

PHILADELPHIA Life.

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ON THE TOWN.

City scene

Inside the ultimate penthouse. **PAGE 8**

PHILADELPHIA
**BUSINESS
JOURNAL**

SEPTEMBER 8,
2006

Revamped Vicky

A Chestnut Hill homeowner brings her Victorian into the 21st century.

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Le Bec-Fin's Georges Perrier prepares a gourmet dish at home.

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Jersey Summers

A Berwyn family builds memories at their vacation home in Avalon.

BY SUSAN STAPLETON

Maureen Shapiro's fond recollections of spending summers at the Shore when she was growing up have evolved into a family tradition she passed on to her three sons. Even her husband, Jeff, has transformed from a boy who never summered at the beach to a man who cherishes the season at Avalon, N.J.

"My husband was not a Shore person, but I convinced him with this house," says Maureen, who with her husband owns a six-bedroom home on Bluefish Harbor.

Innocent games of pool, biking to meet friends for a game of basketball, swimming in the harbor and jaunts out to the Atlantic Ocean help the languid days fly by, while family dinners around the table on the second-floor deck or board games on the first-floor deck bring the Shapiro clan closer.

The easy lifestyle of the Jersey Shore has beguiled countless city dwellers to realize their dream of owning a second home in a sunny vacation town. Nine homes a month were sold on average in Avalon during the first half of this year, and though there are



MIKE MERGEN

signs that Shore home sales are slowing, home sales trends don't concern the Shapiros, who didn't come to Avalon to flip properties.

Instead, the Shapiros are building bonds. And for that, they needed more space for friends and extended family. Five years ago, the family bought the lot next door, razed the house on it during the nine-month stretch between seasons and completed an addition to create



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a 5,300-square-foot home with room to accommodate 20 overnight guests, just in time to enjoy the 2002 season.

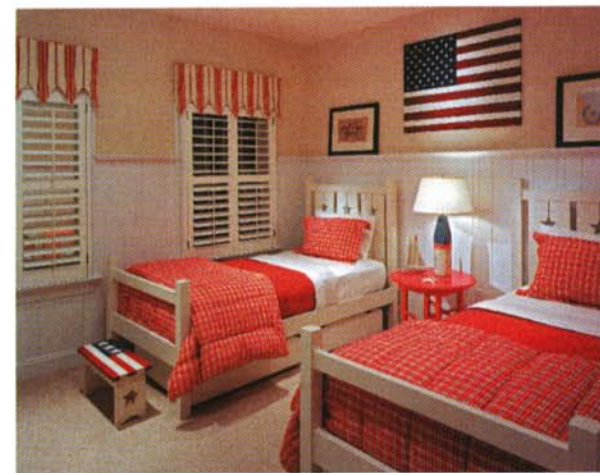
The Shapiros tapped interior designer and decorator Allison Forbes, owner of Forbes Design Consulting in Berwyn, to integrate the new addition and create an upscale Shore experience. Ten years before, Forbes had designed the Shapiros' home in Berwyn.

From the outside, the house looks like a typical Shore home with a simulated gray shake exterior and picket fencing, with the true front of the house facing the small, private inlet of Bluefish Harbor. Inside, the home's Cape Cod-reminiscent character is evident in the millwork details throughout, such as the beadboard wainscot and coffer ceilings. Numerous built-in benches conceal clutter.

Forbes added touches that evoke the naturalism of the seashore, such as limestone floors and oil-rubbed bronzed finishing on fixtures. Architectural details, such as supporting brackets in the entryway, become a repeating detail that complements the design.

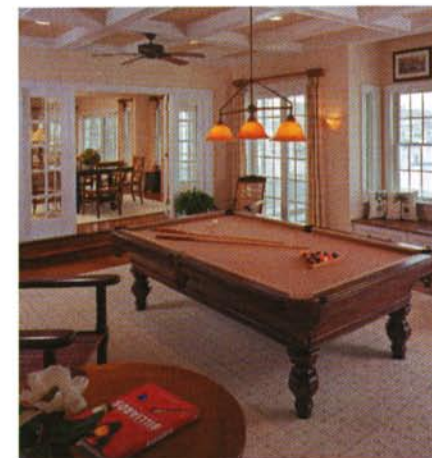
"The hard part is making a home look all new when you're in fact trying to marry the

Interior designer Allison Forbes, center, helped the Shapiros integrate a new addition onto their Shore home.



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game room and family room, where the Shapiros' three sons play pool or board games. Stratego being the game of recent choice. Even outdoors, games surround the house — a basketball court, shuffleboard and horseshoe pit keep the feel of the home light. The open-air design of the front of the house takes visitors from the family room in the former home to the game room just a couple of steps down in the addition. A large beige pool table dominates



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two together," says Forbes, who estimates that a job of this scope will typically cost \$200 to \$300 per square foot.

Forbes kept the kitchen on the second floor, a trait natural to homes in Avalon, where views are treasured. The open, upside-down kitchen with its double island and hidden workspaces is the perfect setup for Maureen, who's taken cooking classes to hone her skills. She makes frequent use of the Sub-Zero refrigerator and Viking range. A dumbwaiter ferries groceries upstairs.

A second home lets owners expand their design ideas, and Forbes took advantage of Maureen's choice to paint the kitchen yellow, a color Forbes describes as a tough choice for a kitchen. "It's great for a second home, though," she says.

The living room on the second floor contains the original mantelpiece, but Forbes added a second mantel for height. "I tried to bring the house up to date with the addition and really personalize it for them," Forbes says.

But the hub of the house resides in the

room, where Maureen says her husband is usually the one starting tournaments with the kids.

The elements — salt water, sand and dirt — can take their toll on a home, so Forbes kept the Shapiros' comfortable lifestyle in mind when she designed by incorporating fibers that wear kindly with children. "I played with a lot of texture for comfort and to hide dirt," Forbes says.

The first floor is dominated by hardwood floors and a beige and cream palette. Cozy couches face a fireplace that comes to life when the Shapiros come down for a winter weekend escape.

Architectural touches add to the flow of the home while marking different rooms. Wainscoting lines the hallways and a coffered ceiling in the game room denotes the change from old home to new. In one room the crown molding might be single, but in another it's married with a second or even third ring. Even an arched doorway in the hallway denotes the movement from the old to the new part of the home. "It really circulates well," says Forbes.

Of the six bedrooms, the young boys occupy three. Forbes used bright fresh colors that tie them together while giving each a distinct personality. The navy blues and

bright reds play off the white beadboards that line the walls. Each room feels as if it were created specially for its occupant.

Each of the boy's rooms has two twin beds with trundles underneath to accommodate the many overnight guests who flood the home. One night it might be the boys' friends from Avalon or from back home in Berwyn. Another it's in-laws or aunts. Two nieces share the old master bedroom with its own private bathroom on the second floor.

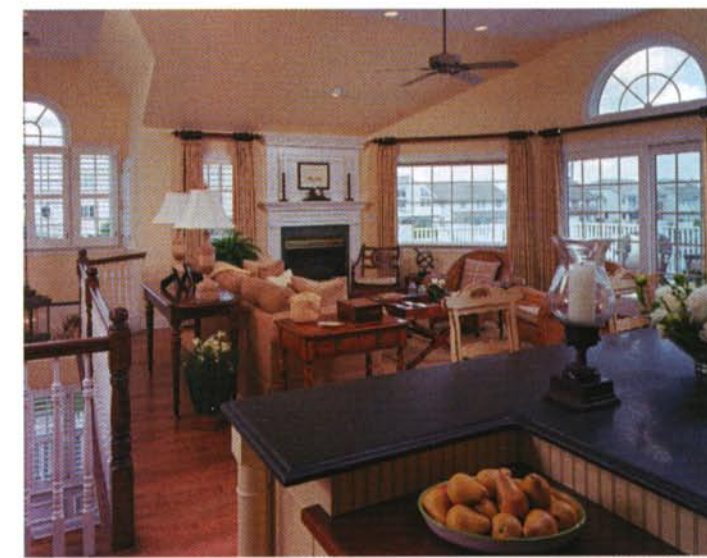
The new master bedroom features a private deck and navy blue décor that spills into the new master bathroom. Iridescent glass tiles and blue in the fixtures tie it into the blues of the bedroom.

"This family really lives and uses this house," Forbes says. "They entertain a lot."

The Shore home is something special Maureen can share with her family. "Something happens when you cross that bridge," she says of the drive into Avalon. "I grew up spending summers here and it's natural to do it with my boys."

Jeff and Maureen plan to install a pool at their Berwyn home between seasons this year. "We love the bay, which is why it's taken us so long to put one in. We were afraid we wouldn't use it," said Maureen, who loves to kayak or crab with the kids off the dock.

But most of all, Maureen dreams of the memories she will create when her sons grow older and bring her grandchildren to visit. "I can have the kids for the weekend, more than just an hour for dinner in the city," she says. ■



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Clockwise from top left: Each of the boy's rooms has a guest bed; a fireplace keeps the family warm on winter escapes; the game room.