

COASTAL LIVING

Coastal Holidays

Celebrate by the sea
with fun, festive ideas!

43
GREAT
GIFTS
FOR
BEACH
LOVERS

DECEMBER 2012/JANUARY 2013

Sail away to the
Virgin Islands

**THE MOST CHARMING
BEACHSIDE COTTAGES**

The kitchen cabinetry is from Kountry Kraft; the countertops are by Arthur Works. The barstools are custom, upholstered in fabric by Kathryn Ireland, and the hanging lantern is by Paul Ferrante. The floral design is by Matthew Robbins.



glad tidings

A stunning coastal home in Avalon, New Jersey, is the gift that keeps on giving for a young family of six

BY MARION LAFFEY FOX PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKI DUISTERHOF STYLING BY LINDA HIRST

The McHugh children may exchange their presents at the family's home in suburban Pennsylvania on Christmas morning, but for mom Gina and dad Chris, the real gift is returning to their airy seaside retreat on the New Jersey coast soon after, to enjoy the holidays by the water. "It's the perfect family-oriented spot," Gina says of the shingle-style house in Avalon, which overlooks the town's spectacular seven-mile-long beach. "We come here all the time."

And they don't come alone. With four children under 10 in tow and a large extended family, the McHughs had to make sure the house was comfortable and inviting, and that it had plenty of space for everybody. So they called architect Peter Zimmerman and interior designer Whitney Cutler, of Morrison Fairfax Interiors, both based

in suburban Philadelphia. "Whitney had done a house for us before, so she had a good idea of what we like and what we would want in our beach home," Gina says. "We also really admired Peter's attention to detail and his traditional design aesthetic."

For Gina and Chris, Peter crafted a Nantucket-style house, incorporating the couple's love of that region's architecture but adapting the design for the site's tricky dimensions—the town had firm height restrictions in place for the lot, which abuts protected dunes. Outside, the structure adheres to tradition, with cedar shingles and a quaint Dutch gambrel roof. Inside, he fashioned an "upside-down house," with guest rooms on the first floor and an open living and dining space on the second, to better take advantage of the views.



From top: The dining chairs are from The Wicker Works and feature cushions made from Kathryn Ireland fabric. The team from Pohlig Builders turned architect Peter Zimmerman's vision into reality. The family gathers around a coffee table from IKEA. The sofas are from Sherrill Furniture; the rug is by Merida, and the mirror above the mantel is from Worlds Away. Opposite: A Lord Bodner octopus print from Natural Curiosities defines the entry.





From top: The master bedroom's custom headboard is by Nancy Maloney Draperies; the sconces are from Circa Lighting. The wallpaper in the master bath is from Thibaut, and the sinks are by Ferguson; the faucets are from Newport Brass. A Bungalow 5 chair pulls up to a Jonathan Adler desk in the girls' bedroom. Opposite: The sisal runner on the steps is from Fibreworks. The Swedish grandfather clock is from Lone Ranger Antiques.



Coastal holiday notes

Celebrated floral designer Matthew Robbins gave the McHugh clan a clean, minimal holiday makeover for a subtle Scandinavian look by the sea. Here are his tips.

Be a neutral party.

"I tried to avoid reds and greens and opted to use a gray palette, instead," Matthew says. The darker neutral base is classic, warm, and unexpected. Plus, it acts as a great foundation when paired with brighter blooms.

Stage a colorful surprise.

The dining room table and the fireplace mantel are some of the best places to appreciate color because that's where people tend to gather, says Matthew. So, for those spaces in the McHugh residence, he created arrangements using roses, amaryllis, ranunculus, sweet peas, and poppies in happy shades. "I went with an interesting salmon-and-coral theme that is fun but elegant. It's a festive, welcoming touch."



Mix up your greens.

The designer constructed his garlands from bay leaves, instead of typical evergreen, for a bit of whimsy. The many wreaths throughout the home provide a nice sense of cohesion, but Matthew made sure to give each one its own unique personality by using plants in many different combinations—the exterior wreaths were constructed from boxwood, while those inside feature Spanish moss, tillandsia, and thistle.

But, for Peter, it's the home's covered porches and open decks with Chinese Chippendale railings that truly define the design. "They add close to 90 linear feet of outdoor living space on the second floor alone," he says. "In the sunlight they cast wonderful shadows and patterns on the floors, and they look totally magical at night."

Seeking to create a little magic of her own, Whitney let the home's architectural details—which borrow from the distinctive New England island vernacular the McHughs love—dictate her design. A pale blue-and-white palette beautifully highlights the crisp wainscoting, white beaded-board ceilings, and muscular tongue-in-groove paneling in the living room; an oversize Paul Ferrante Nantucket lantern works to clearly delineate the dining area in the wide-open floor plan.

On the top floor, family bedrooms feel like cozy nests. The twin boys love their bunks; the little girls adore their bubblegum pink corner perch. Farther down the hall, the master suite lives up

to its name, pairing the serene sleeping space—with its unabashedly beachy, blue-and-white scheme—and a bright bath with an unexpected printed wallpaper festooned with sea coral.

More important to Gina and Chris than aesthetics, though, was building a home that would give order to the sometimes chaotic nature of family life. With that in mind, Whitney was judicious with her choice of textiles and materials, using low-maintenance jute and sisal rugs throughout and opting for slipcovers wherever possible to make sure cleaning is a cinch. In the dining area, the banquette is laminated to resist stains and to make it easy for kids to slip in and out.

The house has something for everyone, and Gina is the first to admit she adores it. "I feel a sense of peace here," she says. "It's chilly during the holidays, but we take long beach walks anyway. We cuddle up around the fire, cook with our guests, watch family movies, and just enjoy being together."  For more information, see Sources, page 106.