



# EAST MEETS WEST

## A decade-long vision blends Japanese design with Cape Cod tradition

A career with computer giant IBM brought John Crawford and his wife Suzy around the world, with assignments in exhilarating cities including Paris and Tokyo, but when they realized retirement wasn't too far off, they had to consider where they would plant roots. "For a number of years we started taking our regular vacations to places people retire to down South, here and there, and each time we'd come and see my folks here on the Cape," explains John. "Then we said, 'You know? We find the Cape to be the place we like the most.'"

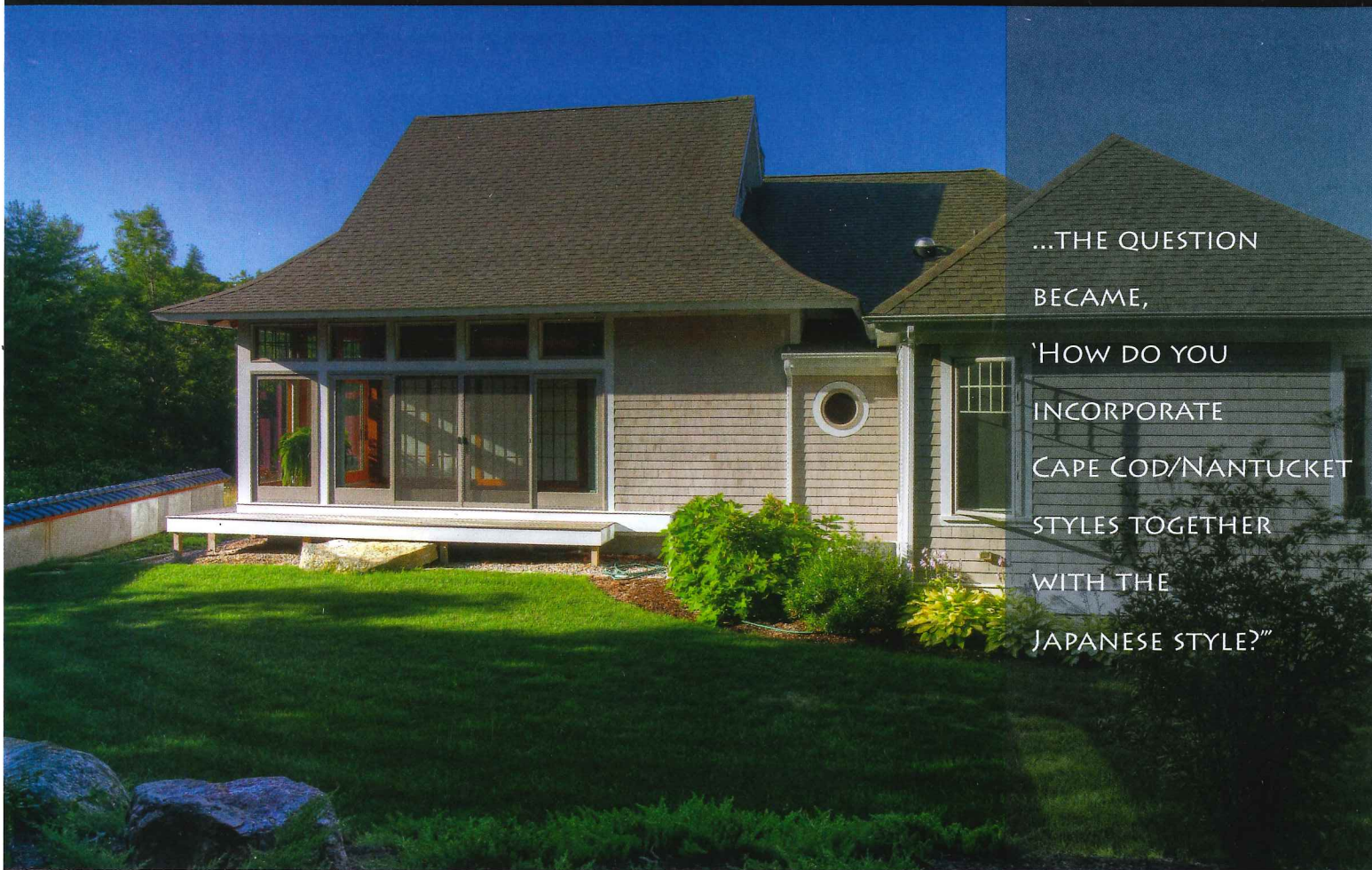
John and Suzy had visited his parents in Orleans since they retired there in 1970. The couple started looking at properties in 1991, leading them to casually explore Hyannis, Falmouth and Seabury. "We were looking for a specific kind of thing," explains John. "We wanted a nice location in terms of town and all, but we really didn't want waterfront or oceanfront...we didn't want the overhead and the operational expenses over the long term, and we wanted something that had a residential feel to it, but not an exclusive community." After an exhaustive search, the two found an undeveloped plot, once a working farm that overlooked a serene pond and abutted conservation land which coincidentally, was just down the hill from where John's parents had once lived. The land was purchased, but the real work had just begun.



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BY ANDREA E. MCHUGH / PHOTOS BY ERIC ROTH





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During their time in Tokyo, Suzy, a third-generation Japanese American, reconnected with her heritage by befriending local women and exploring the country. "And that turned out to be a really tremendous experience for her," John recalls. "Leaving Japan was really a problem. She had really made a lot of good friends and coming back to America was not at the top of her list at the time, so with that the question became, 'How do you incorporate Cape Cod/Nantucket styles together with the Japanese style?'" Back stateside, acquaintances on the Cape had recommended the couple consider Architectural Design Incorporated in Orleans where they met Andrew Miao, who, as it turns out, is Chinese and grew up in Taiwan in a Japanese-style house. Together, John, Suzy and Andrew spent countless hours collaborating on a custom home design that integrated traditional Japanese influence with Cape Cod architecture, a process they agree was challenging but that has reaped tremendous rewards.







Shades of sea and sky brighten the living room, while beloved Japanese treasures are proudly displayed.



"John and Suzy wanted a house that was unassuming, that didn't stick out," explains Miao. He says the home celebrates the indoor/outdoor interrelationship, a palpable Japanese antecedent. The focal point of the entry is an interpretation of a sunken Japanese garden with traditional statuary surrounded by pebbles. Miao says the design also incorporates Japanese tea house elements. "It's a whole different scale, but the joy of it, the relaxation, comes in—just like how we take off our shoes. It's a Japanese tradition that you leave the dirt and stress of the world behind," he says.

A thoroughly modern kitchen with white cabinetry, high arched ceilings and Blue Pearl granite countertops blends into an open floor plan, where a sitting room includes beloved pieces: a desk where John's father, a clergyman, once wrote his sermons, as well as a pair of handcrafted chairs the couple commissioned when they lived in France. Crisp white walls and rich shades of blue are carried throughout the furnishings and accessories, like a hand-woven rug (which Suzy designed), couches and a sitting area, adding a decidedly nautical aesthetic.









The heart of the home, however, is an authentic tatami room surrounded by elegant shoji screens that is elevated from the first floor. In a typical Japanese home, such a space can be used as an eating area, a study, an area for contemplation, and often, a bedroom. The Crawfords use theirs primarily for entertaining and dining. "This works out really well for breakfast when you have overnight guests, or for dinner or cocktails, and it's also a good relaxing, reflecting area," says John. Materials for the room were crafted and shipped by a Japanese carpentry supplier based in California who, at first introduction, gave Miao pause. "Andrew was a little skeptical because his name was 'Clyde,'" laughs John, but with Miao's design, the Crawford's vision and the determination of builder Michael Squier of Hyannis-based Squier Construction, the room has become the home's masterpiece. The alcove pillar is made from *tokobashira*, a tree grown in Japan, a corner post in the ceremonially important alcove called *tokonoma*, the recessed space that is the focal point of the room where a decorative scroll hangs. Japanese wall-paper in an earthen hue offers a grass-like texture on the walls and ambient lighting illuminates the space. Underfoot lay a series of tatami mats that hold special meaning for the Crawfords.

In Shoto, Shibuya, their Tokyo neighborhood, the couple habitually passed a little workshop for four years, curious about the shopkeeper's trade. Their quest to bring authentic tatami mats back to U.S. when they moved led them to the neighborhood shop, where an order for 10 mats was placed and a fast friendship forged. Before their departure, the tatami maker gifted the couple with a number of ancestral kimonos, explaining the meaning of each one. The touching gift today rests in a striking *tansu*, a Japanese lacquer clothing chest.

The master bedroom and bath, laundry room, storage closet, powder room and mud room are also on the first floor. "The concept is one floor living, so everything we need is right here," says John. "In fact, the second floor is sort of an add-on for company and resale value; we don't really use it much." Outside, a traditional Japanese wall lends a panoramic view, says Miao, and a modern interpretation of an *engawa*, an indoor/outdoor veranda, is found on varying areas of the exterior.

The overall project, concedes John, has been 10 years in the making with "thousands of decisions" along the way. But it has been well worth the journey. **H**

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