

Custom Cottages

Small, high-end summer homes reflect beachfront ambience

By Nancy Kirsch
Photography by Michael Derr
& Seth Jacobson Photography

Although a condo project built by Sweenor Builders Inc. appealed to Beth Longo, she wasn't quite ready to sign on the dotted line. When Jeff Sweenor, president and chief executive officer, suggested she look at The Cottages on Caswell in Narragansett Pier, however, a match was made: She fell in love with one of the cottages last fall. With spring finally here, the full-time Glastonbury, Connecticut, resident, recalling happy summer days in Narragansett from her younger years, can't wait to spend her first summer in her new home.

The cottages, all built on spec, were designed to be slightly larger than the summer cottages they replaced. Each 2,300-square-foot cottage, with four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths, an open first floor plan, an appealing laundry room, outdoor showers and a two-car

Continued on page 26





Beth Longo, below, bought 71 Caswell Street in Narragansett in October. Left, is the living room, complete with a fireplace. Some of the nautical features of her cottage include: a compass rose inlay on the stairway landing, below left; and rope-wrapped lighting fixtures such as this chandelier, above, that hangs above the staircase, and a floor lamp, center left.



Continued from page 25
garage, is built on a compact 5,000- to 6,000-square-foot lot.

"Everything you need is there ... because they're smaller than what we're used to [building], we paid a lot of attention to every single space; we utilized every single inch," Sweenor says. Although these energy-efficient homes, with well-insulated natural gas furnaces, are designed for summer living, they would function perfectly well year-round.

This in-fill process (building a new structure on a previously built-on site) was "kind of a bold move for everyone – the town of Narragansett, the town planner,

the Zoning Board and Planning Board all had to buy into it. We were expanding on [existing footprints] and adding garages," Sweenor says. With experience in in-fill building – but generally one property at a time – Sweenor is eager to do more.

Given the development's half-mile location from the town beach, it was a natural choice to incorporate nautical themes and touches. Sweenor and Kristen Martone, a RISD-trained interior designer with whom he collaborates, used that inspiration when they chose the master bathroom tile, the compass rosette on the staircase landing, the tongue-in-groove

Continued on page 28

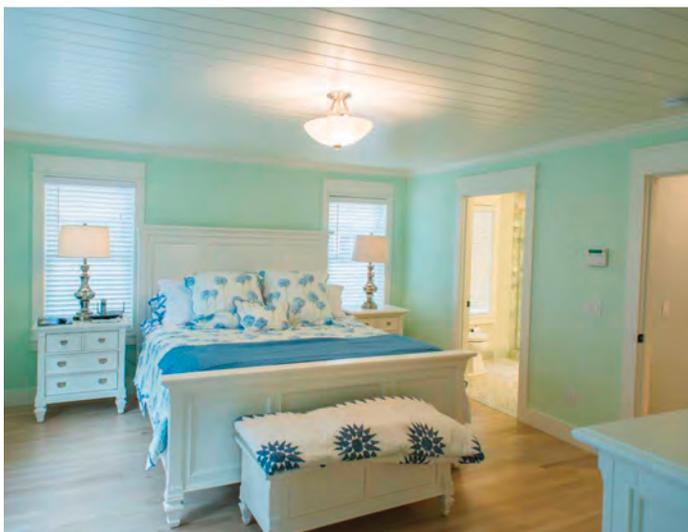
"We paid a lot of attention to every single space; we utilized every single inch."

JEFF SWEENOR | SWEENOR BUILDERS INC.



Above:

The outdoor features of the cottages include: A detached two-car garage, a front porch with recessed lighting and mahogany decking, an enclosed outdoor shower with mahogany door, a sprinkler system, weatherproof fencing, and center-cut driveway with river stones for drainage.



Continued from page 26

painted pine ceilings throughout the first floor, the ship-lap wood on the stairwell and the chandelier, which hangs from a rope. While Sweenor oversees architecture and construction, Martone, who owns Graceke Design, chooses roof trims, interior and exterior colors, window treatments and appliances, among other details. While the layouts are basically identical, each cottage includes some different design elements, Martone says. "There's a total synergy of elements ... of the coastal feel, which can go in so many different ways." Paint colors, for example, may evoke the beach or the ocean, and were inspired by much larger summer homes in the Hamptons. "Everything has to be functional, with crisp, clean lines. Not everyone will have the same kind of style ... we make sure it's classic [so] that no matter who walks in [they] can feel themselves living there," she says. She included some new design trends – dark stained floors, pickled floors and white walls – in the high-end, yet relatively

Continued on page 31

Left: The first floor master bedroom features a walk in closet and private bath.

Below: The dining room and kitchen include chandeliers, multiple sinks, lots of counter and cupboard space, and a breakfast bar.





Left, above: The master bathroom has a double vanity and walk-in shower.
Below: Details include glass doorknobs, and a fish detail in the shingle siding.



Resources

The Cottages on Caswell
thecottagesoncaswell.com

Sweenor Builders Inc.
 12 High Street | Wakefield
 789-4341 | sweenorbuilders.com

Graceke Design
 22 Sextant Lane | Narragansett
 219-1669 | gracekedesign.com

DiPrete Engineering
 90 Broadway | Newport
 619-5890 | diprete-eng.com

Continued from page 28

modestly sized cottages.

Although Longo visited her new home on weekends during the brutal winter, it's premature to anticipate if the home could become her full-time residence. An avid cook, Longo loves the kitchen and calls the house "a great fit." With four bedrooms, there's plenty of room for her two married daughters and two grandsons to spread out during their visits.

Even before summer arrives, Longo has plans: "[I'll be] sitting on the front porch watching the world go by. This porch is great; I haven't sat on a porch for years." When she's not cooking, enjoying family time or people-watching, she'll entertain a group of women friends who regularly play mah jongg together. "Now I can invite them to my house."

On Halloween 2013, Sweenor's crew began demolition of the old cottages and, on an ambitious schedule, completed all four houses by last summer. "While Narragansett did a great job of allowing certain things, [the project] was very strict," Sweenor says. "We had to reproduce the look of the original houses ... and we built through the winter on tight sites, without a lot of room to coordinate deliveries of lumber and other supplies." As hurricanes can wreak havoc, the cottages include pumps and French drains, and driveways have a center unpaved ribbon for drainage, to reduce potential damage.

"A year ago ... [the project] was kind of a hope and a prayer," says Sweenor, who left his family chocolate business in 1989 and launched into the home construction business after building a new home with his new wife. "I put too much heart into the project; I don't think with my wallet ... and I end up overbuilding." Sweenor's bold move appears to be a success; all four units were sold and, he adds, "You can't find a single person to talk negatively about it. The neighbors love it because it improved their [homes'] value, and it improved the aesthetic feel of the neighborhood."

Longo has no complaints. "It was meant to be like that for me; it feels like home." 🏠

TRIO



AS YOU WISH WEDNESDAYS

Join us for As You Wish Wednesdays, when everything on our entree menu will be \$15.95. Linguine & Clams, Scallops, or Lobster Tortelloni - don't worry, you have a full season to try every entree.*

BE HAPPY, PAY HALF!

Join us every Sunday when all appetizers & pizzas are half-price all day in the Lounge and Bar.*

*Cannot be combined with any other offer.

For a complete list of all our events, visit us online at trio-ri.com.

15 Kingstown Road, Narragansett | 401.792.4333 | trio-ri.com