

# Southern home

*Chic  
Retreats*

GETAWAY HOMES  
FROM BEACH  
TO MOUNTAINS

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## From the Editors

WHEN IT COMES TO VACATIONS IN THE SOUTH, people are passionate about where they like to go. Whether it's the beach, the lake, or the mountains, they definitely have a preference—and plenty of reasons why they choose that locale. But one of the biggest reasons involves memories, whether of annual childhood trips to the Florida coast, lazy summer weekends spent with friends on the lake, or big family reunions in the North Carolina mountains. In this issue, we visit a number of gracious getaway homes where families are making memories even as we speak. For a Dallas couple, designer Holly Shipman creates a sophisticated beach home on the Gulf of Mexico that allows for both wet bathing suits and black tie affairs (page 43). In the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, designer Courtney Stubbs Hunter helps her in-laws attain their dream of a family home that offers stunning views at every turn (page 63). For a New York City-based client, design duo José Solís Betancourt and Paul Sherrill transform a traditional waterfront home in Annapolis, Maryland, into a contemporary escape full of open spaces and soothing colors (page 55). And in Georgia, the pace of pastoral life at their weekend farm, designed by Rick Spitzmiller and Robert Norris, leads the owners to make it their permanent residence (page 89). If all of these homes leave you feeling inspired to create your own haven, turn to page 107 for some advice from Florida architect Geoffrey Chick on building the perfect beach house. And be sure to check out the latest finds in outdoor décor to complete your vacation home (page 7). Then start packing your bags.



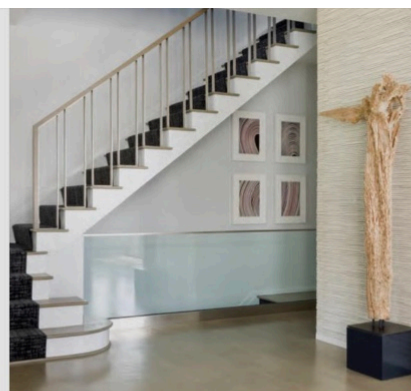
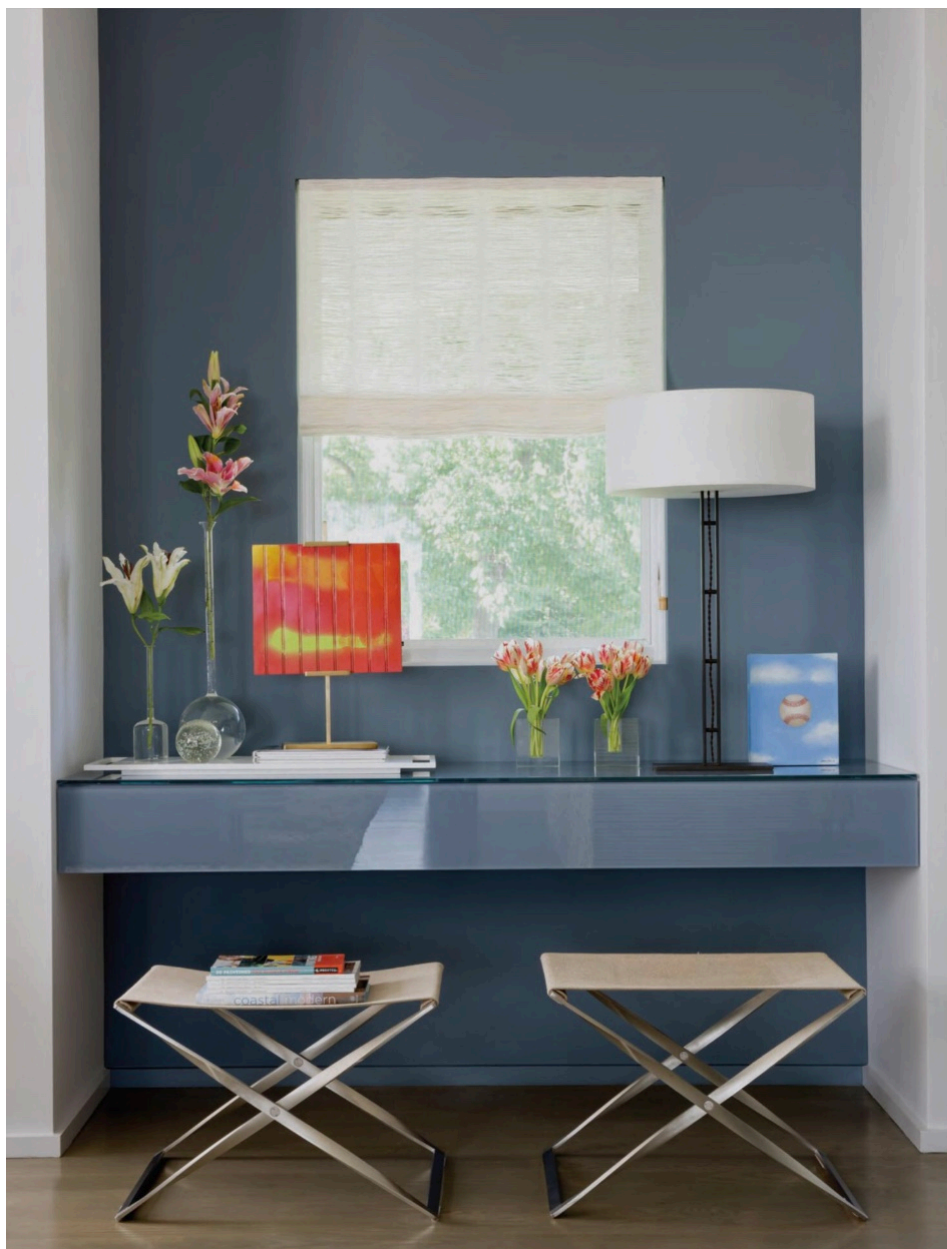


FOR A CLIENT WITH  
A HECTIC WORK WEEK  
IN NEW YORK CITY,  
DESIGN FIRM SOLIS  
BETANCOURT &  
SHERRILL CREATES  
A SOOTHING  
WATERFRONT OASIS  
IN ANNAPOLIS,  
MARYLAND.

# Soft and Sophisticated

TEXT LYDIA SOMERVILLE  
PHOTOGRAPHY GORDON BEALL





Design duo José Solís Betancourt and Paul Sherrill are masters of soft modern interiors that strike the perfect balance between comfort and drama. Clean lines and judicious use of color result in rooms that are visually impactful yet warm and inviting. For a client with a busy career in New York, the designers created just such a space for relaxing and taking in the views of White Hall Bay in Annapolis, Maryland. “She’s chic, interesting, and worldly,” says Solís Betancourt of their client. “While this house is very traditional from the outside, she wanted it to be fresh and light on the inside.”

Solís Betancourt and Sherrill began the transformation by removing numerous small windows and replacing them with larger apertures that extend up to the ceiling to flood the rooms with light and take advantage of the dramatic views. “We also raised interior doorways, which automatically makes the rooms look more contemporary,” says Sherrill. The designers then opened the kitchen to both the porch and the living room, creating one continuous space that encourages movement between indoors and the screened porch. On the porch, glass wainscoting allows the waterfront overlook to be used on rainy days, while a fireplace extends the season for alfresco entertaining.

Blue predominates in the color scheme, but it’s not the usual “beach house” blue. “The paint color is a nautical blue that we grayed down for a more



Previous pages: A frothy shag rug suggests the choppy waves just outside the windows. Afloat on its expanse is an alluring arrangement of sleek sofas amid gleaming islands of bronze Silas Seandel coffee tables. These pages, opposite: In the entry hall, a window above the built-in console tricks the eye into seeing framed artwork. Clockwise from top left: A driftwood sculpture presides over the stair hall. The porch furniture takes a modern approach to a nautical theme. The dining chairs can swivel to join living room conversations when desired. The round table straddles the line between a dining table and a coffee table.





sophisticated impact,” says Sherrill. In the entry, a niche painted in the hue surrounds a stunning window-framed view that seems to read as a painting. The designers repeated the same swath of blue around the brass fireplace in the living room. “We projected the wall surrounding the fireplace a couple of inches into the room,” says Solís Betancourt. “It adds dimension and provides a natural stopping point for the block of color.”

Even with all the clean lines and contemporary touches, the designers emphasize that this is still a beach home. “It’s a barefoot house,” says Sherrill, “and we wanted the room arrangements to be casual and flexible.” They deliberately blurred the boundaries between rooms—dining chairs on casters can swivel to join a living room conversation, and the round dining table can serve as a tall coffee table. Comfortable textures cultivate the laidback vibe—a thick shag rug in the living room invites shedding of shoes, as do wool and silk rugs in the bedrooms. Stacked-stone

tile in the porch fireplace surround and in the stair hall brings a tactile note of organic material.

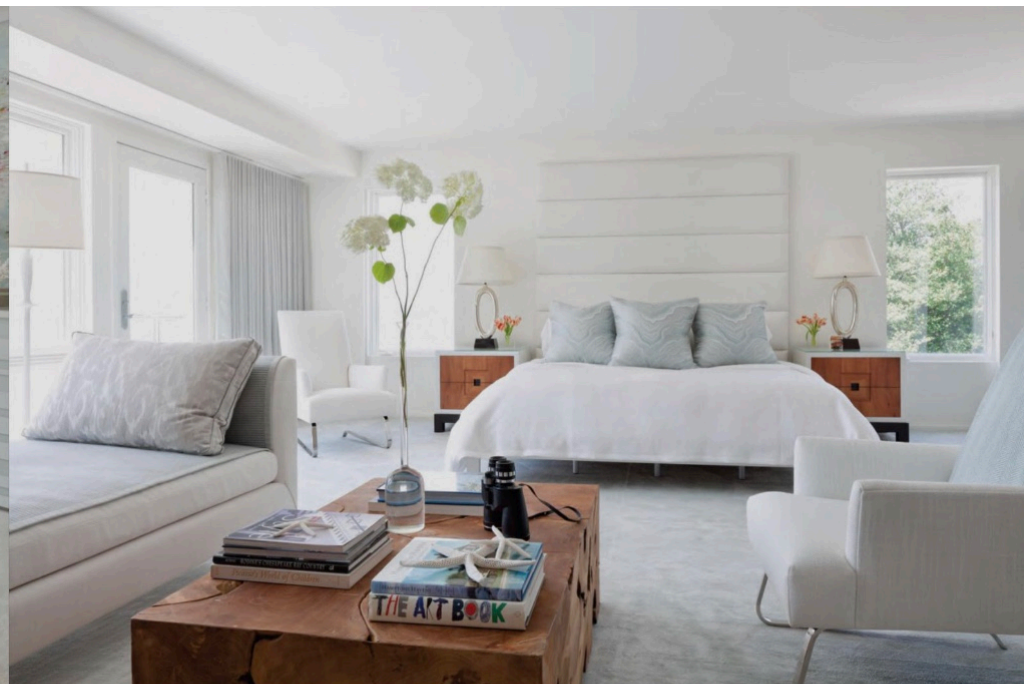
The bedrooms reinforce the comfort level with plush surfaces and lots of inviting places to lounge. Solís Betancourt and Sherrill created a dreamy guest room with fabric and wallpaper that channel French Impressionist Claude Monet. “We wanted to use this pattern in the same way as a toile,” says Sherrill, who also points out the importance of balance in the room. “The modern bull’s-eye painting over the bed tempers some of the sweetness of the space.”

Throughout the house, artwork adds sparkle and delight in unexpected places. A driftwood sculpture near the stair hall stands proud in a soigné pose. In the “Monet room,” a flock of glass birds alights on a wall, nearly imperceptible at first glance but rewarding the keen eye with a moment of surprise and discovery. Such pieces serve as the polish that perfectly completes this elegant, yet relaxed, bayfront getaway.

Opposite, top and bottom: The designers opened the kitchen to the porch, allowing for circular flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Floor-to-ceiling windows and doorways bring in an abundance of natural light and distinguish the house from traditional Annapolis style. This page: A dreamy guest room with dramatic water views emits a softly modern vibe.







"THE MODERN  
BULL'S-EYE PAINTING  
OVER THE BED  
TEMPERS SOME OF  
THE SWEETNESS  
OF THE OVERALL  
PATTERN."  
—PAUL SHERRILL



Opposite, clockwise from  
top: In the "Monet room," a  
contemporary abstract print  
achieves a watercolor effect  
on the walls, windows, and  
bed. Tiny glass birds alight  
on the walls above the chest.  
A minimal bull's-eye painting  
over the bed tempers the  
room's sweetness. This page,  
above: In the master  
bedroom, Venetian plaster  
walls give the feeling of  
being in a "pearl envelope,"  
as Sherrill describes it. Right:  
The master bath, with a  
heated floor and centered  
tub, overlooks the water.

