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**STURDY BUT SERENE** • Eastern grace meets Yankee fortitude in two Arts and Crafts–inspired bathrooms on the Massachusetts coast



**A**

FTER 12 YEARS OF LIVING IN A MODEST cottage with chockablock additions, the owners of this idyllic property overlooking a rocky seaside cliff on Massachusetts’s Cape Ann decided to start from scratch.

The homeowners, a married couple with adult children and grandchildren, knew they did not want to move away from the property they loved so much. Instead, they enlisted Carpenter & MacNeille

Architects and Builders Inc. of Essex, Massachusetts, to turn their teardown into their dream home. Top on their list: master and guest bathrooms that exuded tranquillity.

“We really like old houses and tend to lean toward the details that those houses offer,” says the wife. “If it was possible to buy an old home and move it here, we would have.”

Carpenter & MacNeille drafted blueprints for a 6,376-square-foot home that satisfied their clients and their clients’ neighbors in a community that takes pride in its historic buildings. “They had such great attention to detail,” the wife says of the design team, which was led by architect Rob MacNeille, one of the firm’s principals.

**THE MAHOGANY BATHTUB is the focal point of this tranquil master bathroom on Cape Ann in Massachusetts. Bead-board wainscoting painted in Benjamin Moore’s “Silver Marlin” references the ocean.**

ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION: CARPENTER & MACNEILLE ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS

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**WITH THE DOOR to the bathroom at left, the view from the large wooden tub is of the double mahogany vanities topped with cool-green Costa Esmeralda marble and the generous-size shower beyond. The shower wall is faced in a single slab of the same marble.**

The homeowners wanted to create rooms with clean lines and fluidity, and with strong references to Asian, Shaker, and Arts and Crafts design; when the wife was in her early 20s, she had visited Japan and developed a fondness for Japanese soaking tubs. Now she saw the opportunity to incorporate one into her new home.

“The focus was on natural materials and simple detailing,” says MacNeille. However, creating for the homeowners a Cape Ann-style house that fit in with the regional vernacular but featured modern amenities and generously sized bathing areas was a bit of a puzzle.

“The house is designed to be reminiscent of Cape Ann architecture,” says MacNeille. “It has a low, sweeping roofline, and the bathrooms are in the roof plane. The challenge was making sure we had enough space for them.” The solution was to house the bathrooms in two double-wide dormers specially designed for the purpose, with banks of windows that bring in light.

The guest bathroom features a Japanese-style soaking tub with a pattern-grade American

## BATH IN WOOD OF MAINE

Inspired by the comfort of an antique armchair and the sweeping sheer of sailboats, Steve and Miranda Batiste began building wooden bathtubs three years ago in Swans Island, Maine, an island 6 miles off the Acadia coast. The concept for these tubs was a result of living in a house with a beautiful old claw-foot tub. Made of cast iron covered in vitreous enamel, it rarely retained heat. "This made for a very chilly soak," says Miranda.

While building a 32-foot wooden boat to cruise the coastal waters of Maine, the couple had the idea of a wooden bathtub — a tub that would retain heat while also showcasing the beauty and tactile satisfaction of fine hardwoods. "That idea has kept us quite busy," says Miranda. "We still haven't finished the boat!"

The tubs are constructed from 1-inch-thick mahogany boards or other alternative woods, such as teak or maple, and are connected in a tongue-and-groove joint. The joints are secured by marine epoxy and,



once dried, are incredibly strong.

To ensure that the tubs are waterproof and durable, each is finished in a 14-coat process. The Batistes combine antique French polishing techniques with 21st-century chemistry in a process called "deep sealing." Thin layers of polyurethane gel are hand-rubbed on with cotton pads to create a slip-resistant surface with a matte finish.

The tubs are designed with a 55-degree backrest — perfect for a long relaxing soak



but upright enough to read your favorite book.

Bath in Wood of Maine specializes in crafting single and double tubs, which start at \$8,000. Each is built to order and by hand in the Swans Island workshop. Because each tub is individually crafted, customers are able to request special requirements to meet the needs of their space. 📍 **Bath in Wood;** 207-526-4352, [bath-in-wood.com](http://bath-in-wood.com).

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mahogany surround that was custom-built by Stephen Terhune Woodworking, a partner of Carpenter & MacNeille, who also did all the custom cabinetry in the house.

A mahogany platform between the tub and adjacent glass-walled shower allows for easy entry into the tub. The shower walls are Imperial Red marble; throughout the bathroom, floors are chunky square tiles of tumbled slate. The upper walls in the room are painted a soft currant color that is a striking contrast to the warm mahogany beadboard wainscoting. Despite the small space — just 78 square feet — the room appears open and bright, with lots of nook-and-cranny detailing.

In the master bath, his-and-her mahogany vanities with Costa Esmerelda marble countertops finished with sleek chrome faucets frame the large shower, where the same greenish marble covers the walls and forms a bench. A small anteroom between the vanities and shower contains cabinets for storing towels and linens. Beadboard wainscoting painted a soothing sage green completes the tranquil package.

Here again, the homeowners decided to move away from the standard porcelain tub. While flipping through an interior design magazine, the wife came across an advertisement for mahogany bathtubs handmade

**THIS SECOND-FLOOR guest bathroom is one of four in the house; there are two half baths on the first floor and another full bath with a shower and tub in the finished basement. Here, the same mahogany used for millwork and cabinetry throughout the house lends a warm and cozy atmosphere and brings continuity to the design scheme.**

by Steve and Miranda Batiste of Bath in Wood in Swans Island, Maine. Jokingly, she suggested to her husband that they get one. To her surprise, he agreed. In fact, he actually ended up choosing the larger double tub, which is about a foot longer than the single tub.

“There were so many decisions being made at the time, I just had to agree to the bigger tub,” says the wife. “We had never seen it in person, and when it arrived, I freaked out — it was so big!”

While the master bath was under construction, the 7-foot-long, 3-foot-wide wooden tub was stored in the master bedroom, where it looked like an ark out of water. To her relief, she says, once it was in place as the focal point of the bathroom, “it seemed to fit perfectly.”

“This project was unlike anything we’ve done,” says MacNeille. “Both bathrooms are very special because they’re so specific to the homeowners and their house.”

The homeowners frequently host guests in their new house, and the bathrooms are the big draw for visitors. The couple moved in right before Thanksgiving in 2008 and were inundated with compliments about the design. Says the wife: “Whenever the grandchildren come, they all want to take a bath. They love that it’s like being in a boat.” ▲

**THE VANITY IS TOPPED with Imperial Red marble. A contemporary stainless steel faucet and towel rack bridge the gap between the homeowners’ predilections for Japanese style and Shaker furniture profiles. Although tiny (the edge of the tub is just visible in the foreground), the room is flooded with sunlight, making it a sunny hideaway.**

