

# New England Style



Anna Kasabian

FOREWORD BY

Tommy Hilfiger

WITH  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY

Brian Vanden Brink

Kindra Cliniff

AND

Eric Roth

RIZZOLI  
PUBLISHERS

## A CONVERTED Boathouse

In our quest to preserve and honor the past, we often end up living, vacationing, or even shopping in places that originally had other purposes, other lives. It is not uncommon to find carriage houses or stables, in the city or the country, that have been transformed into stores or homes. And it is just as easy to discover churches, boathouses, lighthouses, and old gristmills functioning as homes or inns. For New England's architects, restoration builders, or carpenters this offers thousands of interesting projects—projects that will be passed on to future generations who will hold these precious places close to their hearts.

Groups like the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) and the Trustees of Reservations protect the most prestigious, historically significant property collections and give us access to the gardens, mansions, and farmhouses that have captured the essence of the region's history and its families. Visiting these homes—from the Crane Estate in Ipswich, Massachusetts, to Roseland Cottage in Woodstock, Connecticut—inspires us in our own home design and decor.

We live in and visit these places to change our perspective, perhaps to leave our high-tech, nontextural lives behind for at least part of our days. If we choose to live in a house from the 1600s, we may design the interiors to keep all the remnants of modern life out of sight. Architects help to hide the wires and systems that cue us that it's the twenty-first century. Designers help us track down the details, from period sconces and old marble sinks to faithful period reproductions. At the North Bennet Street School in Boston's North End, the skills of fine woodworking and preservation carpentry are taught, and graduates produce handmade



Here is the perfect escape—an old boathouse given new life as a getaway. The setting and the space give us the texture, scenery, and salt air we crave all the workweek long.



When we carefully transform these places—open them to the light of day—and reveal the views, we are sustained by the simple pleasure of staring off to sea and letting the sea breezes in.



furnishings that, like the pieces they seek to duplicate, will themselves become precious heirlooms someday. In its hundred-plus-year history, the school has remained committed to training people in time-honored methods and skills that produce the finely crafted products New Englanders love.

Let us not forget that all of this is rooted in an appreciation for the past, for the craftspeople who carved the wood, cut the glass, and tapped each and every nail into place to build our rooms and create the views that take us out of our element.

The Keeper's House Inn on Isle Au Haut Bay, Maine, is protected by the National Registrar of Historic Places. Guests arrive by mail boat, and then innkeepers Jeff and Judi Burke give them a unique taste of New England. By day you enjoy the scenery, and the deer, osprey, seal, and porpoise who will undoubtedly visit. There is no electricity, no telephone, and nothing much to do. Candles, kerosene, and gas lamps light the

way when darkness falls. To lie in bed at night, listen to the ocean, and think that the lighthouse keeper once walked these halls is truly something you will never forget.

Or take this nineteenth-century boathouse on Little Diamond Island, Maine. In the 1800s it served as a Coast Guard coaling station, and later it housed the island convenience store and gas pumps. Just a fifteen-minute boat ride from Portland, where trendy new restaurants and shops are popping up regularly, this retreat is a place that gives its owner breathing space and a good dose of nature as well. Today the space has a new life as a special hideaway, and New England architect Rob Whitten helped bring it back to life. It's not hard to imagine that this was once filled with fishing and lobster gear and winches. That was the idea, really—to keep the feel of an old Maine boathouse, introduce a few modern comforts, and maybe house the owner's boat-building project someday.