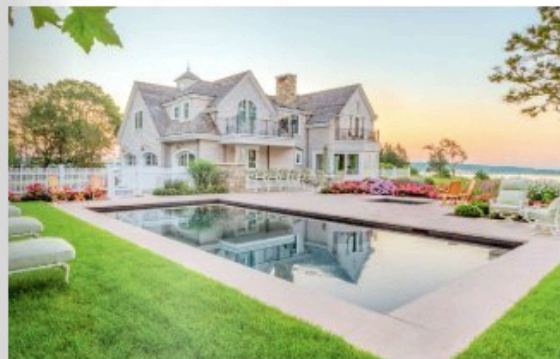
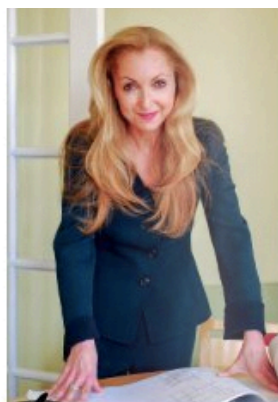
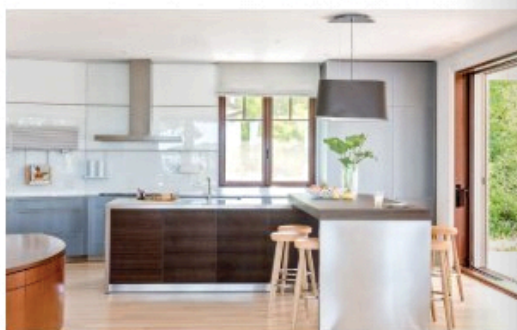
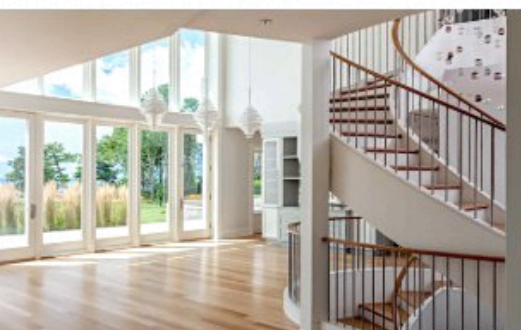
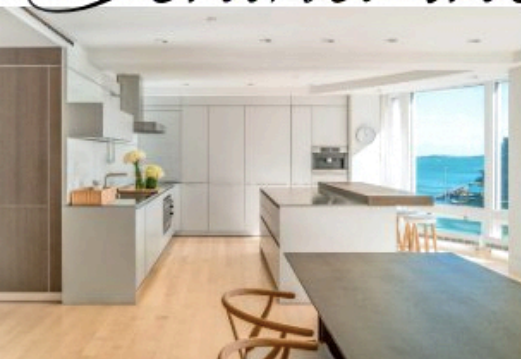


At BDG, we've followed the projects of Doreve Nicholaeff, principal of Nicholaeff Architecture + Design for years with respect, admiration and more than a little awe. We've experienced an extended cupola on the Cape overlooking the bay and walked a brick and cedar shingle revelation in Brookline. And while traditional homes and arcing forms are well represented within her body of work, her portfolio may not tell the full story. We caught up with Nicholaeff to learn more about her current work, her compositional approach, and why you'll never sell a traditionalist on a modern design. The professional statements here, and her explanations, may surprise you....



ARCHITECT DOREVE NICHOLAEFF DIVULGES DESIGN NOTES AND PHILOSOPHIES, AND BRAVE NEW WORK.

# Behind the Boards



## Doreve Nicholaeff can take a hard line.

People look at our work and think: "She only does curves." But that is just not true. While radial elements can be really special at the right moment—there is no question about it—the geometry of a home depends on the person, on the piece of property and on the type of aesthetic someone is looking for.

## Though based in Osterville, Nicholaeff isn't solely a Cape Cod architect. She often crosses the bridge.

While we do have a number of projects under way on Cape Cod, we also have a project in Newport right now and are working on a few projects in the Boston area.

## Her background is steeped in modern design, and she would like to do more of it.

I grew up in South Africa, where the architecture was more modern than it is in New England. When I came to the Northeast, it was eye-opening how traditional people were. I am finding now that people are in search of transitional ideas and are more open to a different aesthetic.

## That said, you cannot sell a very modern house to a traditional person.

As an architect, I try to immerse myself in the clients' wishes and dreams. Where a client grew up and what they've been exposed to influences their mindset. It's as if you're acting a part, and trying to understand what they are looking for. I push as much as I possibly can, but I know when to back off. The satisfaction of doing a project that makes the client happy is enormous—and you'll never make a person happy if they come from a traditional background and you put them in a modern house. It just doesn't work.

## Nicholaeff championed an indoor-outdoor connection long before it was popular.

For me, it has always been about how you relate interior to exterior. Always. It's not a new thing. It is about the relationship to the site, how the pieces fit on the land and how they relate to the sun. And if there are no views, how do you create those views and work with the environment?

## She thinks as a sculptor as well as an architect.

I definitely think very carefully about how pieces fit together architecturally. It's not just about one piece being attached to another; it really has to merge together. It's about the composition.

## Nicholaeff's structures inspire emotional responses.

There is a deliberate sense of calm to the spaces I create. There are also moments of suspense and surprise. It's not just a room I'm creating. It's more poetic.

## There is no 'one' dream project.

Every project has a unique quality to it. Once I get into it, I always develop a special part and we work off that. Right now, for example, we are working on a modern tree house with a floating deck on one end that blends in with the trees. It is cool and stunning, so stay tuned.

Photography: **Left:** Richard Mandelkern (top row); Dan Cutrona (bottom left); Michael J. Lee (bottom right). **Right:** Mitch Harper (left); Michael J. Lee (right)