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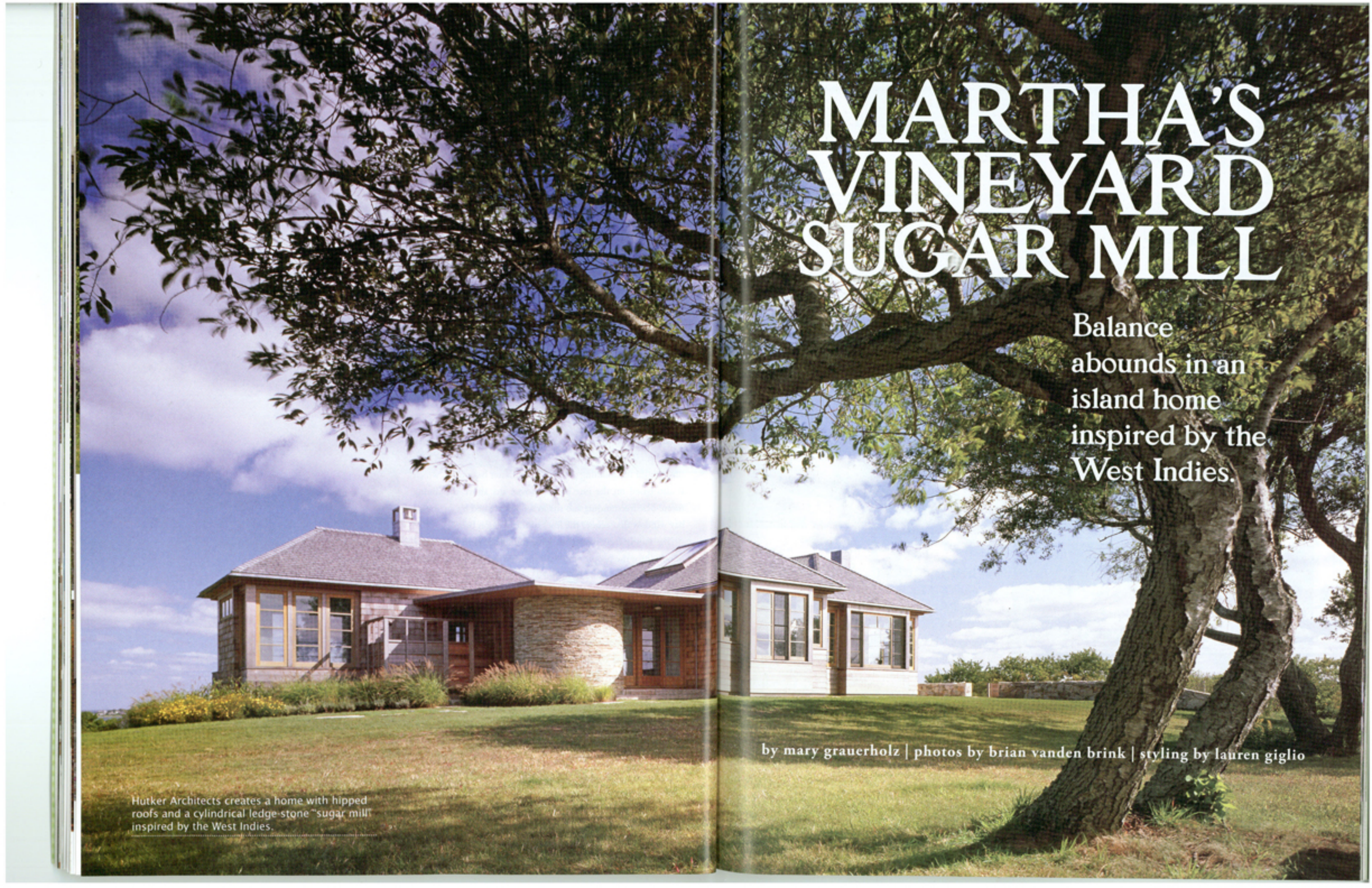
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# MARTHA'S VINEYARD SUGAR MILL

Balance  
abounds in an  
island home  
inspired by the  
West Indies.

Hutker Architects creates a home with hipped roofs and a cylindrical ledge-stone "sugar mill" inspired by the West Indies.

by mary grauerholz | photos by brian vanden brink | styling by lauren giglio





The Hutker team admits they were a bit skittish. James Moffatt, the project manager and designer, remembers the meeting. "At first we were afraid of the dark floors and ceilings," he says. "It's not something we had typically done. We had to kind of wrap our heads around it." Then Regan, Moffatt, and the others began to see the light, literally. "Because of the vast amount of views and light, we were more comfortable with the dark ceiling and dark floors," Moffatt explains. "First, everyone agreed on the dark walnut floors," he says, and then "everything unfolded from there." The West Indian-inspired developments included a sugar mill, a cylindrical ledge-stone structure that houses a powder room, defines the front entry, affords an appealing interruption of glass, and stands as the home's namesake.

Today the contrast of dark and light—such as the light-flooded kitchen with its walnut-stained floor and tray ceiling above the work island—is a big part of the appeal. Regan describes the effect as "wispy white colors offset by dark woodwork." Abundant glass offers glimpses of hip roofs, angular forms that almost undulate, much like the line of sand dunes or treetops. Situated on Squibnocket Hill, the home provides views are spectacular, leading through the landscape, designed by Kristen Reimann of Kristen Reimann Landscape Architect in Oak Bluffs, and toward the Atlantic Ocean in its many forms: Menemsha Pond and Vineyard Sound in one view, an easterly view of the ocean, and Squibnocket Beach to the south, with its rolling surf folding into the Atlantic. "You have three views," Regan says. "It's an unbelievable space. Three walls frame three separate ocean views."

Beyond the style is a comfortable home, where the couple and their grown children have clearly settled. Sugar Mill, with a 1,177-square-foot guesthouse equipped with two bedrooms and lines that mimic the main house, gives the family enough space to come together all at once. The couple previously had another Vineyard summerhouse, located on the water. When the children were grown and married, the family simply



outgrew the space. "They wanted to create a spot for everybody to visit, yet at the same time, the house is still comfortable," Regan says. The couple enjoys entertaining, often with a local flair. Parties are social and easygoing. "When they're here in the summer, it's shorts and bare feet, sand dragged into the house," Regan says. "It's very informal and relaxed."

The feeling of settled contentment may be inspired by the home's appealing effect of balance, seen in architectural features such as two columns

Opposite top: The cylindrical sugar mill houses a first-floor powder room. Left: The second-floor landing floods with light from a 12-paned window. Above: The master bedroom is furnished in crisp whites.






Landscape designer Kristen Reimann created beautiful natural grounds for Sugar Mill. The property includes a lap pool, an outdoor shower, and an alfresco dining area.



at the demarcation point between a circulation area and the living area. On the side of each column is a freestanding oak console, custom built by Herrick & White in Cumberland, Rhode Island, the firm that also built the millwork and cabinetry. As Regan notes, it's about balance, not symmetry. "We shoot for a sense of organization with balance, but there is a difference between balance and symmetry. There's a sense of surprise. Symmetry provides almost none." One surprise is a bronze-colored steel railing and wood stairs near the master bedroom suite, which lead to three bedrooms below. A nearby telescope offers a closer view of Menemsha Harbor.

A bigger surprise lies in the sugar mill, located at the front entrance. The experience of seeing the stone ellipse begins outside, down a slope from the front entrance where the garage is located. "You're drawn to the sugar mill," Regan says. "It has enough volume that you want to approach it to learn more about it." Kristen Reimann designed a garden halfway between the garage and the home's entry. The garden, around a set of granite steps, is minimalist, with fountain grass and flowers in shades of blue, purple, and yellow.

Inside the house, taking a right turn from the sugar mill toward the living area and kitchen, is another eye-catcher, a fireplace on the far wall. On the opposite wall is a dramatic painting by Eric Zener that depicts a platform diver in the clouds. The two elements—fireplace and painting—create powerful points to mark the living area's entry and exit. Other points of interest draw from the natural elements of stone, light, and water. A stone terrace is situated on the north side of the house, overlooking a swimming pool and a mass of blue hydrangeas.

Like the water views that surround it, Sugar Mill is an understatement, a personable house that speaks quietly. This appeals greatly to Regan. "When I got out of college 21 years ago, I thought I'd make big houses, the bigger the better. I was very wrong," he says. "It's about understanding land, scale, and materials. I realized that if I made a statement, it would be a quiet statement. Sugar Mill looks like it belongs on the property. That's the key to what we consider a successful project." 

*Mary Grauerholz is communications manager of the Cape Cod Foundation and a freelance writer. She is a frequent contributor to Cape Cod Home.*

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