

INSIDE

BY SCOTT SIMONS

PEAKS ISLAND
BACKSHORE

Minutes from downtown Portland are some of the most beautiful and dramatic coastal areas in Maine. The pine trees are strong, the rocky coast rugged, and the light crisp and clear. Architects working near the glow of Casco Bay have all of these and more as inspiration for

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became how to provide an entrance at grade followed by revelatory shifts of view that would direct the family up to the natural light of the living spaces and their views of Whitehead Passage and Cushing Island. Strikingly successful in this regard, the drama of the house unfolds like a mystery novel.

Starting at the porch, a gentle stone staircase leads to the front door and stone-tiled entry hall. Inside and directly ahead is a surprise view over the neighboring marsh, a short pause before heading upstairs. A flood of natural light leads you

Surprise views, floods of natural light: the drama of *Points of View* unfolds like a mystery novel.



up a half flight of stairs to the main level, where you immediately get a glimpse of Whitehead Passage and beyond. Drawn by the light, you arrive at the main living spaces with unexpectedly grand revelations in all directions: bright clear daylight, seagulls swooping, views almost to England.

The floors are birch with a clear finish, and the ceilings are pine boards with a whitewashed finish.

Continuing up the staircase, a similar sequence of light and vista leads to a second floor deck overlooking the marsh, and finally to the master bedroom suite on the top level. All along the way you are drawn forward by the play of natural light on the simple but rich palette of natural materials.

Another nice touch: The living spaces have views of three different lighthouses: Two Lights, Portland Headlight, and Ram Island Light. Take a close look at the staircase and you will see that the architect and builder have turned the three newel posts to resemble the different lighthouses, a playful reminder of this house's connection to its site.

The sense of space and light in this house would be wonderful enough in itself. Through a careful understanding of the qualities of space, light, and view, the owner, architect, and builder have created a house that is much more interesting and deeply rooted in its site, its time, and Maine's traditions.