

A CONNECTICUT COTTAGE

ARCHITECT BERNARD MAPES WHARTON DESIGNS A GUESTHOUSE

*Text by Suzanne Stephens
Photography by
Durston Saylor*

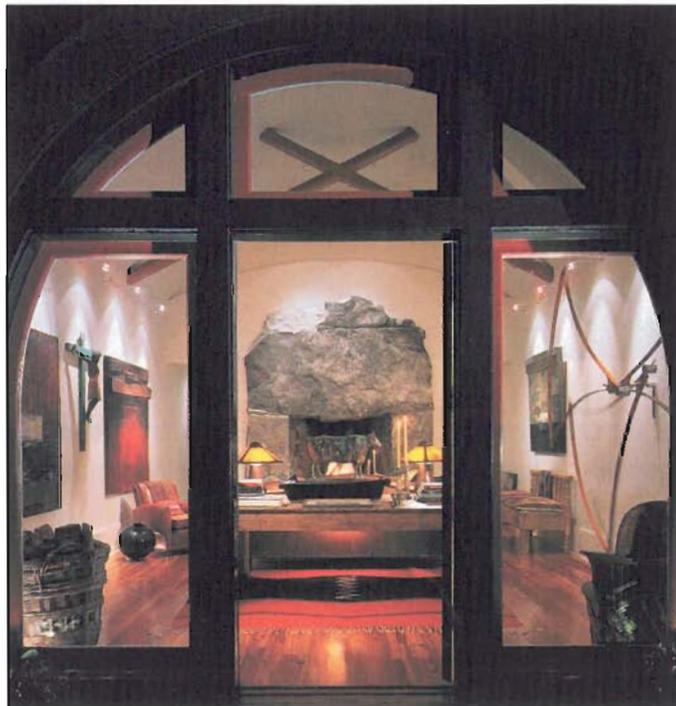
IN EXPANDING HIS CONNECTICUT residence (*Architectural Digest*, October 1993), architect Bernard Mapes Wharton, of Shope Reno Wharton, found that separate buildings best accommodated diverse living functions. He designed a free-standing cottage, with two bedrooms and a living room/art gallery, instead of attaching these spaces to the original house. The guest cottage and main house now form an enclave with two other, diminutive structures, a potting shed and a shed for the family's pet goats. It's a solution not unlike the one Philip Johnson employed in his New Canaan, Connecticut, compound, where, over the years, he has built a separate guesthouse, painting gallery, sculpture gallery and library around his 1949 Glass House. But, Wharton admits, "I didn't go nearly as far as Johnson did."

Instead, Wharton adopted a more traditional approach, and his colony has a consistent, late-nineteenth-century Shingle Style vocabulary. "There is a definite hierarchy—from the main house down to the guest cottage and the potting and goats' sheds," he notes. "The shingle siding and a smattering

RIGHT: "The arched window pattern allows the outside in and vice versa," Wharton says. "The fireplace acts as the terminus." Two bedrooms are at the rear.



ABOVE: Architect Bernard Mapes Wharton's guest cottage is a freestanding addition to his Connecticut house. "The building's layout is much like a chapel's," he says.



of stone keep it all related."

The principal house, distinguished by a conical roof, was built by Wharton and his late wife, Elaine Anthony. When it came to adding bedrooms for the visiting children from their previous marriages, Wharton opted for an eighteen-by-forty-four-foot cabin on a rocky outcropping diagonally across the yard from the dining

continued on page 74

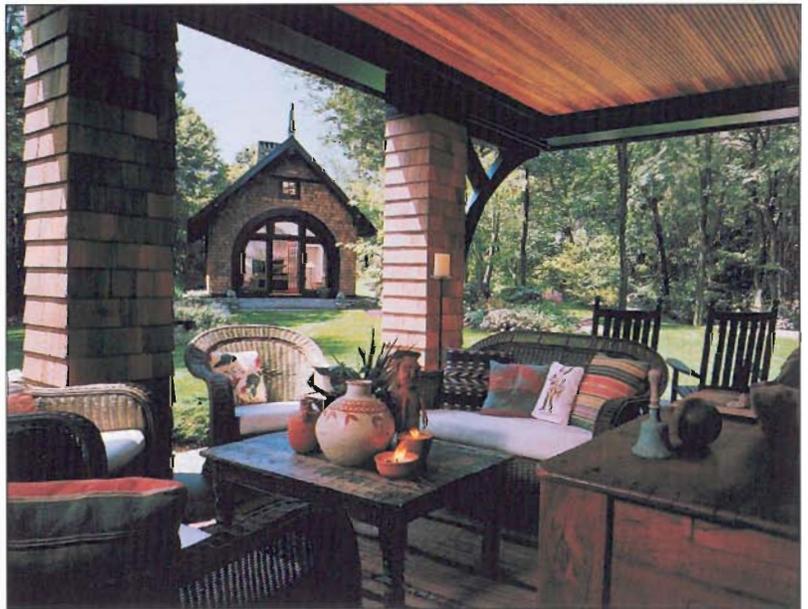
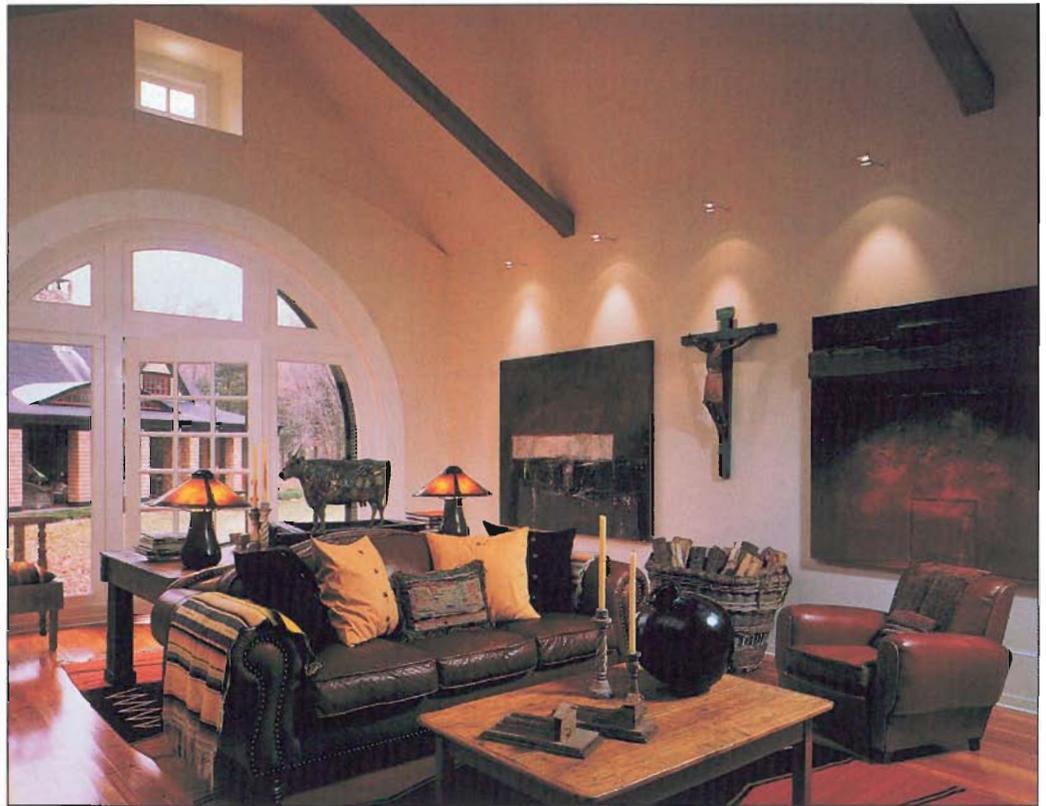
A CONNECTICUT COTTAGE

continued from page 72
 room and porch. “The guest cottage is designed to have a strong presence but not to compete with the house,” Wharton says. “The scale was important—I have an affinity for small-scale enclosures.”

Wharton’s buildings are organized around an area that resembles a New England green. “We intentionally forged a sense of community with the structures,” he adds. “We spend so much time outside all year round, what with cookouts and athletics.”

Wharton is now married

RIGHT: Paintings by Elaine Anthony are displayed in the living room/art gallery. A handmade Mexican rug and rustic furnishings add intimacy to the lofty space.



again, to Jennifer Walsh, and the throng of family members has grown to include seven children. “The guest cottage is the domain of the older kids,” he says. “It gives them a sense of responsibility and autonomy.”

Marked by a sizable horse-

shoe-shaped entrance and a steeply gabled roof with deep overhangs, the guesthouse looks strikingly picturesque. Inside, a rustic living room/art gallery displays richly hued abstract paintings by Anthony. “The room was essentially designed to

show Elaine’s work,” Wharton says of the almost windowless space, where a bank of five skylights softly filters in mellow natural light. Two sturdy eighteen-foot-long cedar beams stretch across the ceiling, and a monumentally

continued on page 76

ABOVE: “With a porch on the main house and the gardens, we have a series of outdoor rooms,” says Wharton (above left). “It creates a town-square-like relationship.”

CONNECTICUT COTTAGE

continued from page 74

scaled granite fireplace deepens the room's intensely primeval quality. "We wanted character and a sense of structure," he says. "There is so much power in simplicity."

Wharton sought out rough-hewn elements and materials to meld together in the cottage. He found granite in a nearby town and used it to create a fireplace with a heft evocative of Stonehenge. "The stone also echoes the paintings' grainy texture," the architect remarks. The granite hearth, eleven feet long and six feet deep, radiates a gentle heat when a fire is lit. "We like to cook there," adds Wharton.

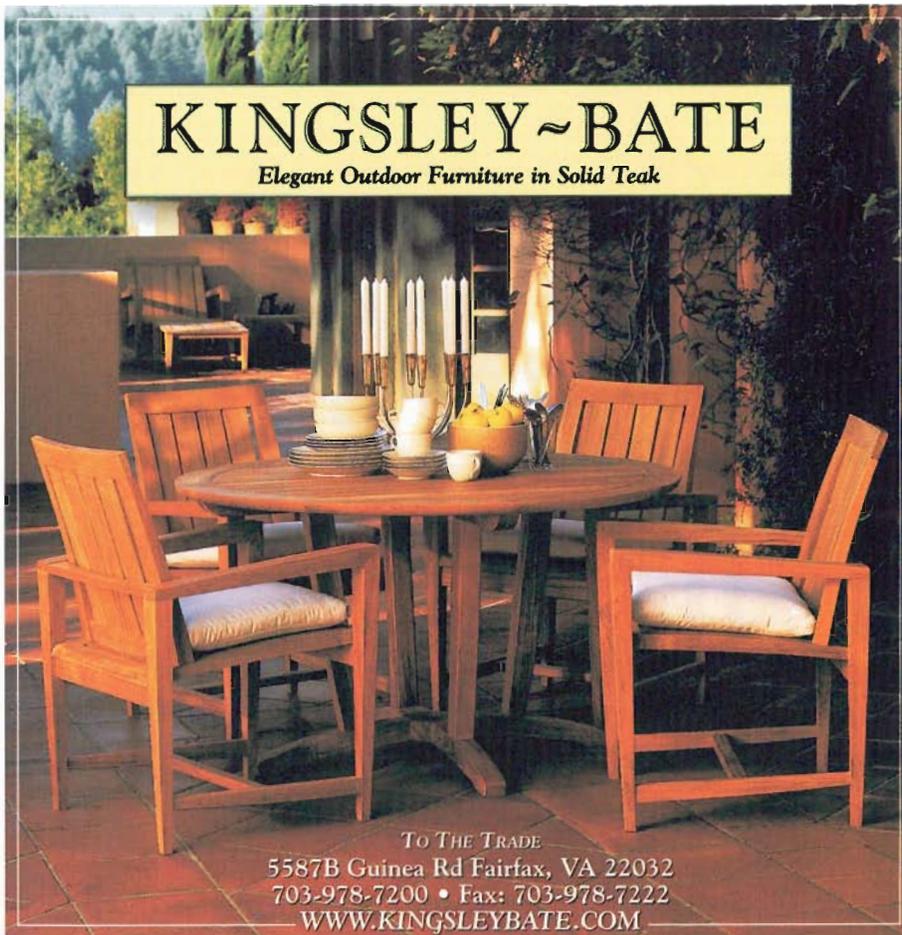
Even the flooring resonates with a rugged history: The heart-pine boards came from the beams of a Sears, Roebuck building in Chicago. A leather club chair and sofa as well as handmade rugs and objects contribute to the homey atmosphere. "It's an informal room—a great place to watch football or read," Wharton says.

References to particular architecture abound throughout, and they are always assimilated by Wharton in an effortless manner. Gatehouses and libraries by H. H. Richardson and houses by

"Shingle siding and a smattering of stone keep it all related."

Bruce Price come to mind in looking at the arched entrance and protecting roof. Wharton also cites the residential architecture of C. F. A. Voysey as inspiring him with its "air of casualness and livability." "The forms and materials of all these architects impart a feeling of permanence and integration with the landscape," he maintains. "But they're still comfortable and adaptable to our way of living today."

This adherence to a strong architectural tradition gives the small cluster a sense of timelessness and place. "I wanted many small things sprinkled on the landscape to create a whole," notes Wharton. "If you like to build, this is an architect's dream." □



KINGSLEY~BATE
Elegant Outdoor Furniture in Solid Teak

TO THE TRADE
5587B Guinea Rd Fairfax, VA 22032
703-978-7200 • Fax: 703-978-7222
WWW.KINGSLEYBATE.COM

SEE YOU AT DECOREX!



LA FORGE FRANCAISE

CREATIVE WROUGHT IRON 36 HAMPTON ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK 11968
T: 516-283-2883 F: 516-283-6081 * AUFFRAY & CO. AT THE NEW YORK DESIGN CENTER
200 LEXINGTON AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10016, T: 212-389-1616 F: 212-389-1739

PHOTO: TERRY BITTER, NYC