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Design Among Friends



A NEW APARTMENT COMPLETES THE RESTORATION OF AN ICONIC ROCKPORT BUILDING

BY DEBRA SPARK | PHOTOGRAPHY JEFF ROBERTS

When interior designer Deborah Chatfield was a girl, she spent summers at her grandparents' house in Pittsburgh. A typical day found her with the children next door: scrambling around the neighborhood's abandoned estate (once owned by the Mellon family), playing Capture the Flag, or visiting the drugstore for candy. When her grandparents moved away, the tradition ended. Chatfield spent summers with school-year friends and saw her grandparents on holidays.

Flash-forward 36 years to Rockland in 2000, a year that found Chatfield attending an event at the Farnsworth Art Museum with her boyfriend, whom she'd met since relocating to Maine from Louisiana. Among the people Chatfield was introduced to that day was Betsy Henshaw, an old friend of her boyfriend's family. Leaving the gathering,

Chatfield remarked to her boyfriend (now husband) that Henshaw seemed oddly familiar. A few weeks later, Chatfield and Henshaw met for lunch and figured out the connection. Henshaw grew up next door to Chatfield's grandparents in Pittsburgh. She was the neighbor girl with whom Chatfield once played. The two women had been dear friends as little girls.

And they are dear friends now.

In 2011, with that friendship in mind, Chatfield approached Michael Sabatini, engineer at Rockport's Landmark Corporation and project manager for the renovation of Rockport's Union Hall, a signature downtown building built in 1856. Chatfield wanted to know what Sabatini was thinking about for the apartment planned for the third floor. The first floor, which in earlier days had been a dry goods store and

(Above, left to right) Union Hall was built in 1856 on Rockport's central street. A telescope inside Betsy Henshaw's apartment, located on the third floor, under the mansard roof. The apartment's magnificent view of Rockport Harbor.

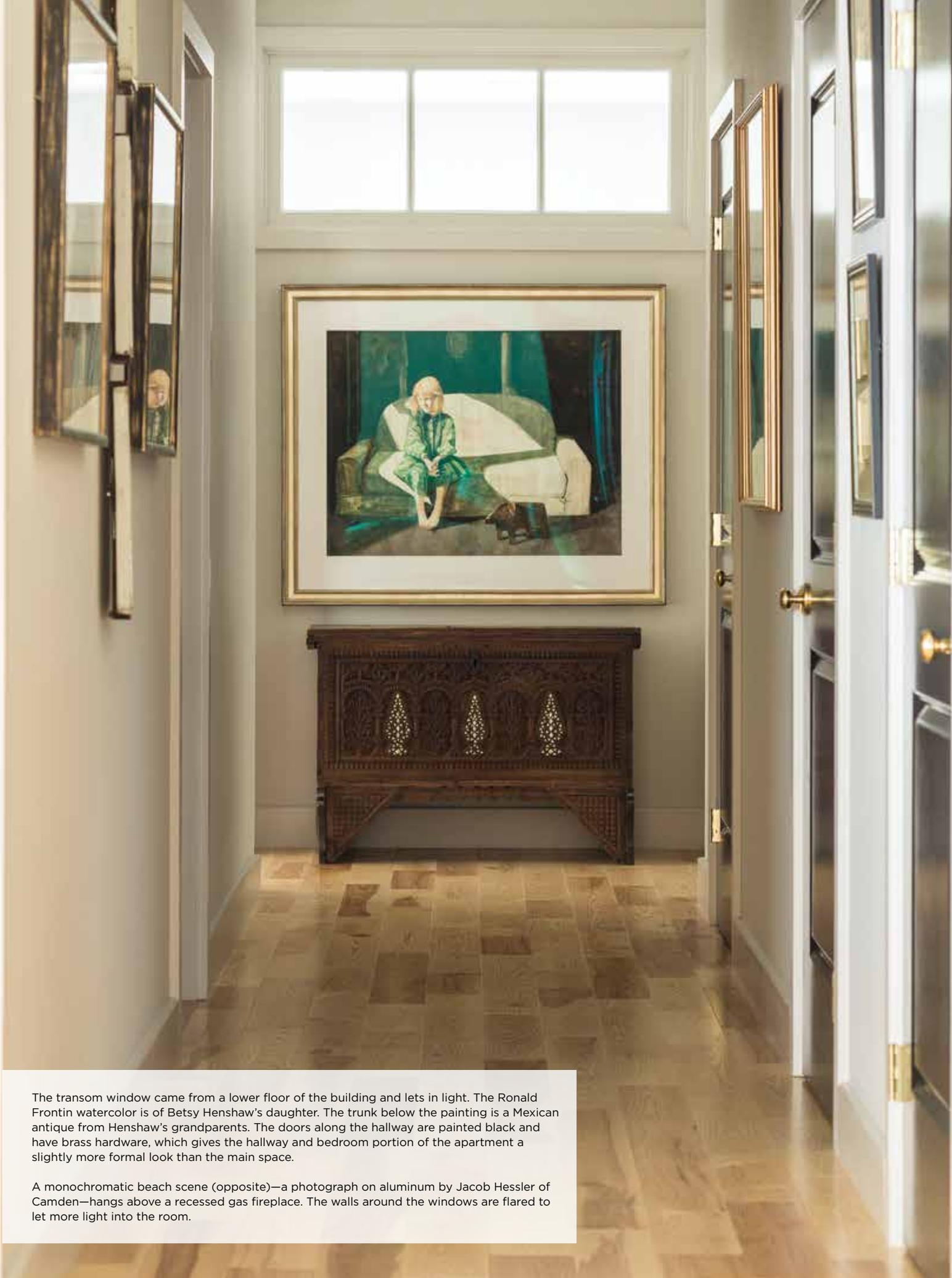
Interior designer Deborah Chatfield and homeowner Betsy Henshaw wanted a modern interior with traditional highlights, so they paired the semi-circular ivory sofa (opposite) and ivory swivel chairs with a Louis Philippe wardrobe with fruitwood veneer and ebony inlay. The antelope print carpet is from Stark. An amber chandelier made of acrylic balls by Emanuel Morez hangs above.







Kelly Wadsworth of Thomaston's Lowe's designed this kitchen with flat-panel cabinets, a T-shaped island with a Caesarstone countertop, and steel tiles for the metal backsplash. The mirrors to the left and right of the stove make the space feel bigger. Off to the right, the pantry is behind a heavy metal door once used for a bank safe. Bar stools are from McGuire Furniture.



The transom window came from a lower floor of the building and lets in light. The Ronald Frontin watercolor is of Betsy Henshaw's daughter. The trunk below the painting is a Mexican antique from Henshaw's grandparents. The doors along the hallway are painted black and have brass hardware, which gives the hallway and bedroom portion of the apartment a slightly more formal look than the main space.

A monochromatic beach scene (opposite)—a photograph on aluminum by Jacob Hessler of Camden—hangs above a recessed gas fireplace. The walls around the windows are flared to let more light into the room.



post office, had been updated and outfitted for a restaurant, Salt Water Farm. The second floor, an event hall, had been restored to its former glory and was intended for concerts, weddings, and meetings. The third floor, where a Civil War veterans' fraternal organization once gathered, was unfinished. Sabatini said he didn't know yet, that he didn't have anyone in mind for the space. At the time, Henshaw was living in an old farmhouse with acres of land and perennial gardens. She was single, her children were in college, and she was ready for a change. Chatfield told Sabatini, "I know who. She'll pay the rent, and I'll decorate it." A convenient enough job: Chatfield Design, her studio, was in a neighboring building.

Some of the challenges of getting the third floor ready for an apartment had already been met by the time Sabatini said yes to Chatfield's proposal. As architects Denis Lachman and Heather Raylinsky of Portland's Lachman Architects and Planners report, the building as a whole had deteriorated by the time New York's Leucadia National Corporation undertook its development as part of their overall effort to give downtown Rockport a facelift. (Leucadia is responsible for the restoration of the Shepherd Building, another iconic building, neighboring Union Hall.) In addition to rebuilding the whole back wall, builder Dave Nazaroff of Rockport's Penobscot Company inserted a steel structure into the attic, which he then connected to the ground with steel columns. Imagine, says Lachman, "a steel erector set" to stabilize the building. Outside, bricks were repointed, windows restored if possible and replaced when necessary, and new slate tiles were substituted for old on the mansard roof.

Henshaw's apartment is tucked under the mansard roofline; her windows were the upper dormers of the building. The space was configured into a large living room/kitchen, off of which a hall led to two bedrooms with baths, powder room, office, and laundry room. If this had been a different sort of project, the architects would have been focused on doing what the original builder hadn't done: opening up the stunning views to Rockport Harbor, which was just behind Union Hall. Back in 1856, it turns out, the harbor view wasn't a desirable one. As Sabatini says, "The harbor was historically an industrial place. It had the ice industry and the lime industry. In old pictures of the lime kilns, smoke and cord wood predominate. Downtown turned its back on the harbor and focused on the street, but as these buildings are now used, the backs of buildings are pretty special." Salt Water Farm was able to build an unobtrusive deck overlooking the harbor. Exterior modifications weren't possible for Henshaw's apartment, though. Because the entire renovation was done to the rigorous standards of Maine Historic Preservation and the National Park Service, changes could not alter the building's form. Thus no balcony and no large windows.

The existing windows were on the small side and spaced fairly far apart, even on the façade side of the building. An initial challenge was to create a layout that took advantage of what views there were—placing a bathtub, for instance, below one window—and brightening the apartment where exterior light wasn't plentiful. Inside, the dormer windows are situated so they create shallow niches. The architects flared the neighboring walls, allowing light to expand as it enters. A transom window (salvaged from a lower floor) was placed at the end of an



The ceiling and walls of the entire apartment are a light gray Farrow and Ball paint called Ammonite. “We wanted soft but a little color,” says interior designer Chatfield of the tinted neutral, shown here in the living room (above, left).

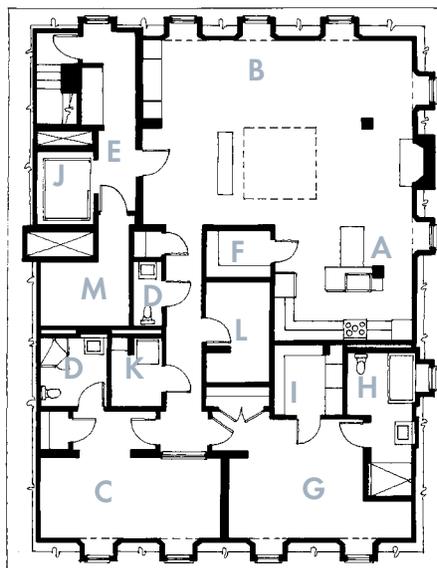
The Lewis and Wood wallpaper in the powder room (above, right) is patterned with Hedges and Butler liquor advertisements that ran in the 1891 *Illustrated London News*.

A cast-iron tub was positioned below a window to get a view of the harbor (opposite, left).

All of the beds in the apartment have upholstered bed frames (opposite, right) covered in Pierre Frey fabric. The pastel in the hall—called *Wind around the Point*—is by Brita Holmquist of Cumberland.



Henshaw’s is a private space in a public building, and as if to acknowledge that, the design transitions in a purposeful way from public to private.



- A** Kitchen
- B** Great Room
- C** Bedroom
- D** Bathrooms
- E** Entry
- F** Pantry
- G** Owner's Bedroom
- H** Owner's Bathroom
- I** Walk-in Closet
- J** Elevator/Entry
- K** Laundry
- L** Office
- M** Utility Closet



A view into the bathroom from the owner's bedroom. Kohler sinks and faucets were used throughout the apartment.

The front door (opposite) opens onto a see-through bookcase, which creates a foyer for the apartment without blocking light or making the living room feel small. The glass shelving inserts are made of fused glass, so they have no hardware. An original beam is exposed above.







Despite the move to the modern, Henshaw wanted to incorporate some traditional items.

The owner's bedroom (left) is meant to be peaceful and feminine. Here, the upholstered bed frame is surrounded by Colefax and Fowler wallpaper.

A painting (opposite) of white horses by William Thon, whose estate is represented by Caldbeck Gallery, hangs above an English walnut dresser with ivory detail at the keyholes, which Henshaw bought many years ago in South Carolina.

interior corridor, and transom windows top the bedroom doors. Chatfield and Henshaw picked finishes that were light and reflective, sometimes literally so, as with the mirrors that surround the steel tiles of the kitchen backsplash.

Chatfield and Henshaw's initial impulse was for modern decor, a contrast to the chintz upholstery of Henshaw's previous home, and the idea gained momentum when they realized a traditional fireplace wasn't an option. The sleek rectangular gas model they chose established the aesthetic of the living room, which is furnished with a semicircular ivory sofa, ivory swivel chairs, and Lucite acrylic cocktail tables. A virtually monochromatic beach scene, a photograph on aluminum by Jacob Hessler of Camden, hangs above the gas fireplace. A standout piece is an amber chandelier of acrylic balls that casts intriguing light patterns on the ceiling. In lieu of a dining room, stools are pulled up to a T-shaped island for meals. Kelly Wadsworth of Thomaston's Lowe's designed the kitchen, which includes a Caesarstone countertop and flat-panel cabinets given a modern twist with pulls from EBS Building Supplies in Camden. The pantry is hidden behind a heavy metal door discovered in a barn and once used for a bank safe.

Despite the move to the modern, Henshaw wanted to

incorporate some traditional items. She brought pieces from her previous house, including three antique chests, one of which found its way into each bedroom and another that stands by the doorway, and a French grandfather clock, which is faux-painted and comes apart for travel. Other items were purchased from the Boston Design Center, like a Louis Philippe wardrobe with fruitwood veneer and ebony inlay and a fruitwood Biedermeier buffet with black marble top. The bedrooms, too, are more traditional. Here, Chatfield chose a South Carolina supplier to upholster bed frames in Pierre Frey fabric, and she selected wallpaper with a calming Colefax and Fowler floral pattern. A chaise in Henshaw's bedroom was faux-painted to match the wallpaper and then re-covered in Holly Hunt fabric.

The artwork, too, runs the gamut with a modern abstraction by Portland painter Fred Lynch and a classic landscape with white horses by the late William Thon that was bought at a Farnsworth auction.

Henshaw's is a private space in a public building, and as if to acknowledge that, the design transitions in a purposeful way from public to private. The keyed elevator that rises to the apartment lets out on a hallway that is also a mudroom with a long bench and coat hooks. The front door then opens onto a

