



THIS CONTEMPORARY SHINGLE STYLE BEACH HOUSE
REVEALS THE SOOTHING POWER OF SIMPLICITY

— MODERN IS —
RELAXING

In a Long Island, New York, beach house, designer Rob Southern covered the living room sofa in Great Plains' Weathered from Holly Hunt, "a miracle fabric," he says, "that never looks wrinkled," and chose Merida's Bora Bora rug from Patterson Flynn Martin because "it's as sturdy and thick as a braided rope." **OPPOSITE:** The classic Shingle Style exterior gives no hint of the contemporary interior. Banks of windows and a second-floor balcony off the master suite have sweeping views of the bay.





Mahogany is used extensively in the kitchen, where a stainless steel backsplash harmonizes with a Wolf range. Pindler & Pindler vinyl on the stools complements the gray veining in the quartzite on the island and echoes the color of the Caesarstone countertops. Pendants by Boyd Lighting. **OPPOSITE:** In a window-filled corner, a swivel chair is covered in Studio Bon's RicRac, and a chaise provides seating without blocking views. Glass nesting tables from Hinson.



LISA CREGAN: It's almost hard to tell where the beach ends and the house begins. These colors could have washed in with the tide.

ROB SOUTHERN: That's the point! The obvious color to use when you're this close to the water is blue. But I think that would have distracted from the beautiful blueness of the bay. So we started thinking about sand—both dry and wet—and the sun-bleached tones of driftwood. What goes better with water than sand and driftwood? My own beach house is painted black, and inside I used lots of taupes and grays with natural oak walls. It's a palette with a cooling effect for a house that's used only in summer. I've done plenty of white-painted beadboard, and I like it, but we were going for a more modern look.

Are sandy feet and wet bathing suits welcome?

Absolutely. It's bohemian! I really like that word for this place. It's similar to the humble modern houses built in the 1940s and '50s in places like Big Sur, California—dark wood interiors, furnishings with a handmade feel, and a close connection to the ocean—very romantic, unencumbered by tradition. It's OK to be a little messy. The sofas are rectilinear and tailored, so the pillows don't have to be perfectly aligned to look neat. And the beds aren't overly dressed, so you don't spend 20 minutes karate-chopping a zillion shams. It's about living only with what you need. There isn't even a dining room. The family eats every meal outside on the covered porch, even when it's raining.

Would you call this your signature style?

Oh, no. When I have clients who want English Country, I say, 'Let's go!' My job isn't to impose myself; it's to balance my clients' dreams with reality. This is a summer home for a family with five children ranging from middle school to college age. I wanted to give them their fantasy—but with functionality and comfort.

And what was their fantasy?

They wanted a Caribbean feel—ocean breezes blowing through louvers,



sunlight filtering through white linen sheers. Calm and cool with the relaxed look of Barbados, which is a place they love. So there are things like mahogany shutters between the living room and the entry. In reality, though, this house runs like an army barracks. Kids and their friends are constantly in and out from boating, waterskiing, or swimming, and the kitchen has to feed a million people at every meal—the kitchen island is the biggest I've ever designed. But even when all hell is breaking loose, I wanted everyone to be able to find a spot that feels like his or her own personal luxury resort.

How is that even possible?

First, the living room's glass walls completely open to the covered porch, creating one massive room, so I designed the indoor and outdoor spaces as mirror images of each other. Both have huge L-shape sofas. People can lie down for a nap, or sit and watch TV, or snuggle and enjoy the view—all at the same time. And one big sofa makes less visual noise

ABOVE: Louvered shutters that open into the living room lend a touch of British Colonial style to the entry.

OPPOSITE: "No need to rinse off, just come up from the beach and have lunch in your bathing suit," says Southern, describing the indestructibility of a dining table by Weatherend and Laszlo chairs from Janus et Cie. "This table is where people sit to watch the sunsets. And when it gets dark, the twinkling lights reflecting off the water are mesmerizing."

than a lot of smaller seats. The living room is a movable feast: The little drinks tables move where you want them, and the ottomans pull out from beneath the coffee table, so you can put up your feet or perch. They're pivot pieces, very flexible, making the design tailored to the individual.

The facade is more traditional, though.

Shingle Style architecture, with its grid of windowpanes, is something you see along the coast in the Northeast, but we painted the window trim brown to help make sense of the dark colors and square shapes we used.

This immaculate kitchen could be the galley of a yacht.

That was driven by the client's love for the kitchens she sees in Barbados. The polished mahogany is so rich, the cabinets couldn't be anything more than simple flat panels. The stainless steel backsplash gives off a sense of light, making the whole effect clean and sleek without looking like a laboratory. I wanted everything behind doors, because with kids constantly pulling things out and taking things down, open shelves would be a disaster. This kitchen looks great no matter what you throw at it.

You make it sound so simple.

It's not. The trick with a modern aesthetic is to be pared down without being soulless. In other words, the furnishings can't be so clean-lined they're off-putting. The chaise in the kitchen alcove is contemporary, but the seat cushion looks like a vintage mattress. It has the air of a comfy bed. And the chairs with the wave-pattern fabric were chosen for their curvaceous shape, because they're the bridge between the rectilinear kitchen and living room. They're the palate cleanser, so to speak.

What do you love most about this particular style of decorating?

Its longevity. Nothing is tied to the moment. It's one thing to buy a new handbag each year, but you should be hard-pressed to outgrow your house.

PRODUCED BY DORETTA SPERUTO
STYLED BY GREGORY BISSONNETTE







1



2

1. Wisteria's Multifunctional table tucks in next to a chair with a bay view in the master bedroom. 2. "I like to have doors on cubbies to keep things tidy," Southern says about the mudroom, which is painted in Benjamin Moore Regal Select in Sail Cloth. 3. The entry's horizontal plank paneling, painted in Benjamin Moore Regal Select in Briarwood, contrasts with the living room's sunnier color, Knoll Textiles' Ovation. 4. The vista from the porch includes a dock where the family boat sits ready for fishing and water sports. 5. A six-by-nine-foot master bathroom shower has two Waterworks Easton Classic showerheads and stunning bay views. An interior window opens up the whole bathroom to sunlight and the views. 6. Jonathan Adler's Wauwinet mirror is a nautical note in the powder room, which is painted in Benjamin Moore Regal Select in Chelsea Gray. **OPPOSITE:** Walls in the master bedroom are covered in Donghia's Silk Texture II, and the ceiling is painted in Benjamin Moore Regal Select in Night Horizon to dramatize the soaring space. The horizontal stripes on the curtains, Hines & Company's Malabar, "mimic the horizon line," Southern explains. Custom chaise in Great Plains' Weathered by Holly Hunt. Bed linens, Schweitzer Linen.

3



4



5



6

"There is literally always someone out here, from morning coffee to the middle of the night," Southern says about the covered porch. When the glass doors are open, it becomes an extension of the living room. A chair used in that room—Sutherland's Shadow lounge chair—reappears out here in a lighter finish. A sectional, love seat, and ottomans from Janus et Cie, covered in Perennials' Rough 'N Rowdy, are impervious to everything from salt air to red wine. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



