

## House Tour Brochure 2025

### Introduction

#### Siasconset ('Sconset)

'Sconset is a tiny village on the eastern tip of Nantucket. Many visitors to the island do not venture this far from Nantucket town, so miss passing through the vast, open conservation land on Milestone Road, before reaching this peaceful little haven with its clusters of houses perched dramatically above the Atlantic. The dwellings nearest the rotary, post office and few shops in the center are small, often rose-covered fishermen's cottages, some dating back to the earliest settlement in the 17th century. Like the rest of Nantucket, 'Sconset went into a decline in the 19th century, only to be rediscovered as a delightful, breezy holiday escape, especially by actors and other members of the New York theatrical community.

Today's Nantucket Garden Club House Tour focuses on houses along Baxter Road, which runs northward from the village along the oceanside cliffs, terminating at the famous lighthouse at Sankaty Head. These houses tend to be larger than their village counterparts. The earliest were built in the late 19th century, others are far more recent but all retain that cottagey feel that complements the unhurried lifestyle of this unique place.

#### 4 Butterfly Lane

Nephawin is an Indian word thought to mean "restful or peaceful corner", which is a perfect description of the house on the corner of Butterfly Lane and Baxter Road, originally built in the early 1890s by Thomas W. King. It was later expanded by the well-known architect, Frederick Hill, around 1920, who also built the Sankaty Head Clubhouse and enlarged the 'Sconset Casino and repaired the 'Sconset Chapel. The present owners purchased the house in 2012 and have furnished it simply but also enlivened it with distinctive art and furniture painted in the most alluring colors.

We begin our tour in the bright living room, where Hill's architectural plans for enlarging the house are displayed, found hidden in a wall by the previous owner. These provide important evidence about the original house. Above the fireplace is a portrait of "Blossom", the family's much-loved and energetic golden retriever, by Chicago artist Rebecca Kincaid. An archway leads into the summer living room, whose shingled walls attest the fact that this was originally an outside wall of the house. New French doors open on to the deck and garden. Another painting by Kincaid of children doing "Cannonballs" is above the fireplace. An American folk art swan floats gracefully on another wall. Beyond is a cozy family room with a weather station consisting of a three brass meters that register barometric pressure, the winds and the time of high tides. Nantucket artist Mary Lecoursiere covered the walls of the dining room with a copy of a 19th-century map of the island, painted in foggy shades of blue.

We can look through the doorway into the kitchen before moving to the summer dining room with views over the garden. A hedge of rugosa roses encloses both the garden and the front of the house. The perennial beds were first created in the 1920s and the antique rose garden planted by the former residents in the 1990s. Today the large lawn area is used by the owners' children (and dogs) for sports and games. A gazebo, covered with New Dawn roses, is a distant focal point and retreat. Nearer the house is a former potting shed (now a tiny guest house) and a garage. The gardens are maintained by landscape designer, Laura Cooper. We exit through the double white gate on to Baxter Road.

## 12 Baxter Road

Teas will be available in the large garden of 12 Baxter Road (house not open), where the Nantucket Garden Club Boutique will also be selling delightful and unusual items for home and garden. In the far corner of the garden is a rare and endangered white ash tree, the owner's special "meditation tree."

One of the oldest houses on the tour and formerly known as "Sankaty Lodge" (now named "Currier" for the current owners), 12 Baxter Road was built in the late 19th century, most likely for Grace Livingston Furniss, a very successful New York playwright, who was a member of the theatrical colony that was such an important part of the 'Sconset community at the end of the century. Furniss wrote over fifty plays and was also a well-known activist for women's rights. Like so many Nantucket houses, the small cottage was enlarged at various times since then, but always sympathetically, using appropriate materials and retaining the charming irregularity of the Arts & Craft style.

## 15 Baxter Road

The current owners purchased the property on 15 Baxter Road in 2013 and promptly renamed it, 'Anntucket'. There are three buildings: "Broom House"; "Broom Cottage" (the original house, now a guest cottage) and "Broom Closet", which they use as a little art barn. The original, stucco house was built around 1907 with the second, built on the same lot in c. 1995. Well-known architect, Tom Kligerman carried out extensive remodeling in c. 1998. The current owners later purchased the neighboring lot (17 Baxter Road) to enlarge their garden. Most of the furniture came with the house but the owners have added distinctive art, including the painted, joke shells and rocks that are scattered around the house and are also set out to amuse passersby on the famous Bluff Walk behind their property.

We enter first into the hallway of "Broom House" and can look to the left to see "the escape room" (cordoned off), then walk to the right, past the television room, into the kitchen and then into the large living room with beautiful views over the ocean. On the wall above the fireplace is a large, very lively painting, "I saw an old house on Nantucket" by local artist Steven Pitliuk. At the end of the room is a painting of a giant ice cream cone by Donald Baechelor. Also on display are the many Nantucket-themed needlepoint ornaments designed by the owners' daughter-in-law, Jenny Johnson. We leave the house and walk into the oceanside garden, landscaped by Sean O'Callaghan with Laura Cooper taking care of seasonal color.

We can then walk over to "Broom Cottage", where there are paintings of the house by John Austin in the living room. There is a bright and cheerful kitchen and dining room and, after peeking into the little guest rooms, we leave by the front door. The large garden is to the right. We exit through the front gate, passing "Broom Closet" on our way out.

## 19 Baxter Road

The present owners purchased the property in late 2018, after losing their home in Bay Head, New Jersey, to super storm Sandy. The couple had spent their honeymoon on Nantucket and, following the loss of their Bay Head house, had rented houses on Baxter Road. Without telling anyone in their family, they bought the house and named it "McDuff's Bluff", a tribute to their much-loved dog (Simon McDuff, the "Wonder Dog"), to its location on the 'Sconset bluff but also a play on words, because when their family first came to visit, they bluffed that they were just renting it.

We first walk through the beautiful front garden, originally designed by Julie Jordin and now maintained by Laura Cooper and Sean O'Callaghan. Inside the front door, we can look back above the door and see the large

wooden whale, carved by Mike Bacle, that the couple purchased as honeymooners on the island. To the left of the door is a delightful picture of little McDuff, painted by the owner's niece. The dining room, papered in "Ocean Toile Delft" by Schumacher, opens up to the great room through a broad archway, a hallmark of the work of architectural firm Botticelli and Pohl, whose association with the house goes back to its construction in 2001 on a site that originally had three structures dating to the 1940s.

Throughout the house the feeling is one of breezy openness. Working with designer Nina Liddle, they chose familiar Nantucket blues and whites and added artwork by local artists that reflects the colors and moods of the island. The large kitchen is papered in a flowery print by the well-known English firm, Sanderson, in honor of the owner's mother, who was English and a passionate gardener. The little office in the far corner of the great room (cordoned off) combines blue with the deep greens of the gardens and of the large painting, "Ocean". From the great room, we go into the back gardens, full of hydrangea, crepe myrtles and kwanzan cherry trees, as well as a variety of native pollinator plants along the Bluff walk. The ancient Hynoki Cypress, just by their private stairs down to the beach, is a landmark along the walk. We pass through the large lawn (the site of the annual "Cousins Croquet Tournament") on our way to the gate that leads out of the property.

#### 20 & 22 Baxter Road

Over thirty years ago the present owners of 22 Baxter Road acquired the house, which was originally built by architect Gwynn Thorsen in 1986. They named the house "Seacroft": a "croft" is a Scottish cottage, a nod to the owners' love of Scotland, which they visit at least twice a year. In 2008 they also purchased the house and land at 20 Baxter Road, which they call "Hitching Post" (a real hitching post is displayed in the garden in front of it), used as a guest house, as is the cottage behind it, "Seahorse". The entire property, then, consists of a collection of charming cottages for their family.

We enter "Seacroft" by the front door and can look into the library to the right (cordoned off). The spacious living room captures the essence of Nantucket life with fine oil paintings of the island, models of ships and small sculptures of sea birds and whales. We can visit the kitchen and dining room before going on to the deck at the back and then walk around the garden, which consists typically of hedges and hydrangeas with the exception of the beautiful perennial border in front of "Seacroft", designed by local landscape gardener, Marty McGowan.

#### 23 Baxter Road (The Brae's)

Built in 1890, the house was originally on the north side of the property (which consists of two lots), alongside an old shed or bath house that still survives. In 2006-8, the house was lifted and moved to its present position on the south side of the property by Scott O'Connor then restored and modernized by Lisa Botticelli of Botticelli and Pohl. The staircase is original, as are many of the windows. A new guest house was built where the house used to stand.

We enter through the elegant, open porch on the "front" of the house, which overlooks the ocean. Many houses on the east side of Baxter Road originally had their entrances on the Atlantic side, so this is a rare opportunity to appreciate the intimate relationship of these houses to the water. The living room is divided into two areas: a billiard room to the left and a seating area to the right. On the far left is the owners' office (cordoned off) and to the right of the door are fascinating old photographs showing the house in its original position, next to a windmill that brought water from the well to the house. We can also see into the charming "fireplace room", whose windows can be raised and hooked up to make it open to the elements in the summer.

The owners were interested in creating a fireplace that would be the focal point of the seating area in the living room. In their previous house (which is actually next door to this house), they had a BeeHive fireplace that was constructed of stones similar to the cobbles that are found in so many of the charming streets in Nantucket town. Jim Mauser of Mauser Masonry was able to create exactly what they had in mind. Their collection of ship dioramas is displayed on the walls, along with other artwork reflecting Nantucket history and its landscape. We go from here into the large, bright dining room and then to the darker, but very inviting bar, paneled and with an interesting painted floor. The big kitchen is next and, from here, we can look into the “hang out” family room (cordoned off) with its pictures of antique flags and a fireplace that backs on to the one in the ‘fireplace’ room. We leave through the kitchen door.

### 39 Baxter Road

The owners of 39 Baxter Road spent many summers on Nantucket. On rainy days they occasionally called real estate agents to look at houses, although they swore they would never buy a house on the island. That all changed when they saw the property on Baxter Road with its magnificent views of the sea. “If we are going to have a house on Nantucket”, the husband said, “this is what we should buy”. And, they did. Hoping to restore the old house, they were told that it was in such derelict condition that it would be better to build a new house on the same footprint; architect Graham Goldsmith carried out the work in 2010. Fortunately, a little guest house on the property was restorable. The main house is named for their granddaughter (“For Caroline”) and the guest house for their grandsons (“For William” and “For George”).

We enter the entrance hall and can look into the little study to the left (cordoned off). This will be our first glimpse of their collection of English and Irish furniture, purchased over the years from London antiques fairs and galleries. They also collect both antique needlework (some American, but mostly English) and salt-glazed creamware, again displayed throughout the house. We go right into the living room and then into the dining room with its large, Queen Anne gateleg table. The large kitchen beyond has another, smaller gateleg table and a large oak trestle table. We leave the house through the kitchen door. The garden is planted simply with Nantucket favorites, hydrangea and rugosa roses, leaving the Atlantic Ocean as the focal point. A colorful little birdhouse stands on their private gate to the beach, the handywork of their grandson.

### 40 Baxter Road

“Panacea” was built as a tiny cottage in 1950 and the present owner has been here since 1994, when she enlarged it slightly and painted the dark brown walls a much cheerier white and added more windows. Having lived in New York City for many years and in a much larger house on Baxter Road that had to be moved before it fell into the sea, she has brought mementoes from all her former dwellings. As she says, “Everything has a story.” An avid collector, the first things we notice are a case of ivory and wood walking sticks and a small grandmother’s clock beneath the stairway (the house wasn’t big enough for her grandfather’s clock). In the living room (to the right) are displayed tiny lead soldiers, glass animals (each a reward for the sale of a property in New York during her real estate days), porcelain-headed French dolls in their original dresses, and a remarkable variety of scrimshaw, including a series of her favorite birds, which she commissioned from a local scrimshander. The large piece above the fireplace is, incredibly, a Swordfish beak, found on a beach many years ago and later carved with early scenes of Nantucket. The portrait, also above the fireplace, is early American. The two portraits to the right are possibly French and are set above a favorite drop-leaf dining table brought here from the larger ‘Sconset house.

In the dining room are a fine dining table and chairs by Stephen Swift and an antique birdcage to complement her collection of bird plates, displayed on an opposite wall. The baskets above the sideboard were brought over from the old house. Beyond (cordoned off) is a small guest room. The kitchen features some of the cupboard doors that were painted by George Davis for her old house on Baxter Road with plants (auricula a favorite), cut flowers, a ceramic asparagus tureen, gardening tools and a bouquet wrapped in a page from W Magazine.

The tidy little garden features a Vermont cow peering out from between the privet hedges and a small shed, whose window box is filled with shells, certainly the most deer-proof of any window box on the island.