

DECOR MAINe

| ARCHITECTURE ART DESIGN EXPERIENCE FOOD SUSTAINABILITY |

OCTOBER 2021

**THE
CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM &
THEATRE OF
MAINE DEBUTS**
on Thompson's
Point

**A K'PORT
GETAWAY GETS A
CONTEMPORARY TWIST**

Black, White & Neutral ALL OVER

*A Serene Retreat on
Rockport's
Rocky Coast*

**Forging a New
Future for Portland's
Fore Street**

PLUS!

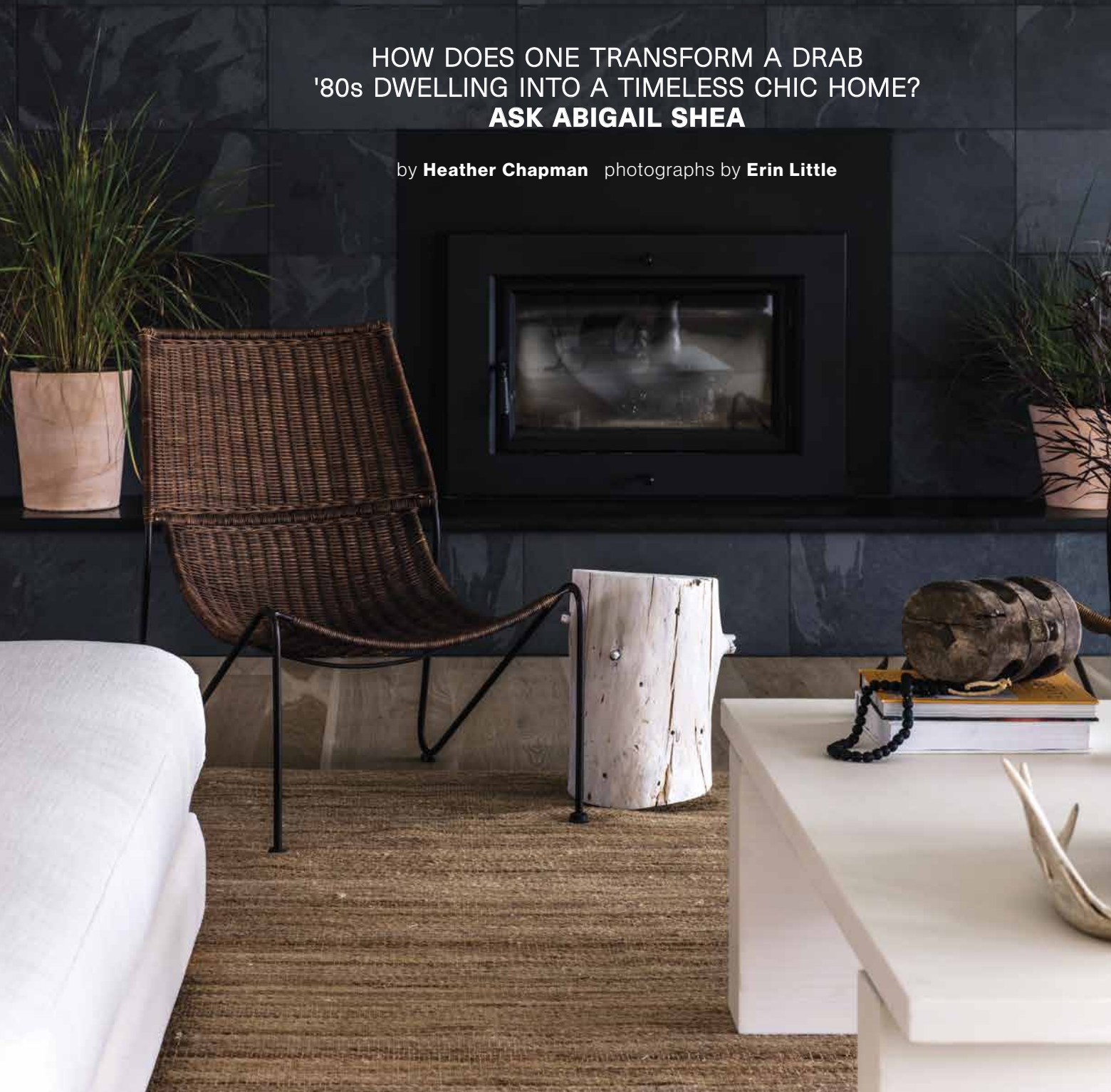
**STYLISH
SHOPS ACROSS
THE STATE**



BEHIND

HOW DOES ONE TRANSFORM A DRAB '80s DWELLING INTO A TIMELESS CHIC HOME?
ASK ABIGAIL SHEA

by **Heather Chapman** photographs by **Erin Little**



THE DESIGN



Abigail drew design inspiration from the home's location and natural surroundings, on display from the cook space. **OPPOSITE:** A slate fireplace adds drama to the living room. Wicker chair from Go Vintage & Vinyl.

The kitchen features cabinetry by JW Custom Woodworking and countertops from Morningstar Stone and Tile. **OPPOSITE:** Interior designer Abigail Shea brought this '80s dwelling from tired to timeless. Sheepskin throw from Chilton Furniture.



WHEN BOSTON-BASED CLIENTS PURCHASED A rugged, circa 1980s Rockport dwelling, the pair had big plans and, arguably, an even bigger vision. They pictured a clean, modern minimalism for the interiors of the structure that would serve as a second home for the next decade before they could move in permanently to make the house perched above the rocky coastline their full-time home.

“Timeless design is much easier in some projects than others, and this one was a challenge,” admits Abigail Shea, designer and proprietor of Abigail Shea Interiors in Portland. “The obvious classic elements like crown molding and subway tile did not feel appropriate for the house. I couldn’t lean into modern trends either, since they would be dated and disappointing when the clients eventually moved in down the line.”

Abigail employed a neutral palette, natural materials, and clean lines to modernize the home while steeping it in sophistication. “I chose subdued neutrals rather than stark blacks and whites, as the subtlety of a lower-contrast palette grounded the modern elements. We were very careful

A neutral palette and textural layers lend a feeling of calm and serenity within the living spaces. **OPPOSITE:** Biophilic elements bring the outdoors in. Rugs from Bradford's Rug Gallery.



Especially taken with the home's geographic location and natural surroundings, Abigail included organic materials such as *ROPE, LINEN, WOOD, AND ANTIQUATED MARITIME ARTIFACTS* as a nod to the significance and ancestry of Maine's midcoast.

BEHIND THE DESIGN



A glimpse down the hall reveals a snug sitting area. Note the custom kitchen island pendant by Olde Brick Lighting.



Art by Sarah Madeira Day pops against the white walls and cream bedding from Evangeline Linens. TOP, LEFT: A study in neutrals: An antler with twine and rope tucked within a textural vessel.



Decorative wooden pieces and potted plants add warmth and texture to the home's sophisticated palette.



Organic materials such as rope, linen, wood, and maritime artifacts nod to the significance of Maine's midcoast.



A trendy paper lantern hangs over a dining table and bench from Chilton Furniture.



to add trendier features—like the paper lantern fixture above the dining table and the hypermodern bar stools—in temporary ways,” Abigail says.

Aesthetics aside, practicality also had a voice in the renovation. “In order for the house to look fresh in 10 years, the materials and furniture pieces had to be selected for long-term durability,” Abigail says, referencing her choices of slate bathroom flooring, stainless steel appliances and quartzite countertops for the kitchen, and stain-resistant outdoor fabric for the sofas. Especially taken with the home’s geographic location and natural surroundings, Abigail included organic materials such as rope, linen, wood, and antiquated maritime artifacts as a nod to the significance and ancestry of Maine’s midcoast.

The result? A home that feels undeniably contemporary but, most importantly, reflective of its place; historically, currently, and for futurity. After all, as Abigail says, “What could be more timeless than the land?” A sentiment to appreciate for many years to come. ■



BEHIND THE DESIGN

Abigail chose materials that were both durable and beautiful for the home’s hardworking spaces. **OPPOSITE:** Abigail worked alongside the homeowners and general contractor Swain Built Quality Homes to transform the Rockport abode.