from house to HOME™

Dynamic & Calming
Inside A Jersey Shore Gem

Cook Up Some Fun
With Mario Batali

The Low-Down
On Smart Kitchen Remodeling

Win! Virtual Room Makeover
By Christopher Lowell
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In Perfect Harmony

An architect, a builder, and a decorator work together to bring the vision of these homeowners to reality
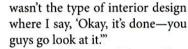
text | Mary Nestor
images | Jonathan Harper

Like the ocean churning beyond its beach, this Atlantic County home is defined by both a dynamic structure and a calming repose. From the moment of inception, it was intended to infuse traditional, cedar shake-style architecture with a decidedly unique voice.

Built in what is described by all parties as a "collaborative effort" the 5,500-square-foot home took shape on a double lot in the Margate community, under the direction of Van Duyne Builders using a blue-print from architect Don Zacker, Interiors By Design consultant Allison Forbes, and the pure style of homeowners who wish to remain anonymous.

Zacker describes the mission: "It was a happy marriage," he says.

Forbes agrees. She considers herself a hands-on designer and enjoys the back and forth decision making that is a natural part of the building and decorating process. Crediting the homeowners with exquisite taste and helpful insights, she says, "It wasn't the type of interior design where I say, 'Okay, it's done—you guys go look at it.'"

Instead, she was able to roll up her sleeves and assist with decisions on everything from room sizes, millwork details, ceiling heights, and building materials. And her voice doesn't begin or end at the front door.

The home combines a stucco façade and slate roof with beautiful brickwork. Forbes says the brick details help anchor the home to its surroundings. "Putting brick in the sidewalk and the driveway introduces you gradually, instead of just having a house sitting on the land. It pulls your eye all the way up to the house."

Top: A pool with a hot tub, a cascading waterfall, an outdoor grilling area, and the adjoining pool house define this backyard getaway.

Inset: This breakfast table, like the cabinets in the kitchen, is finished in a white glaze.

Opposite: Cedar shake architecture helps define this stucco and brick beach home with real slate roof.
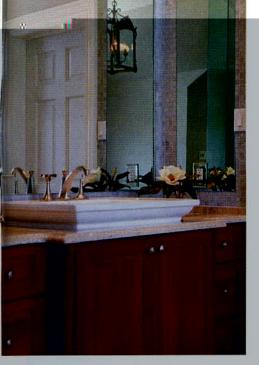
Built in three levels, the main living areas are on the second story to mitigate the presence of a sand dune, which the wind has built over time between the home and the sea. The interiors are a combination of creamy whites and cool blues to mirror the play of light and water just beyond the many windows.

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"There is a reoccurring theme throughout the home," explains the designer. In the downstairs, there is a predominant red, but upstairs, blue and beige take center stage. Then, in the dining room, a red thread returns and runs through the upholstery and along the window treatments. It is this keen attention to details, both decorative and architectural, which makes the entire home work as an organic unit.

Knotty pine flooring predominates the communal spaces, with the exception of the kitchen with its French limestone tiles. The tiles are picked up again downstairs, while the third-floor master suite uses luxurious carpeting on the floors.

Top: Pedestals throughout the home were made to resemble freestanding furniture.

Middle: Tumbled marble in the glass-enclosed shower is accented with opalescent tiles.

Bottom: A private balcony, third-floor views, and soothing palette make the master suite a special sanctuary.

The living room features a beautiful, coffered ceiling and one of two antique fireplace mantels. Forbes says the furnishings here are intentionally understated. "You have to be careful because it is the views that are really spectacular in the house." She says she chose neutral shades, soft shapes, and gentle lines because she didn't want the furniture to "stop your eye."

In the master suite, the second antique mantel holds court against one wall, while light blues, gentle creams, and unbroken views blend the colors of sand, sea, and sky. The master bath is finished in tumbled marble, while iridescent, opal-hued accent tiles (reminiscent of beach glass) frame the mirror, the shower, and the platform tub.

The children's bedrooms are as well-considered as the master suite. A little girl's room and bath have a pink and green floral motif and a unique countertop made from crushed ceramic dishes. The boy's room features nautical elements—including a navy, white, and yellow plaid palette, beaded wallboard paneling, pine floors, and decorative, round life buoys mounted above the twin beds.

Forbes enjoyed the creative process and says that beach homes afford a certain luxury. "In the beach house, you can extend yourself a little further," she explains.

And a very pleased homeowner agrees with her designer's assessment. "We told our architect we wanted to have the most beautiful house on the Jersey Shore. We wanted it to have a lot of character," she says. Armed with that mission, the talented team of architect, builder, and decorator, helped bring the vision to light. |