

# Maine Home

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+ DESIGN

## WELCOME TO BRIGHTHOLME

Kim Swan founds Mount Desert  
Island's first designer showhouse



# Maine Home +DESIGN

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# The Bright Spaces of **BRIGHTHOLME**

*A look at Mount Desert Island's  
first-ever designer showhouse*

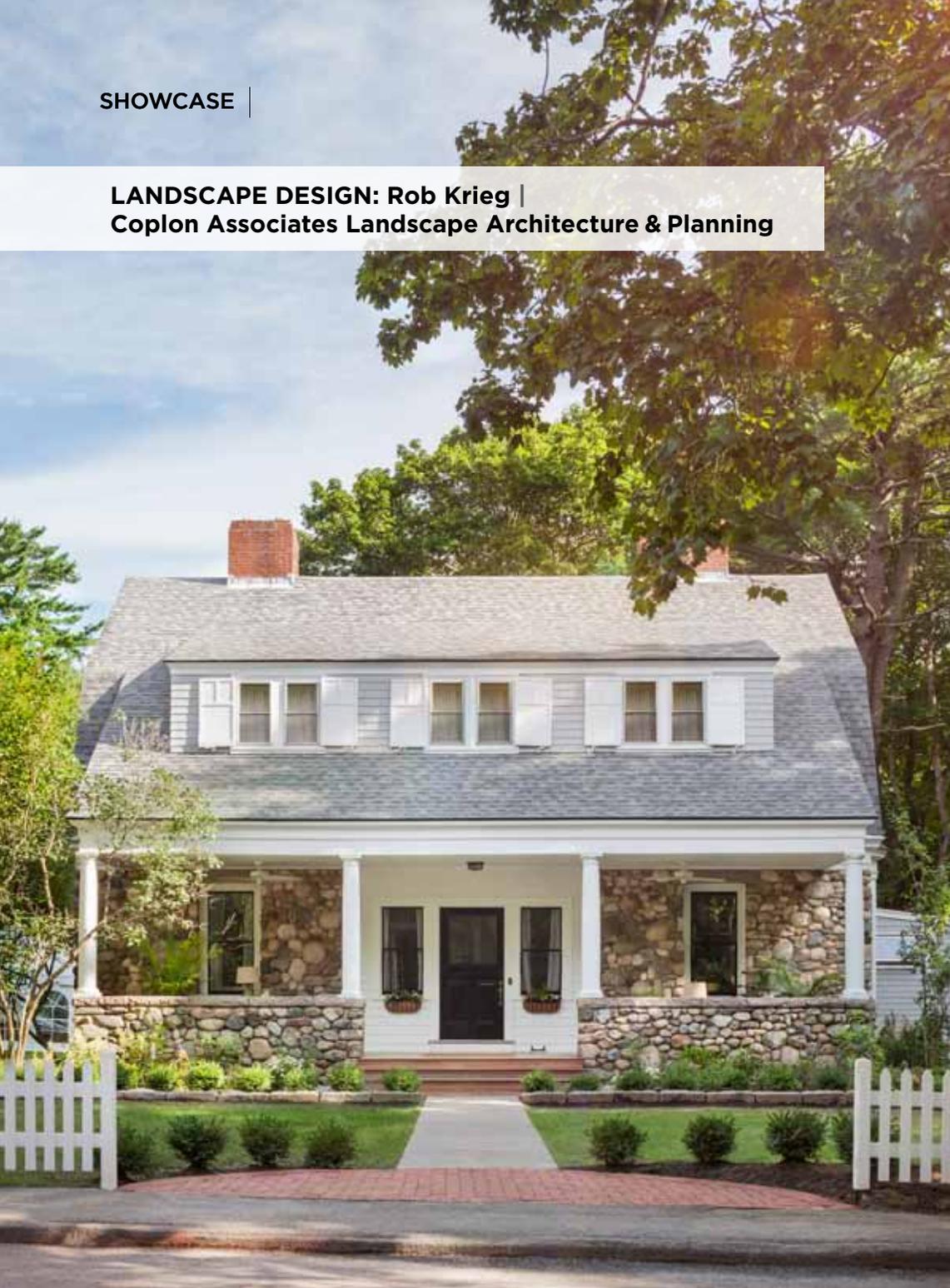
by Rebecca Falzano  
Photography Irvin Serrano

**I**n December 2012 Kim Swan, president of the Swan Agency Sotheby's International Realty, got a call from her father, Cary Swan. He was purchasing the house next door to his on Wayman Lane in Bar Harbor and asked Kim, the family house expert, for help fixing it up. Kim gladly obliged and took her first tour under the narration of Bob Cooper, a son of the family who had lived in the house since 1956. The old Arts and Crafts house had great bones, but Kim quickly realized she was in over her head. Ever-resourceful, she came up with an idea: What if she could turn the house into a showhouse and rely on the talent and expertise of designers? What if she could invite the public in and raise money for a good cause? She asked her father what he thought. "I don't know what a showhouse is exactly," he said, "but sure."

Kim got to work immediately, approaching designers and selecting Brian Shaw Contractors as the general contractor. In her research on the house, she discovered that its original name was Brightholme and it had once been part of the Kenarden estate built by J.S. Kennedy in the late 1800s. She chose as a beneficiary the neighboring Jackson Laboratory, a nonprofit biomedical research institution and National Cancer Institute-designated Cancer Center. As fate would have it, the house had actually belonged to Clarence Cook Little, who founded Jackson Lab in 1929, the same year he purchased the house. And on July 14, the showhouse opened its doors.

On the following pages are room-by-room recaps by the designers who transformed the house this summer—their inspirations, standout features, and favorite moments.

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Rob Krieg |  
Coplton Associates Landscape Architecture & Planning**



“**T**he entrance, with its classic white picket fence and brick pavers at the street and entry stairs, provides a warm welcome to the classic front porch and door. We reused the existing dressed granite block found along the old driveway to slightly elevate the front grade to create a boxwood-framed shrub and perennial garden. This provides seasonal color along with winter structure. The side entrance provided a wonderful opportunity for creating

a little intimate courtyard and outdoor dining terrace. A combination of arborvitae and lilac hedge separate the courtyard, dining terrace, and side lawn from the driveway. A fountain is located in the side yard and centered on the large living room window. Three large multi-stem river birch enhance the overall landscape with color, texture, and shade. While each section of the landscape may be different, they all flow together naturally.”

**STUDY/DEN: Augusto Rosa |  
Augusto Rosa Interiors, A4 Architects**



“**T**he study, with its bay window, fireplace, and exposed stone walls, was a call hard not to answer. From the soft look of the granite wall and the eastern light from the outside coming through the bay window, I had my inspirations to start the room. The first two elements I chose were a large-scale photographic canvas of pond lilies on MDI taken by nature photographer Mayra Bonilla and the Morning Birch Rug from Angela Adams, and voilà!—Maine and the color scheme were all tied together: grays and striae of yellows complement all the strong starting points of stone, lilies, and birch trees. The furniture includes an eclectic selection of midcentury classics—the iconic

Tulip Table and Wishbone Chairs—along with comfortable club chairs. Custom carpentry by Peacock Builders lends clean lines to a traditional space with a sublime fireplace surround, a ‘floating’ bar within a bookshelf, and a practical radiator cover. Other accessories include the round mirror and custom console table from the modern farm line of Furniturea. Completing the room are accessories that are almost all from Maine: Passamaquoddy baskets, wooden carved birds, quirky antique store finds such as gold-tipped antlers and a twig table, Docksmith’s iPod/iPad docks made from Maine driftwood, and of course, books!”

**MASTER BEDROOM: Barbara Kurgan |  
BKOK Studio**


“**M**aine has such a special place in my life. It’s where I come to restore myself in nature, quiet down the noise, and reflect. I wanted to create a nest that held me and the objects that I love. I wanted luxury without losing the natural, rustic elements of nature: river stones, bark, and bees. It was important that the bedroom feel serene, the textures feel good to the touch, and the palette be inspired by nature. The room provided many special challenges and hard lines, so I softened them by upholstering the walls with a natural cotton muslin. There wasn’t an ideal location to place a bed, so I designed a tufted headboard that runs wall to wall, using the same muslin so that it feels like a built-in niche and allows you to see the fire from bed. The fireplace was uncovered in the demolition, and its scale wasn’t in proportion to

the room. It needed a mantel, so I designed a floor-to-ceiling surround with contemporary lines that mimicked the angles of the dormers and made the fire more intimate for a bedroom. I then sheathed it in birch-bark tiles, bringing the outside in and playing the rough texture off of the smooth cotton. The wool carpet has a subtle geometric pattern in the same natural palette that holds the room together, and the bamboo armoire in gold leaf becomes neutral and elemental. The green mohair of the reading chair invokes moss, and the faux bois silk bolster that runs the full width of the bed is a tactile delight. I tried to blur the boundary between traditional and modern, male and female, so that anyone could feel at home. And I always like a bit of whimsy in my rooms, thus the brass bees and their nest.”





“My goal was to create a bathroom that would be attractive design-wise and also functional. While I was out to wow visitors to the showhouse, I also wanted to make the bathroom one that could be lived in and enjoyed for generations to come in this beautiful home. By combining marble, glass, and tile with the black and white foundation and nature- and ocean-inspired accents, we achieved just that.”



**FAMILY BATHROOM: Edi Hall | Island Interiors**



**SOUTH-FACING BEDROOM: Betsy Barmat Stires | Frog Hill Designs**



“**T**he south-facing bedroom was a tough room filled with built-in cabinetry and counters. After I saw the beautiful Woodland Deco bed handcrafted by William Doub I thought I could tie it all together with a combination of amazing but subtle textiles punctuated by some sharp graphics and stunning art (and also, a sharp saw and a great carpenter, Joe Austin). I have spent most of my summers on Mount Desert Island, and wanted to bring some of its natural beauty and tranquillity into my room. I used straw from J. Robert Scott to cover the walls with a very natural and uneven simplicity, combined with some simple and subtle geometry, with a Stark Basketweave rug over a Seagrass base on the floor, and a paper

called Polka Square from Farrow and Ball on the ceiling. I loved the Clarence House Daisy linen and wool crewel for the countertop and pillow because they echo the feel of nature. Cynthia Brown’s diptych was painted for this room and acts almost as windows of a view of the coast if you could see that far. I like the bold, graphic Canon Check from J. Robert Scott on the walls and behind the bookcases with the Matouk bedding because it contrasts so well with the other uneven textures in the room and the curves of the bed. I filled the shelves with books and family photos—all big parts of Maine for me. Rough, simple, luxurious, and thoughtful—that is what I was shooting for.”

**KITCHEN, MASTER BATH & POWDER ROOM:**  
Connie Dedam | Interiors by Details



**LIVING ROOM: Nicola Manganello | Nicola's Home**

“**I**n keeping with the stone cottage architectural style of Brightholme, the busy kitchen has a traditional look, with lace-painted cabinetry, open-frame glass doors, and a farm sink. Cabinetry panels conceal the modern-day appliances to continue the early-twentieth-century theme. A punch of color—aubergine island cabinetry and wall-cabinet interiors—and contemporary lighting fixtures transition the kitchen into modern aesthetics. Stone countertops are River White from India, and the contrasting island top is Brushed Atlantic Black from Quebec. The warmth of bronze-painted wood flooring and cherrywood accents offers contrast to the lace cabinetry. The kitchen may be small by today’s standards, but it delivers on work surfaces and storage space.”

“**W**hen I read about the work being done at the Jackson Laboratory, I wanted to be involved, and now I’m in for the long run. I love to juxtapose old and new pieces in original and compelling new ways and feel that this creates extraordinary living spaces. My room design comes from a very personal place where I have a deep sense of family and place. I wanted this room to stay true to its surroundings and to serve as a gathering place of comfort and serenity. I used family photos, old books, and reclaimed wood to give the room a low-key broken-in feel. I feel that a well-lived-in home invites others to linger and relax, and that is the feeling I try to evoke in all of my work.”

## SHOWCASE



**LINDA'S BEDROOM: Lori Chase | Coastal Interiors**



**LADIES' DRESSING ROOM:  
Tyler Karu & Candace Karu |  
Landing Design**

“M aine has a wonderful heritage of disparate worlds: the old-school elegance of the ‘summer cottages’ and the endless rustic woodlands and wildlife. I love them both. I tried to combine dual legacies, honoring both worlds, in a fairy-tale room you could only expect to find in your dreams. Gilded mirrors and velvet furniture, a bear over the fireplace mantel, silvered birds and fawns, silken bed coverings and draperies, and a glass chandelier are all set down in the middle of a birch forest.”

“T he inspiration came from both the history of the home and a few key pieces. We wanted to respect the age and the bones of this lovely old house, while telling our own story with diverse yet complementary furnishings and accessories, old and new. The Jason Wein dressing mirror, which we sourced at Portland Architectural Salvage, convinced us that the room should be a lady’s domain, a place of repose and pampering. Also from Portland Architectural Salvage was the oversized brass-clad, wooden drapery rod. We found

the circa-1860s fainting couch at the Brimfield Antique Show. It was in rough shape, but we knew it was perfect for the petite space. It was restored, lacquered, and upholstered in contemporary, photo-transferred Martin Margiela fabric. The Laura Fuller glass pieces in the window stand in for draperies and let light enter the room. Vintage advertising posters, a contemporary chandelier by Michael Fink, and a surprisingly neutral leopard-print wall-to-wall carpet add to the eclectic mix.”



**PORCH: Terri Scott | T. Scott Designs**

“I remember, as a little girl, sitting on my grandmother’s porch. Even though it was small and in the city, it was a great escape from the heat of the house. She would put out a rug, some chairs, a small table, and some plants, and we would sit there and talk to the neighbors. Now I have a porch of my own, and it is an extension of our home. My goal was to create a space that anyone can duplicate in their own home. The rugs, pillows, and window boxes came from Lowe’s, and the accessories were from Home Goods and Marshalls. I borrowed the wicker, but the other chairs and table and plants were things I had in my house. I wanted people to know they can create a space like this on a small budget.”



**DINING ROOM: Tyra Hanson | Gallery at Somes Sound**



“**B** rightholme was built in the late 1800s during the art nouveau movement and still, after all these years, has the Arts and Crafts/art nouveau feel as you stroll up the walkway onto the beautiful large porch and enter into a spacious foyer. It seemed only natural to carry this concept through into the dining room. The detailed wooden valances above each window and matching detail around the built-in cabinets were added most likely in the 1970s and incorporated well into my design. During the art nouveau period, colors were rich and subtle, so I chose the warm shades of eggplant, sage, and white to complement the rich mahogany dining room set and side serving/breakfast table. During that period various stylized natural forms were also used, such as flowers, roots, buds, and seedpods, which is why I chose the vine and floral design for the window treatments, rug, and hand-painted tiles in the fireplace. Linda Funk’s botanical illustrations add the right touch of fine art to the walls and blend beautifully with the theme. The table was set with imported linen and selected Wedgwood china and crystal that mirror the dinnerware used in the early 1900s.”

“**T** he media room, larger in size than the other rooms and not a part of the original house, was set to be a challenge simply from its location and sheer size. My inspiration came from a few of the decorative elements that remained, including a bar area and lighting, as I sought to transform the room into a monochromatic lounge area for guests to learn more about the benefactor of the showhouse, the Jackson Laboratory. My inspiration was also influenced by the era of the home, early 1900s. The lighting, feel, and intended use of the room created the perfect fit for Thos. Moser’s Bauhaus-inspired Vita collection. Also featured in the room was the supremely comfortable chaise recliner, yet another piece with design inspirations dating back to the same time period. A recent Thos. Moser introduction and also amazingly comfortable, the Drift chair and ottoman rounded out the seating area. The bar area that remained in the room created a unique opportunity to add the Georgetown single-pedestal table and Aria chairs as the evening game or gathering table, where guests could enjoy conversation as they learned about the history and mission of the Jackson Laboratory. Finally, topping the decor in the room was a set of Thos. Moser Aria bar stools that brought elegance and comfort to the retro-styled bar area. The stools and matching chairs, with their sculpted and scalloped backs, fit beautifully with the bar and gathering areas and were equally appropriate for the picturesque home and the oceanside community of Bar Harbor. Thos. Moser furniture, so eloquently presented, transformed the media room into a place I’d like to call home.” **MH+D**