen Windows & Patio Doors
 WESTERN RED CEDAR PORCH CEILING: Real Cedar

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RENDERING: UNION STUDIO ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY DESIGN



TOP LEFT: Sweenor Builders crew members install the front entry ceiling's stepped tray detail, crafted in cherry.

BOTTOM LEFT: Mason Buck Sharpe installs quick-to-go-up manufactured stone veneer on the precast foundation.

TOP RIGHT: The stairway in the main house is being installed in sections. Sweenor Builders built them at their shop, without stringers, to create a monolithic system of oak treads and poplar risers and skirts connected with epoxy. "It's a stronger, straighter, better system than a site-built one," says Jeff Sweenor.

ABOVE: A crew member lays the quartersawn white oak flooring on the upstairs hallway's plywood subfloor, which is treated with a liquid vapor barrier to minimize the wood's movement.



LEFT: Mike Rich trims out a doorway with moisture-resistant radiata pine.

BELOW: Crew members install cedar-look composite roof shakes on the garage.

CHERRY TRAY CEILING AND WHITE OAK FLOORING: **Baird Brothers Fine Hardwoods**
 WOOD GLUE: **Gorilla Glue**
 MANUFACTURED STONE VENEER: **Eldorado Stone**
 PRECAST CONCRETE WALL PANELS: **Superior Walls**
 PLYWOOD SUBFLOOR: **AdvanTech**
 RADIATA PINE TRIM, SOFFITS, AND CLAPBOARDS: **LIFESPAN Solid Select**
 COMPOSITE ROOF TILES: **DaVinci Roofscapes**

stone piers, cedar shingle siding, and windows with a trim-tin detail evocative of the style. The modernization comes through in such materials as a precast insulated foundation that is waterproof, straight, and level from the moment it is set in place; manufactured stone veneer that goes on faster; a liquid vapor barrier applied to the sub-floor in the house's first and second levels to keep moisture away from the quartersawn white oak floorboards; hurricane-rated windows; an engineered wall-sheathing system; self-sealing roof underlayment; and weatherproof composite roof tiles that look like cedar shakes.

Interior designer Kristen Martone included distinctive touches that nod to old-house details and also tap the Sweenor crew's fine craftsmanship: A stepped tray ceiling inset made of cherry adds a focal point in the entry, as does a white oak herringbone floor inset outlined in black walnut. Bringing in a more contemporary feel are the linear limestone veneer on the living room fireplace, the open-plan first-floor layout with the kitchen adjoining the living room, and sliding glass doors that create a 12-foot-wide opening from living room to screened porch. "We are definitely bringing the outside in, and making this house the kind of place where people with overscheduled lives can just come home at the end of the day and have some time for themselves," says Martone.

The staycation mind-set is underscored by all the outdoor amenities, which include a plunge pool to cool off in, an outdoor kitchen for casual entertaining, and a fire bowl for gatherings under the stars. "This arrangement sets up a private enclave delineated by the house and garage," says Carlson. "We wanted a detached garage in the rear so that from the sidewalk, the house is most prominent—it's something you typically see in older neighborhoods." A covered breezeway connects the garage to the house, adding the modern convenience today's homeowners are looking for.

For evoking the Craftsman era, however, there's no better spot than the front porch, especially since the house sits in a walkable neighborhood in one of Narragansett's four historic districts. "This is a street where people still sit out on their porches and spend time in their yards," says Sweenor, "and this house will fit right in." 🏠



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