

ALICE WASHBURN AWARDS 2015

## Elegant New Build Captures Authenticity of Period

By KATE HARTMAN

This year's Alice Washburn Architectural Award winner is a new home that was specifically designed to appear as if it had been an integral part of the landscape for many years.





**THE ALICE WASHBURN AWARD** is named for the distinguished Connecticut residential architect of the 1920s. The annual award program is a joint effort of the Connecticut chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Connecticut Magazine to acknowledge excellence in traditional house design. Focusing on style, the program honors the thoughtful adaptation of tradition to address 21st-century needs. The competition is open to architects licensed and residing in Connecticut. This year, projects had to be one- or two-story houses completed after June 30, 2008, and designed in a style considered traditional—including but not limited to Shingle, Georgian, Queen Anne, Gothic, Colonial and Greek Revival. The three jurors chosen by AIA Connecticut for their expertise in traditional design were: David Andreozzi, AIA, Andreozzi Architects, Barrington, Rhode Island; Michael Crosby, FAIA, Chairman, Department of Architecture, University of Hartford; and Katie Hutchison, Katie Hutchison Studio, Warren, Rhode Island.



PHOTOS, THIS RESIDENCE  
Exteriors: Gus Cantavero  
Interiors: Olson Photographic

#### NEW CONSTRUCTION WINNER

### Mead Point Shingle Style Residence GREENWICH

The results are in for the 2015 Alice Washburn Awards, the annual competition by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), which recognizes excellence in architecture and design. The pool of entrants was deep with worthy properties, but this year top prize was awarded to a beautiful new build with Old World charm on Long Island Sound in Greenwich.

Constructed on Mead Point, the impressive single-family home was designed to take advantage of the water views from every side. Classic, coastal materials—including stone and shingle siding—were utilized in the construction. If you didn't know the home was built in 2013, you would think it had been standing since the turn of the last century

and had been beautifully updated. That was precisely the intention.

“The goal was to design a home that looked like it had been there for many years,” says architect Douglas VanderHorn. “My goal was to reach back to the late teens in style, 1915, for references.”

Douglas VanderHorn Architects of Greenwich specializes in restoration projects, pulling inspiration from history to reimagine modern construction. The property's existing home was completely demolished to make way for the ocean blue, white and stone stunner that now occupies the space, and looks like it is original to the parcel.

“The reclaimed stone work was from a farm wall. It has a natural weathered look to it already,” explains VanderHorn. “We laid it in such a way that it looked like an authentic stone building.”

The traditional details continue through the stately wood-and-glass entryway into the home. Custom millwork defines each living space—painted a sleek white in the main living quarters and left its original





The Alice Washburn Architectural Award judges were impressed with how well the home blended Shingle and Victoriana elements, and how well the interior was integrated with the exterior and surrounding grounds.



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deep cherry in the grand drawing room, which also features bowed ceiling beams and a mantle reminiscent of the stern of a ship. The living and dining rooms are lined in distinguished wainscot paneling and decorative plaster moldings, and bay windows with French doors that open onto a luxurious stone terrace.

It's the original and enhanced details that motivated the Alice Washburn jurors to name the property the new construction winner.

“This project has timelessness: it is hard to tell when it was built, 100 years ago or today,” the jurors wrote. “The roof line takes advantage of the Shingle style and grounds the building, bonds it to Mother Earth, and gives

better scale to a really big house. The wrap-around porch is gorgeous and architecture is pulled off in every room. The project melds Shingle style and Victoriana, but style is secondary to the beautifully crafted and historically correct parties. It is a great project, with totally integrated landscape architecture and interiors.”

Lee Ann Thornton Interiors in Greenwich crafted a crisp and comfortable interior in calming blue, white and beige tones. A tasteful array of oceanic décor evokes the home's surroundings without being too literal.

One of the homeowners' requests was a large living and recreation space on the home's lower level that transitioned eas-





ily outdoors. That posed a unique challenge for the architect. How do you avoid a dark, dingy basement? VanderHorn's answer was two large glass doors that exit out onto the backyard patio. The space was painted white to provide an inherent brightness. A long bar, comfortable seating, Ping Pong table and built-in bunk beds make this area a natural place for the family to congregate.

"The lower level, the recreation level, feels

high quality," says the architect. "[We built] bunk beds with rolling barn doors so you don't have to look at the bedding. The client was looking for a place to sleep, so we found a spot in the floor plan."

The jurors noticed these livable details noting, "The interior provides large, more comfortable spaces for the way we live now: every detail was thought out for contemporary life, but in traditional form—as an

example, the sliding barn door that covers the mates' bed in the common space. The architect had the ability to understand and manipulate every detail, and yet there is restraint—the architect sits back and lets the architecture speak for itself."

While the Mead Point home may look a century old from the exterior, the interior, and in particular the unnoticeable bones of the build, are brand new and cutting-edge. The home is highly insulated and features a geothermal heating and cooling system. There is LED lighting throughout and it operates on a smart house control system. A co-generation system fueled by natural gas allows the home to generate much of its own electricity.

"There is a major green component," says VanderHorn. "The client was sensitive to the fact that they were a building substantial home and wanted to reduce the carbon footprint."

All of the combined details make this Greenwich property seem timeless—relevant 100 years ago, today and into the future.



Style and function are melded together in the recreation area (left), which features bunks with rolling barn doors that provide discreet extra sleeping space.