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# Cape Cod & Islands HOME

Living & Gardening on Cape Cod,  
Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket

SPECIAL ISSUE

NAUTICAL HOME DESIGN

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■ (opposite top and center) Alan Granby and Janice Hyland had longed for a lighthouse they could call home. Fifteen years ago they bought South Hyannis Light, decommissioned in 1929, and went to work renovating and expanding the property, which now serves as the base for their internationally recognized antiques business. Nantucket Sound forms the backdrop of the lens room. ■ (opposite bottom): A seven-foot diameter ship's wheel dining table doubles as the workstation in the couple's extensive marine research library. The ship models of the "Thomas W. Lawson," the only seven-masted ship ever built.

ARTS & ANTIQUES

# SEA STORE

*He loves to collect. She loves to sail.*

*As Hyland Granby Antiques, they buy and sell  
some of the world's most  
sought after nautical artifacts.*

Lighthouses are optimally positioned for panoramic views. The visual sweep from the sunroom of the keeper's house at South Hyannis Light is no exception. To the northeast stands Point Gammon at the mouth of Lewis Bay; just beyond, a day beacon flashes intermittently, warning boaters of the hazards of the old Bishop and Clerks Light. To the east at the edge of Sea Street Beach lie the cobbled remains of South Hyannis Wharf where in the 1800s schooners delivered precious coal and lumber. To the southeast stretches the Hyannis Port jetty, a string of fine granite pearls—large boulders taken from the wharf's foundation. In the distance, you can espy the Kennedy Compound, an elegant canvas of rambling white summer houses that march to the sea.

Built in 1849 to guide heavy commercial traffic in and out of Hyannis Harbor, South Hyannis Light had a range of eight miles. Its Fresnel lens displayed a fixed white light with a red sector that reflected off the breakwater and nearby Southwest Shoal. Nicknamed the "bug light" because it was so short, South Hyannis Light was decommissioned in 1929 and passed into private hands. New owners expanded the squat keeper's house for comfort and removed the lens room for fear that rum-runners would use the beacon to land contraband on the wharf.

TEXT BY GREG O'BRIEN

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LEFT: The attached barn serves as the stock room for Hyland and Granby's antique business. In the foreground is a rare circa 1780 dockyard scale model of a well-armed French ship. BELOW: Captain David Folger crafted this scrimshaw and mahogany four-poster bed in 1845 for his daughter Lydia (seen in the accompanying photo). MIDDLE: "Yacht America from Three Views" was painted by Fitz Hugh Lane, circa 1851. It is considered to be one of the icons of American marine art. Below is the America's Cup presentation telescope given in 1851 to the captain of the "Yacht America" commemorating his win of the Cup of all Nations.



for \$5 million. Antique regulators, clocks, telescopes, and nests of Nantucket baskets can sell for as much as \$30,000 to \$200,000.

Seated at a table made from an 1880 ship's wheel seven feet in diameter in the rustic library, Granby and Hyland are as compatible as teakwood is to the sea. From the beginning, it's been a perfect blend, Granby with his knack for collecting and

Alan Granby and his wife, Janice Hyland, of Hyland Granby Antiques, two of the most renowned nautical antiques collectors and dealers in the country, purchased South Hyannis Light in 1985. They have renovated and expanded the property on the Hyannis-Hyannis Port line three times, giving the home the ambience of a captain's quarters and filling it with antiques—ship models, marine oil paintings, telescopes, figureheads, navigational instruments, and scrimshaw. Together the home and large attached barn, where they store, catalogue, and prepare antiques for shows, comprise nearly 12,000 square feet.

Hyland and Granby conduct most of their business over the Internet, through the mail, or at the top national and international antique shows in America—New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Greenwich, and Nantucket. Their antiques fetch world record prices—one painting sold



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Hyland with her love and knowledge of sailing. The sturdy Granby with his round face and tight gray beard looks like a sea captain, while Hyland has the demeanor of a teacher, most likely due to her nineteen years working in the Newton, Massachusetts school system. In fact, she hired Granby when he was twenty-one and fresh out of Clark University to integrate the arts into Newton's regular curriculum. Since then they have never looked back. "No time to," says Granby, noting they log eighty-hour weeks. There are no children;

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two Scottish terriers—Teddy and Tucker—fill the house.

Ever a collector even as a child, Granby traded postage stamps and baseball cards in his Manhattan neighborhood. His father was an antiquarian bookseller, his mother a noted interior designer. For a while he collected photographs, but after a day sail with Hyland, he got hooked on the sea and turned his attention to anything nautical. Hyland, who grew up on a farm in Taunton, Massachusetts, is an expert sailor and has been plying the waters of the Cape and Martha's Vineyard since childhood.

When they first began collecting antiques, they never spent more than \$300 for a single item. "We were teachers and didn't have the resources to buy anything," Granby explains. However, he broke through a "psychological barrier" when he paid \$3300 for a sextant that Louis XVI had presented to a French priest who had saved him from drowning.

Granby and Hyland parlayed money from wise real estate investments into antiques, but when their house outside Boston became cluttered, Hyland declared, "That's it! We're going to sell antiques." The couple bought the 1820 Federal-style home of sea captain Uriah Howe in Dennis and opened a nautical antiques shop.

"We didn't start the business with any idea it would mushroom," says Hyland. But with Granby's eye for research and collecting (he has a doctorate in media technology) and Hyland's talent for marketing and display (she has a doctorate in library science and communication) the venture quickly expanded. "We're selling the same types of objects," Granby says. "But we are now buying and selling masterpieces and advising major collectors and museums."

The couple's philosophy is simple. "We buy the best we can find and buy what we like," explains Hyland.

For several years Granby fantasized about living in a lighthouse. "There's a romance to them, providing peace and safety to mariners," he says. About eighteen years ago, they began looking in earnest for one along the craggy coast of Maine. One weekend while Hyland was in Boston searching for antiques, Granby made his own purchase. When his wife returned home, he declared "Sit down. I want to tell you what I bought today—a lighthouse!"

"You mean you bought a model," Hyland was quick to reply. "No, I bought South Hyannis Light!"

The lighthouse, in great disrepair, was advertised in the *Boston Sunday Globe*. Granby read the ad, called the real estate agent, toured the property, and made an offer—all in one day. The couple spent the next two years renovating and expanding the keeper's house and replacing the lens room at the top of the light. The house today is an elegant showpiece visible from Hyannis Harbor.

The couple added a bright, airy living room, also known as the great room, with high ceilings for displaying wood objects and antiques that can withstand the sun's rays: American eagle carvings, an Indian motorcycle, a wooden sled from the 1800s, a horse from a vintage carousel, and a gilded wooded lion that once decorated a circus wagon. The room features unique nautical instruments—an 1855 regulator, one of the earliest made in Boston; a pair of "Big Eyes," fifty-power Russian binoculars from a Soviet warship; and a six-foot-long celestial telescope.

The research library of the keeper's house bears an academic flavor with its high gloss cherry floors and expansive bookcases. The library houses one of the country's most comprehensive maritime research collections with its volumes of ship

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registers, yacht club yearbooks, and naval histories stacked next to books on fishing schooners, whaling, scrimshaw, marine art, and lighthouses. Resting atop a cherry cabinet is the *Thomas W. Lawson*, a six-foot, one-of-a-kind, wood model of the only seven-masted schooner ever built.

The drug store room is a re-creation of an 1847 apothecary that once stood at the corner of Beacon and Charles streets in Boston. Framing the doorway is the shop's original sign, Clough and Shackley. Hyland and Granby purchased the interior and remodeled their den with the shop's fine cherry paneling, cabinets, multi-layered crown molding, and burgundy tufted wall coverings. The room's centerpiece is the pharmacist's cabinet, its small drawers bearing nameplates for maranta, gellatin, quillaya, tyme, brimstone, alumen, roll plaster, bandages, and whiting. Perched on a leather-topped military campaign desk are two refracting telescopes—one from the eighteenth century, the other from the nineteenth. In front of the fireplace stretches a five-foot-long replica of a Titanic lifeboat, a prop from the 1954 film *A Night to Remember*. The walls are appointed with fine marine oils from the 1800s such as William F. deHass's *Twin Lights at Gloucester*, James E. Buttersworth's *Columbia & Dauntless*, and William Edward Norton's *Seascape*.

Other paintings hang in an adjacent gallery, including a prized nineteenth-century work by Fitz Hugh Lane, considered by many to be the nation's most accomplished marine artist. Beneath it sits a small spyglass with a collapsible sunshade, which was awarded to the first winner of the America's Cup in 1851, the captain of the *U.S. Yacht America*. Some regard it as one

of the world's most important yachting artifacts. Nearby is another nautical jewel, *Susan's Tooth*, carved on December 28, 1828 on the Nantucket whaleship *Susan*. It is one of the most important scrimshaw whale's teeth in the world, demanding record high prices at auction.

The 5,000-square-foot barn provides ample space for storing antiques and preparing them for shows. According to Hyland, who coordinates the planning, New York antique shows require as much as six weeks of preparation. Two employees help build set designs, with Hyland applying finishing touches. Each booth is set up with antiques precisely placed and then photographed, catalogued, disassembled, and trucked to the site. Granby is especially proud of a newly acquired item—one of the world's most famous barometers. The five-and-a-half foot tall weather instrument in a solid mahogany case was made in 1844 and hung in the Royal Exchange underwriting room in Lloyd's of London until seven years ago.

A lifelong collector, Granby has an instinct for tracking down the unusual and relies on better sources than Scotland Yard. "Don't ask me to find something because I will," he says. "I'm really going to find it! Then you'll have to pay for it."

"Alan buys something every day of his life!" adds Hyland. Asked if she has ever regretted hiring him to teach fourth graders, a job offer that sealed her fate, Hyland smiles. Obviously, together they have found safe haven in their once-just-a-fantasy lighthouse, surrounded by the treasures of the past.

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*Greg O'Brien is editor and president of the Stony Brook Group, a publishing and communications company based in Brewster. He is the author/editor of several books about the Cape and Islands, and a frequent contributor to Cape Cod Life Publications.*