

**Alaska Sportsman**  
Eider Hunting in Winter

# Alaska

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## Little Diomedes's Big Dilemma

Island Villagers Consider  
Abandoning Their  
Ancestral Home

## Battle of the Beasts

Horns and Antlers Collide  
In an Age-old Fight  
for Dominance

## My Neighbor Is a Whale

Floathouse Dwellers  
Savor Life Off the Grid

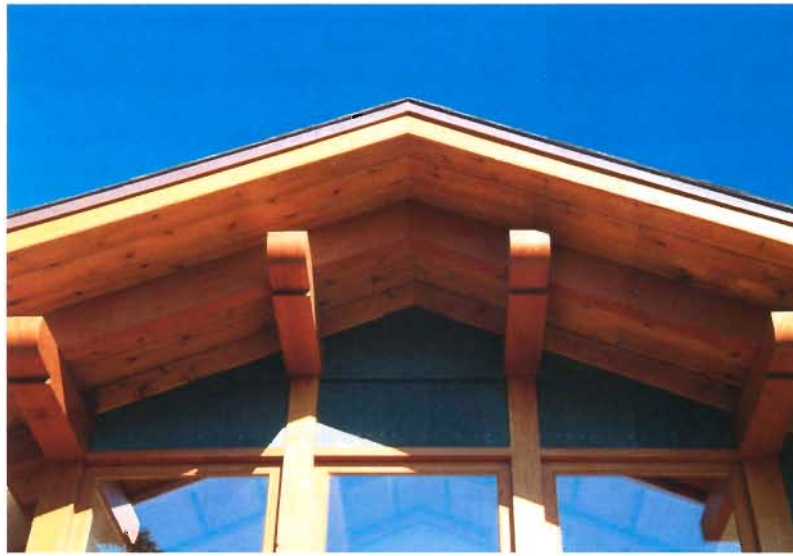
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**Pease and DiPietro** used beams of reclaimed Douglas fir, and detailed craftsmanship including mortise and tenon joints. Accessories like a small bell [BELOW] add personality and charm.

# a grand entrance

additions give anchorage homes  
a second chance at a first impression

BY JOY MAPLES

PHOTOS BY DANNY DANIELS



**a**laskans like things big. Big, wide-open spaces, big trucks, big fish. So why do they tolerate homes with postage stamp-size entryways? Part of the reason is the proliferation of split-level homes.

“The split-level era has been job security for us,” said Mark Ivy, a local architect who says he has done more than 100 entry, or arctic entry, additions.

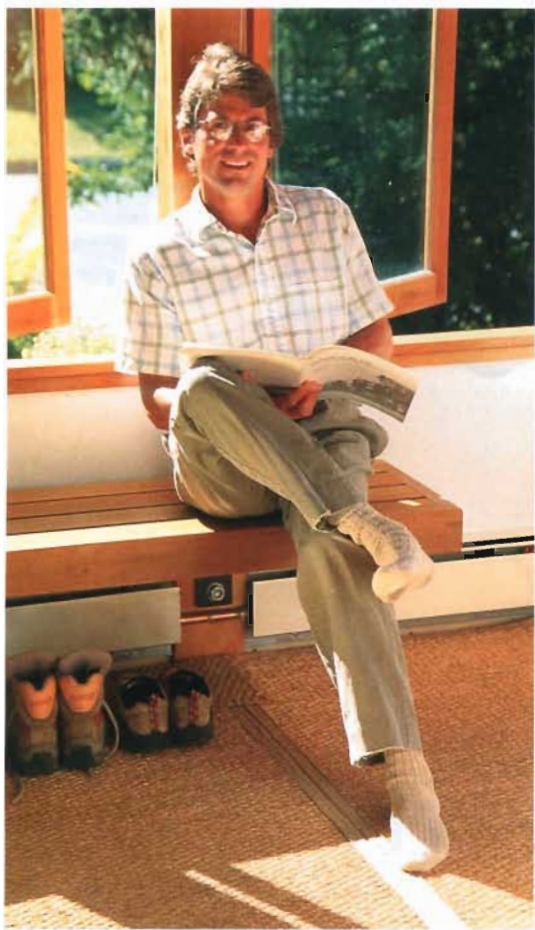
“Every time someone came into our house, the furnace kicked on,” said Government Hill homeowner Thomas Pease. “There was no temperature gradient between the outside and the inside.



**Thomas Pease and Susanne DiPietro** renovated their Government Hill home with a covered entry that incorporates lots of glass to allow in plenty of natural light.







"And the entryway was right in the middle of our living room, which made the space a hallway to every other room in the house rather than a room of its own."

Pease, a teacher at Rogers Park Elementary, and his court administrator wife, Susanne DiPietro, are very pleased with the entryway addition to their home. Good thing, because the architect was DiPietro's brother, Marcus DiPietro of Nashville, Tenn.

"Marcus was the architect, the engineer, the builder. He did it all," Pease said. "Our entryway won an award at the Winter Cities design competition a few years ago. Marcus placed for each aspect, from the design and construction to the implementation. He walked up to the podium again and again. It was great."

Pease described the house as a "nice" home that he and his wife have lived in for eight years. The front of the house was concrete and steel. "It was dark," he said. "You walked to a concrete yard, and then up a short flight of concrete steps, and then right into our living room." They embarked on the addition in 1997, taking off the entire front of their home.

"We dined al fresco for a while. It was a mess. Our kitchen and living area were entirely exposed," Pease said. "The whole process took us about six months. We started in May and finished it in October."

To save money, Pease and his wife worked right alongside Marcus DiPietro. They planed the planks and jackhammered the concrete outside the front door. They also obtained Douglas fir beams from a salvage job. "They were tearing down an old warehouse. I think it was in Pennsylvania, and Marcus knew someone on that job," Pease said. "It's



**Pease [ABOVE] enjoys the south-facing windows in his renovated entryway, which he and his wife also use as a sun room and green house. An abundance of glass, including a stained glass insert above the French doors, lends light and defines the space without separating the entryway from the rest of the house.**





real difficult and very expensive to get old-growth wood, so we got this reclaimed Douglas.”

Sitting inside the 7-by-15-foot entryway, Pease looks out over a finished perennial garden that is built in levels leading to a path of blue slate stones with gravel beneath. A redwood deck leads to the arctic entry made of the towering beams of Douglas fir and using what Pease calls “the lost art” of mortise and tenon joints, which uses no hardware. The soaring ceiling and nearly floor-to-ceiling windows provide great light and warmth. A glass panel above the porch provides extra light as well as shelter from the snow. The south-facing windows flood the home with light. “We’ve really enjoyed the addition,” he said. “We use it as a sun room, a green house; and we come out in the morning and read the paper. We entertain a lot more. It’s just got a warm, welcome feel about it.”

There are many challenges in adding or remodeling an entryway, and solutions aren’t cheap. Kathleen Squires of Alaska’s Squires Co. said that adding an entryway costs about \$150 per square foot.

“There are a lot of things you have to take into consideration when doing a remodel; the roof line and pitch, and matching it to the style of the existing home. There are a lot of people involved and it doesn’t matter if you’re doing a 10-by-10 or larger,” she said. “The breakpoint, where you can start seeing a savings per square foot, is at about 146 square feet. We get a lot of bids to do entryways, but once they get the bid back—and we are competitive—they just find it’s too expensive. But the ones we do get to work on turn a normal-looking house into a grand home.”

Tom and Susan Morgan live in Eagle River. Tom is the executive director of the Armed Services YMCA, and Susan is a social worker. Tom bought the house in 1981 but rented it out over the years. In 1993 he



**When Tom and Susan Morgan** renovated the entry to their Eagle River home, they chose to re-create the prow front at a 90-degree angle from the house. The angles reflected in the roofline [LEFT] and on the interior ceiling [ABOVE] required custom work, but the result was worth the extra effort. Tom Morgan, with Susan below, said using the right contractor is the key to a successful project.

