

Seaside Oasis - Home & Design Magazine

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A modern retreat in Bethany Beach celebrates its locale with dramatic architecture, sophisticated interiors and laid-back luxury

At first glance, a couple who grew up on a Caribbean island lapped by warm, turquoise seas didn't think of the Delaware shore as a real beach destination. "The water is too cold for me," laments the wife. But after spending many a summer vacation in Bethany and Rehoboth rental homes with their son, the tranquil Atlantic resort area grew on the two Bethesda-based technology execs—so much so that they decided to purchase an oceanfront lot in North Bethany and build a beach escape of their own.

Their goals eclipsed the standard beach cottage. Sure, they wanted a carefree refuge where they could de-stress within driving distance of home. But they also wanted a house large enough to host multiple families and friends—including teammates of their son, now a college-age soccer player. A deck with a pool (for warm swims) was a must, as was a nice office where, the husband says, "we could work remotely in peace and quiet—even if we had

visitors—and not feel like we’re in a ‘time-out.’”

The duo envisioned an airy, modern abode that would play well with its traditional neighbors. A friend’s referral led them to architect Mark McInturff. “When we met Mark and saw his work, his focus on symmetry and clean lines spoke to us,” says the husband. McInturff joined the team that already included builder Tim O’Hare—whom the wife encountered when walking by one of his Rehoboth projects—and interior designer Sharon Kleinman.

McInturff got to work on a design concept that instantly resonated with the owners. His three-story plan encompasses two gabled forms connected by an open, glass-enclosed volume. The ground level houses a gym, office, game room and guest accommodations—including a six-bed “dorm” for the owners’ son and his buddies. On the second floor, the voluminous kitchen and breakfast room, dining room, living room and screened porch capture lofty beach views—as do the son’s junior suite and the master suite, perched on the third floors of the north and south volumes, respectively. Additional guest rooms and a media room are situated on the second level, facing the street. Connecting the three floors are a floating staircase and a glass elevator, which ascends to a roof deck complete with hot tub, outdoor TV and fire feature.

With neighboring homes only 20 feet away, establishing privacy on the tight lot was a challenge. “My approach is always to screen the neighbors,” notes McInturff, who bumped out the southern wing of the home to hide the adjacent property. This shift created the perfect space for the deck and infinity-edge pool. “When you’re on the deck or porch,” the architect marvels, “all you see is people on the beach and the ocean—and nothing on the sides.”

Sharon Kleinman outfitted the interiors with an eye on the architecture and the setting. “I was wowed by the design; it’s so beautiful with lots of glass and expansive ceilings,” she recounts. “My challenge was to make sure the interiors were warm and inviting.”

Throughout the home, she judiciously layered textures and materials, honing in on a palette of blues, grays and neutrals “I didn’t want anything to stand out more than the environment itself. And I didn’t want to fight with those views,” she explains. “One of the clients’ goals was for it to feel serene.”

Clean-lined, uncluttered furniture with stain- and water-resistant upholstery answers the owners’ call for laid-back style. “We don’t want a showpiece; we want something that’s livable, comfortable and still looks good,” says the wife.

From the architecture to the interiors and hidden technology, every detail in the project celebrates its seaside environment. Folding glass NanaWalls open the main living space seamlessly to the balmy breezes, yet automated window shades and phantom screens shield against strong sun and pesky no-see-ums. Smart-home systems control lighting, music, video and climate with the touch of a button whether the family is home alone or hosting a fête.

The large kitchen designed by Jerry Weed of Kitchen & Bath Studios works like a dream even if the house is at full capacity. “When everyone’s in there, you’re not bumping into people,” says the wife. Beverage refrigerators, a microwave and a built-in coffee machine in the breakfast area let guests grab drinks and snacks outside the main cooking zone. The breakfast room spills out to a

screened porch where a hanging swing and seating by Dedon beckon year-round, thanks to built-in heaters.

From day one, this project was a fruitful collaboration between the owners and their design team. “If we didn’t meet on a weekly basis, we had a conference call,” Kleinman recalls. “We all worked together really well.”

The owners, who report that they would not change a thing in their newly minted beach retreat, unwind upon arrival. “One of our favorite things is the porch swing,” reflects the husband. “Our dog jumps up between us and with the sound of the waves and the rocking, I usually fall asleep in a minute. It’s a fantastic atmosphere.”

Architecture: Mark McInturff, FAIA; Christopher Boyd, AIA; David Mogensen, AIA, LEED AP; Jeff McInturff, McInturff Architects, Bethesda, Maryland. Interior Design: Sharon Kleinman, Transitions by Sharon Kleinman, Potomac, Maryland. Kitchen Design: Jerry Weed, Kitchen & Bath Studios, Inc., Chevy Chase, Maryland. Builder: Tim O’Hare, O’Hare Custom Builder, Ocean View, Delaware. Landscape Design: Princess Garden Landscaping, Severna Park, Maryland. Home Automation: Electronic Interiors, Ocean City, Maryland.