



(Sticks & Stones)

ARCHITECT PAGE GOOLRICK AND INTERIOR DESIGNER SUSAN HAGER
GIVE A LACKLUSTER NORMAN JAFFE HOUSE A THOUGHTFUL MAKEOVER

BY FRED A. BERNSTEIN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN M. HALL

BEFORE HE DIED in 1993—drowning off Bridgehampton—Norman Jaffe designed more than 60 houses on eastern Long Island, popularizing a style that involved bold forms, large expanses of wood and flagstone blocks arranged like puzzle pieces. A retrospective at the Parrish Art Museum through September 18 explores Jaffe's contribution to the Hamptons in the decades when potato fields were sprouting futuristic architecture.

But not every Jaffe building was a triumph. One house—built for real estate developer Ed Cohen in 1981—struggled under an oversized red tile roof. Alastair Gordon, the author of a new book on Jaffe and curator of the show at the Parrish, writes that, "Instead of celebrating the site, the Cohen house seemed to dominate it." In order to fit the house to the roof, Jaffe angled the windows so that they offered better views of clouds than of the beach. Worse, many of the rooms were oddly proportioned. The living room and master bedroom were cavernous; the other rooms huddled, claustrophobically, under the eaves.



Changing Times | Architect Page Goolrick replaced Norman Jaffe's original roof of red clay tiles with cedar shingles (PREVIOUS SPREAD LEFT) **Water Retreat** | Market umbrellas from Hildreth's (PREVIOUS SPREAD RIGHT) shade chaise lounges from Munder Skiles with cushions in Perennials fabric. The pool is Jaffe's design. **Layered Look** | Jaffe's cavernous living room (FAR LEFT AND THIS PAGE) was made more livable with furniture designed by interior designer Susan Hage and upholstered in Rogers & Goffigon fabric. See Resources.





Open Sesame | A pair of doors pivot open (OPPOSITE) to the master bedroom, where the bed is designed by Hager and upholstered in fabric by Dongbia. Linens are from Frette. A 1940's Lucite lamp is from John Salsbello in Bridgehampton. **Blue Crush** | Bisazza glass tiles cover the shower walls and floor (LEFT) **Afloat** | Mirrors expand the perception of space in the master bathroom. Along the floor (BELOW), they make the vanity appear to float. Porcelain floor tiles are from Southampton Brick & Tile. See Resources.

Still, there are extraordinary features, including a guesthouse that seems to be a piece of the main building sliced away, and a bridge, with oversized pipe railings, connecting the two structures. An unusual site plan—the driveway passes through an alley between the main house and the guesthouse—reveals an extraordinary architectural mind at work.

Like many eccentric properties, the house came on the market three years ago and took a long time to sell. Some potential purchasers discussed tearing it down. (Jaffe's nearby Raynes house was demolished in 2003.) But the owner of the house waited to find a buyer who would keep Jaffe's architecture intact. Eventually, a New York couple accepted the challenge, hiring interior designer Susan Hager (who had worked with them before) and architect Page Goolrick to make the house more livable, without effacing Jaffe's vision.

Their first task was reconfiguring the interior spaces. At the west end of the house, a pair of maids' rooms had no openings other than skylights. "To see the ocean, you had to stand on your tiptoes," Goolrick recalls with amazement. She converted the rooms into a library/office and cut away a section of Jaffe's endless roof to add sliding doors and a balcony, which matches a Jaffe-designed balcony at the other end of the house. Goolrick was also able to add a large playroom in an attic-like space that Jaffe had left vacant. There was so much unused space, Goolrick was able to enlarge the house within the existing building envelope—a kind of "indoor addition."

Throughout, Goolrick installed windows that open. Before, she says, "You were





right on the ocean, but you couldn't hear it and you couldn't smell it and you couldn't feel the breezes." In the guest rooms, she dropped the windowsills from shoulder height to knee height, "so you don't feel like you're standing in a bucket. We wanted to make the house more pleasant and more fun, using the existing architectural vocabulary."

Outside, Goolrick replaced the vast roof of clay tiles with cedar shingles, which she says are "much more sympathetic to the landscape," and painted trim that had been battleship gray with a lighter beige found in the house's flagstone chimney. Now, Goolrick says, "the house is like a piece of driftwood on the beach. And it doesn't need much maintenance. The cedar and the stone can get full of salt water—it's not like a painted house that needs refinishing every few years."

At the same time, much remained unchanged, including the tongue-and-groove white oak that forms most of the interior walls and ceilings. But that was a problem for Hager, who knew that furniture near the richly grained walls would—literally—blend into the woodwork. So she positioned them away from the walls—creating rooms within rooms, in colors that allow the furniture to stand apart. She also used shapes that seem appropriate to Jaffe's architecture. Notably, she designed the lounge chairs that recall the pipe railings and wooden bullnoses that Jaffe used throughout the house.

Goolrick, a passionate sailor, says that inside, "The house is now like a boat, where none of the space is wasted." Hager gave the vessel chic interiors that respect the architecture, but don't surrender to it.

"I wish I had met Jaffe," Goolrick says, "but luckily I feel like I got to know him through the house." 🌟



Different Angle | A new, lighter paint color from Benjamin Moore was chosen for the exterior trim (OPPOSITE). **Made to Order** | A cream fabric by Hinson & Co covers cushions on a banquette (LEFT) designed by Jaffe for the second living room. A vintage teak drum from H Groome in Southampton commands a corner and armchairs designed by Hager, fabricated by Interiors by George & Martha and covered in Hinson & Co. fabric, face one of Jaffe's unusual windows which give better views of the sky than the Atlantic. See Resources.