



NEW HOUSE, OLD SOUL

This East Hampton retreat proves that true summer-house character comes not always from age, but from timeless design and room to play

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“IT FEELS LIKE SUMMER HERE, the kids running around with bare feet,” says Marti Ely of her East Hampton beach house. “I just love this house. It’s a happy place.” For years, Marti, her husband, Randy, and their two daughters spent summers in her mother’s East Hampton home. But when the family’s fourth generation of beach babies came along, the Hamptons residents (who spend summers here and winters in Florida) knew they needed something bigger. They weren’t ready to give up the classic style of the homes they’d grown up in, though. “I wanted a new house that felt like it had been here forever,” she says. So the couple turned to Hamptons architect Bill Beeton and builder and landscape architect Michael Derrig for a beach house that would fit their growing brood and would also fit in with the village’s older homes. And they brought on Phoebe Howard, a veteran Southern designer known for her fresh twists on traditional, timeless interiors. As for giving the new house an age-old feel, Randy says the design team got it right: “People walk in and say, ‘I can’t believe what a good remodel you did to this house!’” Here, the design trio shares their tried-and-true formula for classic summer-house style.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE + A GIANT AMERICAN FLAG

“The owners wanted something that looks like the village they’ve known for most of their lives,” says Beeton. To stay true to the area’s architectural roots, he designed the house in traditional Dutch Colonial style, with gambrel and gable roofs. “Many homes in the Hamptons have similar original elements; then their owners would add onto them throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries,” Beeton says. To help the house blend in with its more pedigreed neighbors, he positioned the master bedroom suite to the side of the house (see previous page) to look like an addition. On the front of the house, just outside the door, the Elys hung a large flag—a nod to the all-American character that has long been a hallmark of Hamptons towns.

RUSTIC BRICK FLOORING + A PLACE TO HANG YOUR HAT

A Dutch door on the side of the house opens to a smartly designed mudroom with plenty of spots for stashing gear. “I always like to have hooks of some kind, and all the better if they are cute,” says Howard, who installed a Victorian coat rack for a catch-all with a bit of character. “This one is expandable, so you can fit it to your space.” For durability, brick floors are mudroom all-stars, standing up to everything from saltwater to snow. The wood paneling is painted White Dove by Benjamin Moore, and the striped bench cushion fabric is by Pindler.



WOOD PANELING + CLASSIC BLUES

“Blue always works in a summer house, and it relates so well to the sea,” says Howard, who filled the house with shades ranging from periwinkle to deep indigo. In the living room, she chose light blues with a hint of green to complement the limelight hydrangeas that spring up in the backyard just beyond the room’s glass doors. “The owners wanted a lot of painted wood,” says Beeton, who clad the living room walls in vertical paneling with a 1/8-inch reveal, but also mixed in natural wood and drywall “so nothing has a ‘just-built’ look.”





BOLD PATTERNED DRAPES + ANTIQUE-INSPIRED FURNITURE

"In the Hamptons, you might be at the beach during the day and entertaining 12 people at night," says Beeton. The dining room, then, needs to be both durable and beautiful, adds Howard, who chose a contemporary, colorful pattern by Schumacher to frame the windows and a reproduction sawhorse table with hand-hewn planks "for a little patina and a little bit of soul." The Orkney host chairs are a fun, updated take on the throne-like designs that originated in the Scottish archipelago.



COLORFUL BUILT-INS + ARCHITECTURAL QUIRKS

The wet bar is positioned off-center of the hallway window—an unusual design detail Beeton likes to incorporate in new houses. "Not everything has to be centered," he says. "We call it 'purposeful asymmetry.' It really adds to the room's charm." The gray-blue paint color (Jamestown Blue by Benjamin Moore) elevates the alcove, taking it from a practical service area to a "little jewel of a space to be in," notes Beeton.

SHAKER-STYLE CABINETRY + OLD ENGLISH ACCENTS

Windsor barstools and a collection of blue-and-white spatterware pitchers warm up the modern kitchen with a sense of history. (The designs date to 18th- and 19th-century Europe, respectively.) "Collections can really personalize a room," says Howard, who found the antique porcelain in a Bridgehampton shop. The graphic patterns pop against the simplicity of Shaker-style cabinetry.

BEADBOARD WAINSCOTING + THROWBACK BEDDING

"It feels like a memory; maybe it reminds you of your grandmother's house," says Howard of her take on traditional Americana in the guest rooms. Here, white beadboard paneling, a simple white coverlet, and natural bamboo balance out the nostalgic pattern duo: a red small-scale Kravet print on the draperies, headboard, and bed skirt, and Clarence House florals on the pillows. "Use humble, simple materials," says the designer. "And when it comes to patterns, stay away from trends."





Homeowners Randy and Marti Ely (front) cruise Georgica Beach in their 1931 Ford Model A Cabriolet with daughter Ashley Lavin and two grandchildren, Lucy (4) and Billy (3).



A SERENE SWIMMING POOL+ RUSTIC OUTBUILDINGS

The team designed a barn-style garage and pool house with natural cedar board-and-batten walls to maintain the property's historic look. "These barn and patio designs have been around for 150 or 200 years," says Derrig, who chose a light gray marble dust finish for the pool. "It strikes a nice, warm balance—not too light and not too dark—and blends in well with the surrounding landscape."



A GRACIOUS BACK PORCH + FORMAL HEDGES

The rear porch, which Beeton designed to fit two seating areas, is paved with New York bluestone and outfitted with a mix of furniture materials that feels organic and collected. For instance, a square cement coffee table with a branch-like base contrasts the woven texture and curvy forms of a black wicker sofa and chairs. A house with an age-old feel should have a landscape—like these privet hedges and London planetrees—to match, Derrig says. "Whether you're inside looking out, or outside looking in, you should feel the unity of house and garden."



SIMPLE SEASCAPES + A SPINDLE BED

In the master bedroom, a pair of coastal prints in sleek, nonbeveled frames serve as a contemporary foil for a traditional four-poster spindle bed from Howard's collection. "It's low-maintenance, there's no dust ruffle, but it has a lot of timeless style," she says. Soft blues in the artwork, Lee Jofa Roman shade trim, and Matouk bedding reinforce the quiet, blissful vibe. ■