

WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

Tour an Island Home in Maine Filled With a Rich Palette and Room for Entertaining

Gachot Studios transformed a coastal home into a retreat for two art-loving city dwellers

By Zoë Sessums

Photography by William Jess Laird

Styled by Anita Sarsidi

October 6, 2023



Art: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome. Ishmael Randall Weeks/Lawrie Shabibi.

When Charles Shoener and Eric Richter decided to look for a home in Maine—a quiet escape from Manhattan—they figured the process would be a long and challenging journey. Afterall, that had been the case with the search for their Upper West Side apartment. It was hard to believe that this time around, after spending just one day seeing houses between Cape Elizabeth and Yarmouth, the fourth one would be it. “It didn’t have some of the

qualities that we were looking for from a check-the-box standpoint,” says Shoener. “But we saw the house, walked around, and we both thought, This is actually a lot more interesting than we thought it would be.”

On a small island near Portland less than two square miles big, the home, which abuts a nature preserve and has exceptional views toward Casco Bay, had just enough potential to convince the couple. Plus, they were on the phone with [AD100](#) and [AD PRO Directory](#) designers John and Christine Gachot, of [Gachot Studios](#), before they even closed on the house. The team had designed their New York City apartment, so the rapport, friendship, and trust was already there.

“I think it was within a month of closing, [John and Christine] went up to Maine and spent two or three days without us in the house,” says Shoener. “They had a little card table, fold up chairs, and the totally empty space.” The Gachots spent the handful of days in their makeshift office, thinking through what could or couldn’t work, getting all their measurements done, and feeling excited about this next project with Shoener and Richter. On the designers’ final day at the house, Shoener and Richter joined them for a cold yet lovely outdoor dinner to talk about all of their ideas.

“They didn’t really want to touch the exterior of the house,” says Christine of the unassuming, single-family shingled Cape. “I think that one of the biggest challenges, but one of the most fun aspects of the job, was that they wanted it to be slightly more casual than [their New York City home]. They’re great art collectors, so casual to them is not your average casual. They really wanted to experiment and play with color.” John adds, “It was an environment that they weren’t going to be in day in and day out. So they could be a little more bold with their choices and pushed us to play with color and contrast.”

Shoener and Richter wanted the house to feel homey and have interesting character. “I think having those unique elements of either color or texture or fabric, whatever it may be, helped us distinguish each room from each other versus just having this long alleyway of rooms that we were trying to figure out,” explains Shoener, who describes the original layout of the house as akin to a bowling alley. “I think particularly with ceiling textures, that’s where the Gachots pushed us a lot.” The team was very careful in balancing a contemporary design in the more rural setting.

Out went the nautical themed rooms—a very strict nonnegotiable for the homeowners—and in came a plan that could accommodate the way the Gachots knew Shoener and Richer wanted to enjoy the space. “The layout was really traditional and our clients were really specific about how they entertain,” says John. “So the dining, living, and kitchen area, which is really the hub, was laid out in an interesting way.” Instead of focusing on segmented rooms and features like a big dining table, the team created different seating groups, adapting the space to fit all the ways Shoener and Richter like to host.

The homeowners were also interested in having a place ready for overnight guests. “We had known all of that from our experience in designing their town house,” says John. “So we logically thought, If they’re doing it in New York, they’re definitely doing it in Maine.” They wanted spaces for friends, family, and kids to enjoy too. Shoener had the idea to include a game room, which initially made Richter skeptical. “Sure enough, the first time we had two couples over there, people were playing ping-pong and others were sitting nearby on the sofa,” says Richter. “My brother and his wife were over for a week and they were finding all different places to hang out, whether it was on the deck, in the living room, upstairs—it really has a lot of different inviting areas all throughout the house.”

Of course, one of the great considerations, it being an island home in Maine, was orienting the rooms to take advantage of the views. Shoener and Richter wanted to be focused outward, with tables and chairs facing the windows. “Every significant room except one guest bedroom has anywhere from amazing to really nice views of the water,” adds Richter. “[Charles and Eric] both travel extensively, but I think that Maine is a really great retreat for them and always has been,” says Christine. “They found this very spectacular, special little piece of the world.”



Art: © 2023 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome. Ishmael Randall Weeks/Lawrie Shabibi.

1/15

Between the rich [Angelo sofa system from the Future Perfect](#) and [Ipanema lounge chairs from Espasso](#), the living room is prime for enjoyment and entertaining. Striking furnishings like the [Jan Vlug coffee table from Morentz](#), Affordances limited-edition side table from Matter, [Orbitale brass chandelier by Silvio Piattelli](#), and the [Double Quartz table lamp by Allegra Hicks](#) are just a few of the elements that elevate the design of the home.



2/15

The many narrow doorways in the home were turned into wider archways. The rich but versatile paint color allows for the homeowners’ collections to stand out on the shelves.



3/15

“I think the layout just lends itself for those informal, large gatherings that are so special,” says Christine of the kitchen. “It just feels really friendly like [the homeowners].” Around the island with custom millwork by MR Brewer and Rosso Alicante marble slab from Bas Stone sits [American black walnut stools from BDDW](#). Slim [cylinder fixtures by Lumfardo Luminaires](#) light up the room and a painting by Edward Zutrau adds an extra pop of color. The walls and ceiling are painted in [Farrow & Ball’s Wimborne White](#).



Art: ©Janet Taylor Pickett/Jennifer Baahng Gallery

4/15

In the dining area, a custom banquette, dining table from Ruemmler, and set of vintage Italian chairs from Morentz makes for a cozy eating area with a view. Janet Taylor Pickett’s *Remembering The Lightness of Her Being* adds dimension to the corner.



5/15

With a fireplace on the opposite wall, the first floor lounge is painted in Benjamin Moore's gray-green Carolina Gull. A Davenport Sofa from RW Guild upholstered in Pasha linen velvet from Gretchen Bellinger and a pair of vintage Gio Ponti lounge chairs from Piasa add softness. Serpentine PM coffee table from Louis Vuitton and ceiling light fabricated by HB Lighting add contrasting hard lines.



6/15

Benjamin Moore’s Drenched Sienna paint color pops against the dark elements and of this powder room. The [Paavo Tynell ceiling lamp](#) from Studio Schalling and [Circuit 1 Surface light](#) from Apparatus add sculptural detail.



7/15

In Richter’s office, which is on the lower level of the house, the design team added a window to allow for more light. The cozy blue sofa is a custom piece fabricated by Wood Spring & Down, which perfectly contrasts the Poppy coffee table by Pierre Yovanovitch.



8/15

The deep, dark mix of black, blue, and green in this powder room adds an element of intrigue. The custom mirror is fabricated by Fischer Furniture and the Rotation wall light is from Monologue.



Art: Ishmael Randall Weeks/Lawrie Shabibi

9/15

In the primary bedroom, a vintage [Pierre Jeanneret bench](#) from Galerie Downtown sits at the end of the custom walnut bed fabricated by [Fischer Furniture](#). *Circulo Concreto* by Ishmael Randall Weeks hangs on the wall, which is painted (along with the ceiling) in [Farrow & Ball's Wimborne White](#).



In the primary bath, red, brass, and marble are the materials of choice, from the Trambiserra marble slab floors from Bas Stone to the credenza painted with a glossy Benjamin Moore Brick Red paint. The customized table lamp from Galerie Negropontes and vintage Gaetano Sciolari for Stilnovo ceiling lamp add additional moments of color and texture.



11/15

In another corner of the primary bathroom, custom white oak vanities and [Nickey Kehoe vanity stool](#) add warmth. [Farrow & Ball's Dimpse](#) paint completes the look.



12/15

In the lower-level media room, the decor takes on a moodier tone from the custom sofa fabricated by Wood Spring & Down, to the Jean Royère Bridge armchair and Artistic Frame lounge chair.



Art: Walead Beshty/Petzel, New York

13/15

The ping-pong table is the star of the game room, which doesn't skimp on other sophisticated details like the Club modular sofa by Dimore or the Walcott barstools from KGBL. The custom millwork is by MR Brewer, painted in Farrow & Ball's Dead Salmon.



14/15

For outdoor entertainment, the terrace is furnished with a [Portofino table](#) and [Vieste dining chairs](#) with custom upholstery.



15/15

On a quiet island in Maine, the home sits with a footprint that follows the waterline and faces the western sun.



Zoë is a New York- and Midcoast Maine–based writer and editor, currently the senior digital design editor at *Architectural Digest*. Her work has appeared online and in print for *Architectural Digest*, *Sight Unseen*, *Sixtysix Magazine*, *Bon Appétit*, *New York Magazine*, *Epicurious*, and more. While her focus is primarily the written word—having a ...
[Read more](#)