

COASTAL LIVING

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Cozy beach style from New York to California

Tybee Island,
Georgia

**BEST
BEACH
BARS**

**CLEANER
OCEANS**
A NEW PLAN

SUNNY COLORS THAT POP

NOVEMBER 2014

The trim is painted Moonlight White, and the door and steps are painted Maritime Blue, both by Benjamin Moore. Opposite: The sawhorse table is from Maison 140. The fan coral artwork is by Karen Robertson.



BREATH OF FRESH AIR



A MANHATTAN INTERIOR DESIGNER AND HER HUSBAND TAKE ON A CENTURY-OLD EAST HAMPTON COTTAGE TO REVEAL BEAUTIFUL BONES UNDERNEATH

BY ELLEN MCGAULEY PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY GILBERT



A DARK 19TH-CENTURY FARMHOUSE wasn't on the house-hunting agenda for one couple seeking a weekend getaway to buy, but on their first day looking at properties, their real estate agent made a pit stop at just such a place. It was a small cottage for sale in East Hampton. Though only intending to pick up the key to another house, the agent obliged when clients Jenny and John Wolf asked if they could pop in to take a peek.

Behind its 120-year-old cedar shake exterior, the pair found a series of dark rooms with 8-foot ceilings, heavy crown molding, and just 1,500 total square feet. It wasn't nearly the wide-open country house they had envisioned, and it made sense, Jenny thought, that it wasn't on their official shopping list. "We wanted a place to spread our wings, where our 3-year-old daughter, Ella, would have plenty of room to roam," she says.

But just before heading back to the car, the Wolfs caught a glimpse of the backyard. "It was early spring, so the flowers weren't even in full bloom, but it was absolutely magical," says Jenny of the lush garden that stretched off the back of the house. With an expansive lawn, hydrangeas peeking out of a verdant evergreen border, a large swimming pool, and an artfully arranged pattern of stone pavers, the couple swooned. They made an offer that same day. "We were scheduled to tour 15 houses, and we did, but this was the one we wanted. We knew we could transform the interior to match the beauty and airiness of the backyard," says Jenny, an interior designer in Tribeca.



The walls throughout are painted Decorators White by Benjamin Moore. The sofa is by Lee Industries. Right: The stair treads are painted Misted Green by Benjamin Moore.



The Saarinen dining table and Tolix chairs are from Design Within Reach. The lighting is from ABC Carpet & Home. The rug is from West Elm.



The floor is painted Misted Green by Benjamin Moore. The linen seat cushion is custom; the pillows are by Dash & Albert. Opposite, from top: The pool furniture is by Kingsley-Bate. The lighting is by Barn Light Electric, and the refrigerator is by Smeg.



She and her husband spent the next few months sketching out their ideas. "Our goal was to make the house feel bigger and more open without adding to the footprint," says Jenny. By removing the attic, for instance, they were able to add 6 feet vertically and expose the vaulted ceilings in the master bedroom and their daughter's room. Downstairs, revealing the natural wooden beams returned a sense of authenticity to the farmhouse while also adding height. They then stripped away the heavy crown molding throughout, and replaced an ornate Victorian banister with a simple contemporary rail. "My husband and I have realized we like the 'guts' of houses," says Jenny, laughing. "We like to scale things back to see the true lines and structural elements, and highlight those."

To keep the newly simplified rooms from appearing stark, they clad the walls upstairs in 5-inch cedar planks that run horizontally everywhere except the staircase. "We turned them vertically along the stairs to add visual interest and draw the eye up," explains Jenny. Widening the thruway between the living and dining rooms meant additional light could pour through both spaces. Meanwhile, the walls went from moody beige to bright white, warmed by pale green painted floors in all rooms except for the kitchen (where Jenny chose white).

"I'm a traditionalist by nature, but here, I wanted to be able to experiment a bit with the furnishings," she says. The streamlined palette also allowed her to combine industrial pieces like Tolix metal chairs with a modern Knoll table and a beachy jute rug in the dining room, or to pair a contemporary linen sofa and a rustic sawhorse





The canoe in the master bedroom is from Restoration Hardware. Above, from left: The patio table and benches are by Kingsley-Bate. The wire rack is from The Upper Rust.

table in the living room without causing an identity crisis within or among the different spaces.

Funky elements mix well, too: a curvy canoe frame propped in the corner of the master bedroom, a papier mâché deer head wearing a chunky red necklace in Ella's room, and the painted stair risers—numbered one to 12, starting at the bottom. (Jenny used Coast Guard-style stencils to reflect their beach environs. "It's how Ella learned to count!" she says.) In the kitchen, a cornflower blue refrigerator adds a dose of colorful, retro cool. And though the pair swapped out nearly every door in the house, the front entrance was left exactly as they found it. "That pale turquoise was the original door color—the wide painted steps, too," says Jenny. "We believe that color is inherent to the home's character."

Post renovation, the soul of the cottage indeed shines, from the porch steps right through to the wide-open yard. And though they swapped navy market umbrellas for off-white ones, traded some roses for more maintenance-free succulents, and added teak dining furniture for Saturday night barbecues, much remains unchanged in the backyard that first wowed them. "Ella and our dogs, Benny and Wolfie, have a ball out there—there's so much room," says Jenny, adding that indoors and out feel connected now. "There was a special harmony to the outdoor spaces here, a sensational balance—everything had a place and reflected its location near the beach," says Jenny. "Our goal was to extend that harmony to the house itself, and I think we did." **For more information, see Sources, page 103.**



The teepee in Ella's room is from Hayneedle, with custom trim. The pouf is by Serena & Lily. The "Beach" wall letters are from Anthropologie, and the Eames rocker is from Design Within Reach.