

OBSESSIONS

Three stunning ocean palaces add sizzle to a buyer's market.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT



SOCIETY'S CHILD

235 BAYVIEW STREET, Camden
\$5.5 MILLION

Gentlemen, sharpen your pencils! It's hardly a shock that Colorado mining executive **William Borden** (1887-1913) would decide to draft plans for his summer home in Maine himself. After all, the attorney had shelled out a fortune to have **Richard Morris Hunt** design his French Renaissance chateau [since destroyed in the early 1960s] on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive a few steps from The Drake Hotel—Hunt having designed the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Marble House and The Breakers in Newport; and The Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina, for the Vanderbilt family.

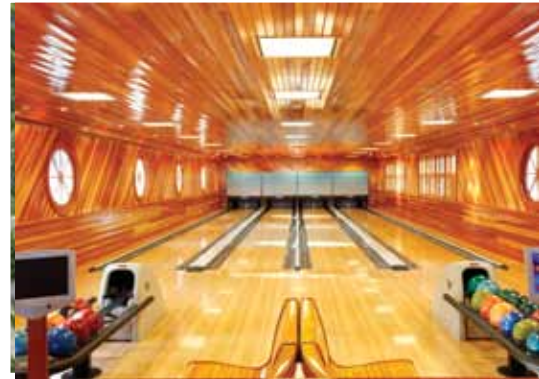
With a little help from "Hunt's architect nephew [Jarvis Hunt (1863-1941)]," Borden let his imagination soar atop Fox Hill on a delicious slice of coastline where Camden meets Rockport, according to Micki Colquhoun of Camden Real Estate, who is offering the property for \$5.5 million in 2012.

No doubt, Borden's wife Mary had a say in the Shingle Style palace's construction as well.

For decades, the cottage remained a classic



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY CAMDEN REAL ESTATE (2); CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/RAMIRO DE LA CEVEDO RAMOS; CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/SARAH SZWAJKOS; CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/EMILY MANSFIELD



Luxurious

**"There's platinum lightning in the sky
Look I'm livin' like a queen"
—Gwen Stefani, "Luxurious"**



retreat for rustivating family members in white duck and sailor togs, including the Borden's precocious daughter, novelist Mary Borden (1886-1968), who graduated from Vassar in 1907. From the beginning, there must have been something about Mary.

Her World War I book of short stories, *The Forbidden Zone* (1929), came out the same year as *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and Hemingway's *A*

Farewell to Arms. But they were men. According to Wikipedia, it was shocking and avant for a lady to recount her wartime experiences so vividly: "Even in this context, contemporary readers were disturbed at the graphic, sometimes hallucinatory, quality of this work coming from a woman's pen."

In 1937, her novel *Action for Slander* was adapted into a British film starring Ann Todd (remember her opposite Gregory Peck in 1947's *The Paradine Case*?). Not bad for a little rich girl some of the local kids might have dismissed on the beach in midcoast Maine. But Borden, known socially as Lady Spears—she earned the title upon marrying British brigadier general and diplomat Sir Edward Louis Spears, a Member of Parliament who served as an influential liaison between Britain and France across two wars—wasn't finished.

As the shadow of World War II darkened Europe, she blended her funds with friend Lady Hadfield to create the famous Hadfield-Spears Ambulance Unit, of Lorraine, France, the answer to the prayers of the fighting Free French. The unit traveled with troops in bloody skirmishes in northern Africa, Italy, and France.

Her novel *Down A Blind Alley*, "published on her return to Paris in 1946, records

the history of the unit and her disillusion with the French failure to put up an effective resistance to the German invasion and occupation," according to Wikipedia.

You might think Lady Spears was a tough act to follow. Her daughter, Ellen Borden Stevenson, was known to the world as the wife of Adlai Stevenson II (the national Democratic nominee who twice ran unsuccessfully against President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1952 and 1956). The two were married from 1928 to 1949, when Stevenson was elected

governor of Illinois. The Borden Cottage "stayed in the family through 1946, when Joyce Borden Balokovic sold it to Richard and Joan Sexton,"

In 1937, a novel by Lady Spears, *Action for Slander*, became a British film starring Ann Todd

says listing agent Colquhoun.

The Sextons changed the name of the house to Fox Hill when their son, Peter, "saw a family of foxes outside the kitchen window.

Peter's sister, Felicity Sexton Bowditch, remembers her summers there from the close of World War II to 1965. "My father was a Philadelphia banker who died in 1990 at 91. He met my mother in England, because his family rented a house every year in a little town called Melksham, near Bath, and she lived there. Very romantic! She died at 90. We'd drive every summer from our house in Pennsylvania to Maine, and that was a long haul—

FROM TOP: COURTESY CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/RAMIRO DE ACEVEDO RAMOS; CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/CHRISTOPHER BROWN; CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/LEO CASADO

Xiaoze Xie Amplified Moments 1993–2008

January 23 – March 18, 2012



Top image: **Xiaoze Xie**, *Flags & Banners: A Century of Student Movement in China*, 1994, oil and acrylic on wood 117 x 141 x 26 in. Collection of David G. Brooks and Patricia Lambert, Shanghai

Above: **Xiaoze Xie**, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Library (Dürer)*, 2006, oil on canvas 48 x 72 in. Collection of Storch Amini & Murves, New York

Lecture by Xiaoze Xie

Thursday, January 26 at 6 pm
followed by the opening reception

James Ensor:

Scènes de la vie du Christ, and other works

January 23 – March 18



James Ensor *XIX Le Christ livré aux critiques*, 1921, lithograph on paper, 7 x 9 in (17.6 x 23 cm) from *Scènes de la vie du Christ* (Scenes of the Life of Christ), 1921 an album of 32 lithographs on paper, edition number 104/250

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Location, Location, Location? Sometimes It's Backstory,



The Winter Palace: A French Chateau on Lake Shore Drive in Chicago designed for the Bordens by Richard Morris Hunt. The Carlyle replaced the mansion in the early 1960s.

A Summer Place: Designed in Maine by William Borden with the help of Hunt's architect nephew.



William Borden's daughter, novelist Lady Mary Spears, is joined by French General Charles de Gaulle as she inspects the Hadfield-Spears Ambulance Unit she founded in France. She was 17 during her first summer in Maine at Borden Cottage.



Novelist Mary Borden became Lady Spears when she married Major General Sir Edward Spears, the powerful British diplomat to France and Member of Parliament.

Pictured below, per the Imperial War Museum, London: "Lady Spears (centre) with Sir Edward Spears (left) in December 1942 in Lebanon on the steps of their residence—that of the First British Minister to the Levant. To the right of Sir Edward stands Henry Hopkinson, private secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Alexander Cadogan; Richard Casey, Minister Resident in the Middle East, is to the right of Lady Spears, with Mrs. Ethel Casey to her left."



there were no throughways then!"

Her favorite moments at Fox Hill (nee, Borden Cottage)? "Watching my father drying the sails of his racing sloop inside the huge stairwell which seemed to rise forever up the center hallway."

She interrupts herself on the telephone, still seeing it.

"One time, my brother and I got in trouble. He and I found there was a way we could crawl into the basement and work our way up inside the huge casings in which the pocket doors moved. We'd get up inside there during dinner parties and astonish our parents' guests, sliding the doors back and forth as 'ghosts.'"

The saga continues. According to Colquhoun, "In 1982, Joan Pirie Leclerc, a great-granddaughter of William and Mary Whiting Borden," missed the tang of the crashing waves and bought Borden Cottage back!

The Borden family reconvened here until 1992, when a new breed of rusticator, "Charles Cawley, then chairman of MBNA, and his wife Julie," became the next owners, Colquhoun says. They dared to think big, too, transforming the estate into a corporate Shangri La.

Then the music stopped.

In 2006, Bank of America bought MBNA for cash and stock totalling a reported \$35 billion, with Borden Cottage apparently one of the pieces left on the playing board.

In 2009, the property was acquired "by a local summer resident for use as a conference center. Due to the owner's demise, this plan was never implemented."

In any case, the next owners of Borden Cottage will delight in a dreamscape that drew coverage from *Architectural Digest* in 2004. The "10-bedroom, self-contained compound lies at the quiet end of Bay View Street, which runs along the southern side of the harbor," Colquhoun says. "With almost 14 acres, it's very private; the approach is up a long winding drive lined with a variety of pine and spruce trees.

"The 16,000-thousand-square-foot main house has a heated pool, a movie theater, three guest houses, an office cottage with three [business spaces], a reception room, and a conference room... [The] activities building [has a] bowling alley, game arcade, and fifties-style diner. Oh—and a 75-car garage. All set on acres of rolling lawn, and all with amazing views (even the garage)!"

What are the driving directions to the property?

"From the center of Camden, turn onto Bay View Street and follow almost to the end. The property will be on your right."

What can you see from here across the water?

"You overlook all of West Penobscot Bay and can see across to North Haven and Vinalhaven, as well as out to the peaks of Blue Hill, Cadillac Mountain, and Isle au Haut. The immediate foreground view is of the eastern side of Beauchamp Point in Rockport."

Taxes?

"Taxes are \$105,000 annually."

What is your favorite place in the house?

"That changes, because the house has magical moments. I've been at parties on balmy summer evenings, on the deep porch that runs along the water side of the house, with a band playing jazz and people on the lawn laughing. But I've also been at a mid-winter gathering with a small group of friends in the living room with a fire blazing away in the fireplace, and that's my favorite place then. I've also been in the diner with the catering staff serving up sundaes to guests of an after-party, and at that moment, *that's* my favorite spot. It's totally impossible to pick just one, sorry!"

Backstory, Backstory

Adlai cheers on his alma mater Princeton as they play Harvard in Cambridge with his three sons, who would eventually all attend Harvard. From left, Borden, Adlai III, Adlai, and John. It's likely all visited Borden Cottage.



Adlai Stevenson III served as a representative from Illinois in the US Senate 1970-1981, credited with the International Banking Act. He was co-chairman of HuaMei Capital Company, the first US-Chinese joint venture in financial services.



1952 Campaign Button for Adlai's unsuccessful runs as Democratic Presidential nominee in 1956 and 1959

- There's an Adlai Stevenson IV (TV journalist turned investment banker), and an Adlai Stevenson V, born in 1994. Adlai Stevenson I was Vice President of the United States from 1893-1897.

Lady Spears's youngest daughter, Ellen Borden, married future two-time Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson II. They are pictured hosting a costume ball in Chicago early in their 21-year marriage, which broke up in 1949. From left, Adlai, Ellen, Lawrence Williams, and Harry Knott.



Adlai as John F. Kennedy's Secretary of State demands answers from the Cuban ambassador during a United Nations general assembly at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

FROM LEFT: PRINCETON (2); FILE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE; FILE

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This contemporary Shingle Style landmark graces Owls Head on Broad Cove, facing Rockland Harbor and the Camden Hills.

Successfully updating the summer magic of classic retreats such as John Calvin Stevens's Gignoux Cottage in Delano Park, Cape Elizabeth, this 2003 confection was built "by Peter Grimm, a retired executive,



FROM LEFT: COURTESY CAMDEN REAL ESTATE, CAMDEN REAL ESTATE/ELIZA MASSEY (3)



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and his late wife, Leslie, as a place for the family to gather," says listing agent Micki Colquhoun of Camden Real Estate. The original architect was Christian H. Fasoldt of Camden, and the builder was McCormick & Associates of Rockport."

To get here, "take North Shore Drive into the village of Owls Head, go left at the Owls Head General Store onto Lighthouse Road, then left again at the stone pillars onto Garth Gannon Drive. The house is the second driveway on the left."

What can you see from here across the water?

"From the house, you see a quiet cove directly ahead, the association's granite pier, a nice collection of boats on moorings, and the lights of Rockland Harbor. From the lawn, you also see the Camden Hills."

Show me the magic

"The best thing about this property is the combination of location and flat-out luxury. Owl's Head has an IFR-rated airport as well as one of the few remaining working harbors in the state. It's close to Rockland, which has great restaurants like Primo and Suzuki, as well as the Farnsworth Art Museum, Strand Theatre, and wonderful stores; and it has a wonderfully-protected waterfront, a safe harbor at the edge of Penobscot Bay. The luxury part comes from the design and finish of the house, which includes three master bedrooms, a two-bedroom guest apartment, six fireplaces, a four-car attached garage, and entertaining spaces that are just made for big gatherings and week-long house parties. The level of finish—moldings, floors, stonework, landscaping—throughout the property is really exceptional."

What are the taxes and price and special considerations?

"Taxes on the property are \$40,316. The listing price is \$3,250,000."

What is your favorite place in the house?

"My favorite place in the house is the kitchen/great room. It has French doors opening onto the water, a huge stone fireplace at one end, a nice sitting area, a casual dining space, and the best kitchen I've ever seen—acres of counter space, multiple dishwashers, a professional gas stove, incredible lighting, all just beautifully done. Look at the photos and you'll see what I mean!"



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OCEAN CASTLE

67 PERKINS STREET, Castine

\$4,250,000



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY LANDVEST/STEPHEN RUBICAM

Is your ship coming in? According to listing agent John Saint-Amour of LandVest, the Morey-Pierce House, listed for \$4.25M, “has stood watch over the entrance to Castine Harbor for over 100 years.”

The original owner of this Queen Anne palace “had ties to a steamship business which covered routes to Boston.”

Where exactly is the property?

“It’s on Perkins Street in historic Castine Village. Within walking distance to the village shops, Maine Maritime Academy (MMA), golf, tennis, and restaurants. To get there, take Route 166 into Castine, then follow Perkins Street along the harbor’s waterfront.”

What can you see from here across the water?

“Sweeping views from the inner harbor with yachts on moorings, the MMA fleet, passing boats of every description, kayaks exploring the shore and inner harbor islands to the distant islands of Penobscot Bay. Wonderful wildlife—birds and seals.”

Show me the magic:

“This three-story Victorian has been completely restored and updated. 7,100 square feet of wonderful living space, six bedrooms,

five fireplaces, covered porches, gourmet kitchen, wonderful terraces over-looking the water (324 feet), and beautifully landscaped grounds of 2.6 acres. Access to the shore to launch small boats/kayaks with a deep water mooring for a larger boat.”

What is your favorite place in the house?

“The light-filled living space with views of the water, cozy hideaways with the warmth of a fireplace for a favorite book, covered porches to watch the ever-changing waterfront, spectacular grounds/gardens/terraces that beg for a large celebration or gathering. This is truly a generational property to be shared. Taxes are \$27,645.” ■

» For additional photos, visit portlandmonthly.com/portmag/2011/12/luxurious-extras.