

DESIGN DESTINATION

ESSEX, MASSACHUSETTS | BY CHERYL AND JEFFREY KATZ

If your idea of heaven is to take a meandering drive on a sunny autumn day and while away an afternoon poking through antique shops, consider a trip to Essex. Known for its rich maritime history (it boasts the oldest shipbuilding community in the United States), Essex has a quiet charm and simple elegance.

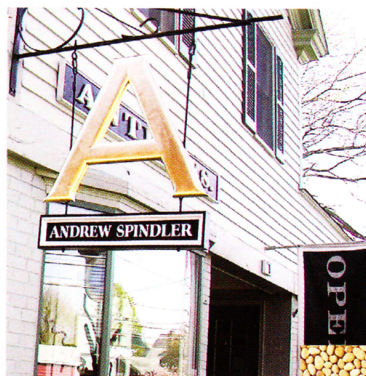
A paradise for antique lovers, Essex boasts more than thirty-five antique stores, more than half a dozen on Main Street alone. For period furnishings there's **A.P.H. Waller & Sons**; for a more country look try **Americana Antiques**. Long a favorite of architects and designers, **Andrew Spindler Antiques** is a don't-miss. Andrew Spindler-Roesle, the owner, is an overseer of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and a member of both the Historic New England Council and the collections committee of the Cape Ann Museum. He brings his trained eye and wonderful taste to the shop's eclectic collection, whether it's a pair of 1930s Rococo-style mirrors or nineteenth-century English white ironstone china. If you're lucky enough to catch him at the shop, he'll answer any question you might have about a piece's provenance. 140 MAIN ST., (978) 768-6269, WWW.APHWALLER.COM; 48 MAIN ST., (978) 768-6006, WWW.AMERICANAANTIQUES.COM; 163 MAIN ST., (978) 768-6045, WWW.SPINDLERANTIQUES.COM

Spindler-Roesle recommended a visit to **Cogswell's Grant**, the summer home of Bertram and Nina Fletcher Little. The Littles bought the eighteenth-century farmhouse in 1937. Over the next fifty years, they filled it with primitive paintings, painted furniture and redware, helping to define the country look in New England decor. The charming, quirky house is open to the public from June 1 to October 15. SPRING STREET, (978) 768-3632, WWW.HISTORICNEWENGLAND.ORG/VISIT/HOMES/COGSWELL.HTM

If Essex's many antique shops still don't sate your shopping fantasy, make a quick detour to nearby Wenham and visit Paul Gaucher's shop, **Coast**, relocated from its former spot in Beverly Farms. Gaucher brings the same design sensibility to his new store, which sits in a converted firehouse, as he does to his Icon showroom at the Boston Design Center, peppering a modern mix with carefully chosen antiques. 148 MAIN ST., WENHAM, MASS., (978) 927-8800

WHERE TO EAT

A visit to Essex wouldn't be complete without clams—steamed or fried—so a stop at the **Village Restaurant** is a must. If being named one of America's top ten small cafes by Epicurious doesn't convince you to grab lunch (antiquing can be tiring), the fact that they serve Indian pudding for dessert will. 55 MAIN ST., (978) 768-6400



Among an abundance of fine antique shops, Andrew Spindler stands out.



Coast offers a unique mix of antiques, furnishings and decorative accessories like these embroidered, bejeweled toss pillows.



A leopard relaxes on this Vermont-made hearth rug, part of the collection at Cogswell's Grant.