

CREATING COTTAGE STYLE NEW OLD HOUSE



“It looks like it’s been here forever”

Kate and Glenn Lawton designed their airy Long Island cottage to evoke the timeless simplicity of Shaker style

THE PROPERTY'S SHAKER ROOTS

inspired the cottage's classical proportions, such as symmetrical windows and a centered front door. “Vertical board-and-batten siding draws the eye up and gives a feeling of lift that is punctuated with the cupola,” Glenn says. “It gives the house a real sense of place.”

IF GLENN LAWTON could press “rewind” and replay the compliments he gets on his new cottage in Sag Harbor, New York, he would. “In fact, I hear the same thing every time,” he says. “People always assume the house has been here forever.” It’s just the response Glenn and his wife, Kate, were hoping for when they designed their 2,300-square-foot cottage six years ago. Kate’s mother lives in a 1793 Shaker house on the property, and they wanted the new cottage to embrace the history of the land.

“We wanted our home to emulate a carriage house that might have been on a working farm of yesteryear,” Glenn says. Most of the exterior features, such as the vertical board-and-batten siding, symmetrical windows, and cupola (see Glossary, page 38) mirror other historic Shaker homes in the area. “We wouldn’t have built the house without the cupola,” Glenn says. Sometimes called “widow’s watches,” cupolas are common on old homes in whaling villages like Sag Harbor. “It’s the highest point in the house, so women could sit up there to watch the water in anticipation of their husbands returning from sea,” Glenn says. With a nod to tradition, the Lawtons’ cupola also serves >

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A BUILT-IN WINDOW SEAT in the kitchen has become a favorite spot. According to Kate, whoever isn't cooking can often be found there lounging or relaxing. "It's usually not me!" she jokes. **IN THE LIVING ROOM,** earth tones on the walls and bare windows accentuate the natural light. "In the afternoon, we love to nap here because of the way the sun hits the sofa," Kate says. "It's like getting a sunbath."



important and practical architectural functions. "In the center of the cottage, it emits a light tunnel that gives a soft glow all the way down the stairs," says Glenn, "and it has a really great cooling feature." In spring and summer, the Lawtons open the cupola's electronically operated windows to draw hot air out and let fresh breezes in.

With minimal landscaping, the couple stayed true to the Shaker aesthetic. "They believed anything ornamental was unnecessary, so the plantings are very simple," explains Glenn, who has a degree in landscape architecture. Basic boxwoods anchor the base of the house while *Vinca major* (periwinkle), a native ground cover, fills space around it. "The *Vinca* is great because the deer won't touch it, and it has a beautiful blue flower in springtime," he says.

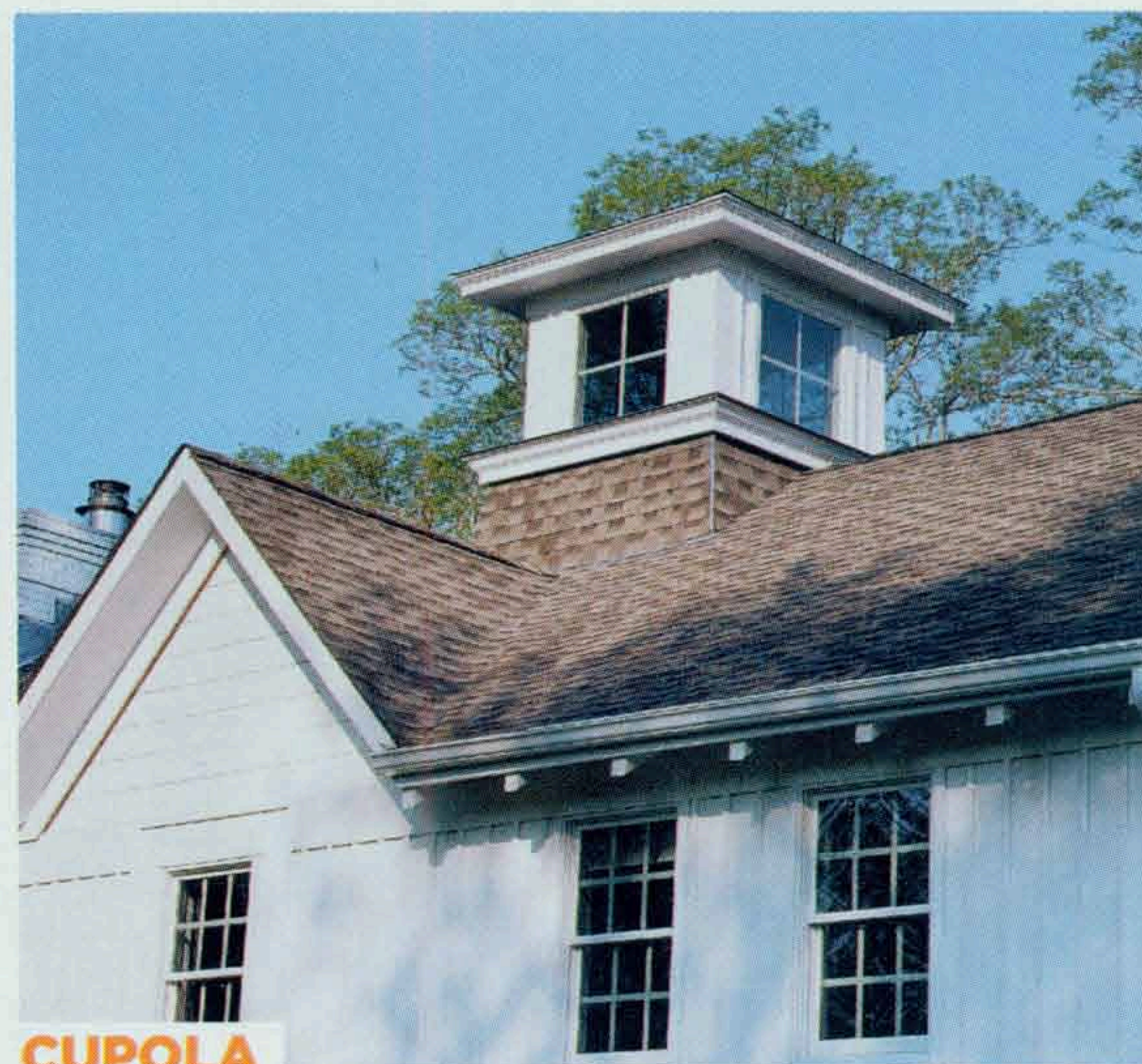
Though Glenn replicated Shaker style on such details as the banister, window trim, wide pine floor planks, and four-paneled doors with thumb-latch hardware, the floor plan is anything but traditional. In a typical Shaker house, rooms would have been carefully separated "because the strength of the timber had its limits," Glenn says. "Today, with steel and power beams, we were able to build the house in response to our needs. We spent our first few years together in a studio apartment; then we lived in the smaller cottage on this property. We were ready for an open feel and lots of flow from room to room."

Instead of installing doors to separate rooms, Glenn set areas apart with special architectural details, such as several steps leading down to the living >

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MASTER BEDROOM



CUPOLA

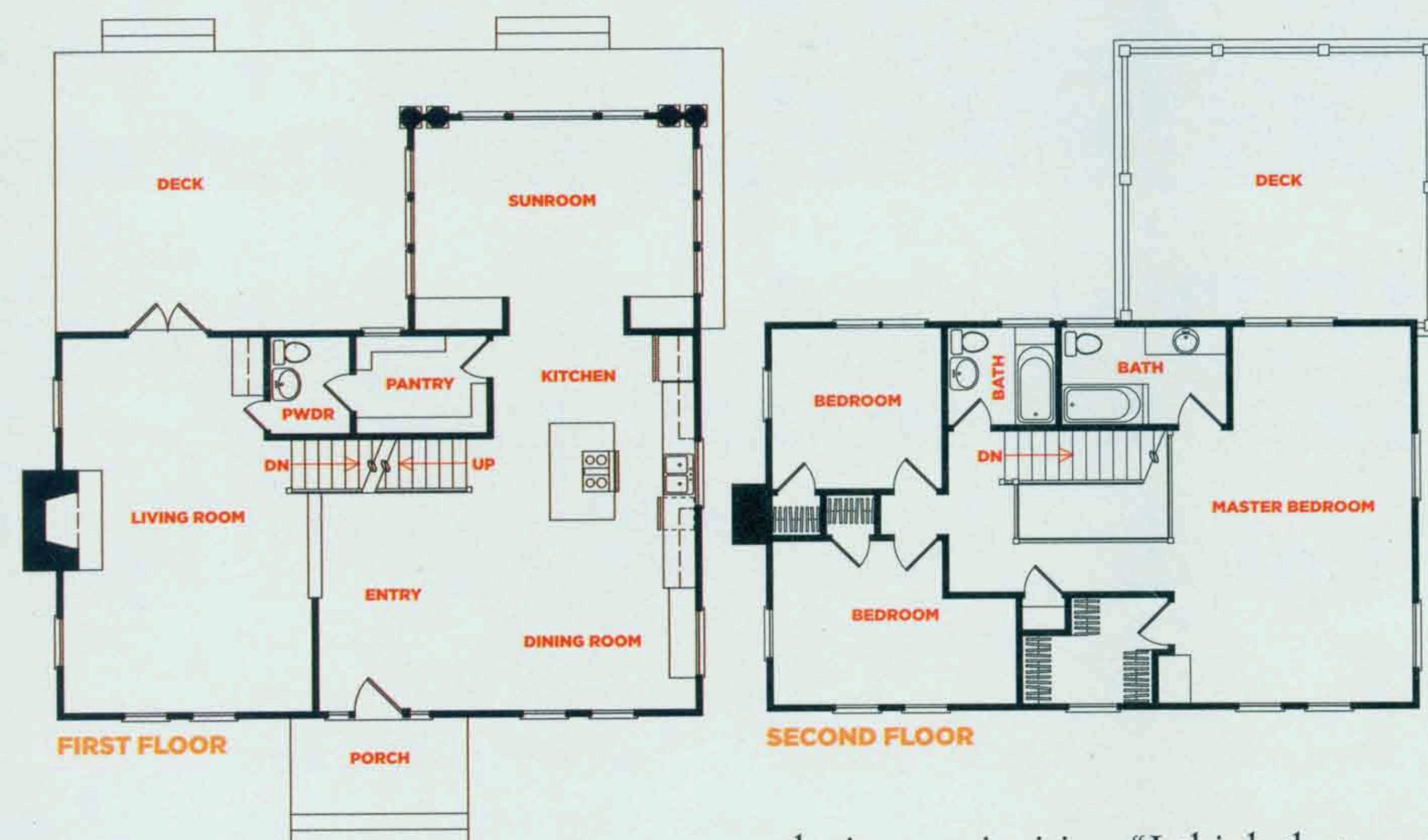
The way they live

■ **MASTER BEDROOM** To preserve an open floor plan, Glenn resisted installing a central hallway upstairs with doors to each bedroom. Instead, he put up a rod and curtain at the entrance to the master bedroom; the curtain can be left open or pulled shut for privacy.

■ **CUPOLA** When designing this typical Shaker feature, Glenn mixed modern conveniences with architectural accuracy. He specified electronic windows so that, on hot days, the family can let warm air out and cool breezes in.

■ **KITCHEN** The Lawtons added a built-in seat with pillows to a wide window in the dining area. "If you're in the kitchen and not cooking, you're sitting here," says Glenn. "It's one of our favorite spots in the house."

■ **FLOOR PLAN** Glenn designed wide, open interiors to fit the young family's lifestyle. "Thomas is in his superhero, secret agent stage, and he's running and jumping everywhere," says Glenn. "A 5-year-old boy needs space to play."



room to make it more inviting. "I think that good, quality spaces are formed when you make the room comfortable and intimate," he says. "When we're in the living room, we always say it's the nicest spot in the house because the sofa is tucked into the wall and the fireplace really makes it cozy."

Another of the home's coveted spots is the kitchen's window seat. "We love to sit there and drink coffee with the morning paper," says Glenn. "You can see almost the entire first floor." It's a great perch for keeping an eye on their 5-year-old son, Thomas, who can steer his tricycle around the house and even maneuver the kitchen island—wreck and worry free.

"I was pregnant while Glenn designed this house, so we always like to joke that Thomas and our home were built at the same time," Kate says. With all of the choices during the cottage's construction, "whether it was on hardware or any other detail, we would go with the more classic Shaker look," Kate says. "It made decision-making easy, and we didn't lose sleep over finishes or colors." The result is a home they both adore with lots of natural light throughout. "It's spectacular and very quieting," says Kate. "This is a house that helps you breathe." ■