

United by Design

Homes of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket



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Foreword by John R. DaSilva, AIA



Fallen Leaves, Martha's Vineyard

Construction completion date: 2004

Fallen Leaves is a summer home located at the top of a broad and rolling hill in Aquinnah and completed in 2004. It is a windswept, mysterious, and elemental site, with ocean views to the north and a heavily trafficked, wooded road to the south.

The house is conceived as a series of horizontal planes inspired by the layering of fallen leaves found on the site's ground plane. These layers play gently against each other emitting cracks and fissures of south facing light and unfolding to open up the house to its view and a sweeping landscape to the north. The home is a mysterious and unfolding object, which has to be moved around and through to be understood. A sloping glass roof overlapping the north wall of the house renders ambiguous the distinction between interior and exterior space. Large sliding doors open the house up to the deck.

In the elevated living room, the ocean view – which at first is concealed by the mass of the concrete fireplace – is slowly revealed. The mysterious quality of light coming in from the southern clerestory supports the suspense that the house offers, and interior spaces culminate in a treetop roof deck above the master bedroom. The interior opens up to the land like a flower, the ocean view being revealed by one's sequential progression up and through the house.



Exterior front view. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Front exterior close-up. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Another front exterior close-up. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Interior living and dining rooms. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Alternate angle of the living room detailing staircase to upper level. Photo by Chuck Choi.



View from the living room through the dining room, into the kitchen and outside onto the deck. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Bathroom and outdoor deck. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Screened-in porch off kitchen. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Exterior view of the screened-in porch. Photo by Chuck Choi.

Bluff House, Martha's Vineyard

Construction completion date: 2008

Bluff House is a light-filled yet sun-sheltered home on Martha's Vineyard, completed in 2007. The design accommodates the Vineyard's intermittent harsh weather, but remains visually open to enjoy a panorama of lovely views. Occupying the crest of a windblown bluff overlooking the Atlantic and nearby saltwater ponds, the house's interior situates the occupant between an earthen stone plinth and light trapezoidal roof forms. Shifting and skewed roof planes simultaneously provide a sense of shelter and openness, and the structure's complex form navigates the limitations of a highly restrictive building envelope. Varied interior and exterior spatial, lighting, and viewing conditions heighten the awareness of site and allow the user to occupy the house in response to the ever-changing environment. The roof planes reciprocate the formal qualities of the bluff, windswept cedars, and cresting waves of the Atlantic below. The building's interior continues the cedar tongue-and-groove cladding, creating visual continuity to the outside, as well as offering a sense of craft similar to what one might find in the local boat-building traditions.



Exterior waterside view. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Aerial view. Photo © 2009 by TurnerVisuals.com.



Waterside bedroom. Photo by Chuck Choi.

Exterior deck off the back/
waterside of the home.
Photo by Chuck Choi.



View of the sitting room
looking toward the dining
room and out to the water.
Photo by Chuck Choi.



Interior sitting
room. Photo by
Chuck Choi.





Living room. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Bedroom. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Bedroom. Photo by Steve Turner.

Hilltop Glade, Truro

Construction completion date: 2008

This small vacation home, completed in 2008, rests upon an inland hilltop glade surrounded by conifers and native shrub grasses. The design scheme seeks to maximize the distant views of Cape Cod Bay and the dramatic slope of the site. The plan is divided between two volumes. The larger contains the primary living spaces, bedrooms, and a study. A small guesthouse occupies the latter. A screened dogtrot joins and separates the spaces and throws the living areas to the outdoors. A pivot at the dogtrot folds the house into the hillside and around a cluster of existing trees. In the primary volume, eleven-foot ceilings and abundant glazing bring the forested condition inside, placing the living areas amidst the tree canopy. The vaulted ceiling heights downstairs hoist the bedrooms and study into the sky. Views from the second floor master suite, study, and roof deck, which spans the dogtrot, disengage the occupant from the ground plane. Inserted within the trees, panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and the bay envelop the occupant.



Exterior rear view. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Exterior front view.
Photo by Chuck Choi.



Alternate exterior rear view.
Photo by Chuck Choi.



Kitchen and sitting areas. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Dining and sitting areas. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Dining area and staircase to upper level. Photo by Chuck Choi.



View down from the second floor.
Photo by Chuck Choi.



Second floor view. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Front exterior. Photo by Chuck Choi.



Rear exterior. Photo by Chuck Choi.



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