

# SAND, SEA AND SKY

*Outdoor pleasures are built into the design of a waterfront home on Long Beach Island.*

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This waterfront house on Long Beach Island was designed as much for outdoor living as in, and the expansive master deck is a perfect illustration. The table seats 12 to 14 with room to spare, and there's plenty of space for lounging, snacking and gathering around the firepit. The pergola is equipped with screening to protect diners from wind, sun and bugs.



**T**HE DECKS WERE NOT AN afterthought. When Valerie and Rich Falcone were working with designer Karen Wolf to create a waterfront house on Long Beach Island, they didn't just want to bring the outdoors in; they wanted to draw the inhabitants out. "We planned to spend as much time outside as in," Valerie says, referring to her immediate family (two daughters, 10 and 13, and a black Lab) and the many friends and extended-family members who'd be visiting throughout the summer. So the decks comprise the same square footage as the actual house, providing ample opportunities for sunbathing, alfresco dining and taking in unobstructed vistas of sand, sea, sky and bay.

There are three decks in this reverse-living house: the family's private deck off their bedrooms on the ground floor, a rooftop deck for watching sunsets over the bay and the main deck off the second-story great room, designed for family and guests and just right for all manner of vacation living. "We really wanted the outside to feel comfortable," says Valerie. So Wolf provided cushiony chaise longues, a daybed swing, a firepit surrounded by outsized, comfortable chairs and a dining table that expansively seats 14. There's also a pergola that affords shade during the hottest parts of the day and a counter that connects directly to the kitchen through transom-style windows.

This page and opposite: In the kitchen, the custom range hood, which extends all the way up to the 12-foot ceilings, was color-matched to the striking Lacancho range. Pale blue quartzite countertops echo the hood and range colors, as well as the island's base, painted in Sherwin Williams's Windy Blue.





This page: The house is filled with subtle nods to the ocean, such as the custom pen-shell chandelier from Glow Lighting over the dining room table. Opposite page: In the great room, a coastal palette of blue, white and sand predominates. Because so much of the home's square footage is devoted to outdoor living, furnishings indoors often do double duty: The circular game table from Darafeev, for example, has a removable top, revealing space for poker and bumper pool underneath.



Dedicating so much space to outdoor living meant that the indoor spaces required a highly creative use of space. "Literally every inch was used for dual or multiple functionality," says Wolf. "In that way, it was almost like a cruise ship or a yacht." There's a bunk room, for instance, that sleeps 12, with three bunk beds, some of which contain storage drawers, running alongside each of two walls. A round table in the great room provides extra seating, with storage underneath; it's where the

girls do their crafting and the family works on puzzles, and the top can be removed, revealing a space for poker or bumper pool beneath.

Like the exterior spaces, the interior takes full advantage of the extraordinary views. In the primary bedroom, for example, the bed is sited to offer ocean vistas. Portholes in the bunk room serve a similar purpose. And in the great room, 12-foot-high windows open out onto the deck and the sea view beyond. "There's no separation between the inside of



This page: In the primary bedroom, the custom mother of pearl fireplace surround evokes the ocean, as does the soothing palette of oyster and pearlwinkle. Opposite page: Though the bedroom was designed to cosset and soothe, the designer added a touch of drama in the form of a sparkling ceiling fixture from Made Goods.





the house and the deck space and the ocean," says Valeric.

The colors and textures used throughout the house also erase the distinction between outside and in. "Everything in our color palette and our textures brings in the sand and the ocean and the sky," Valeric notes, "so everything is blue or driftwood or white." The sandy tone of the decking, for example, matches the pale wood flooring that is used in every room but the bathrooms. On the deck, white furniture offers a backdrop for cool gray-blue cushions and pillows. Those same tones predominate in the great room: In the kitchen area, a striking blue-and-gold range hood echoes the blue of the stove below it and the pale-blue quartzite of the countertops. In the living/dining area, where most of the furniture is white, blue makes an appearance in cushions, throw pillows and a gray-blue area rug.

The most striking use of blue is in the primary bathroom and the bathroom adjacent to the bunk room. In the former, deep-blue ombre tile surrounds the tub and the vanity; in the latter, a deep gray-blue is repeated in the vanity, the subway tiles surrounding the tub, and the dramatic starburst-patterned tile on the floor and tub surround inset.

The interior seascape is enhanced by the use of shell and mother of pearl, the latter particularly arresting in the dramatic chandelier over the dinner table and the

This page and opposite: The primary bathroom derives its own drama from the use of custom ombre tile from Artistic Tile around the tub and vanity. The white Thassos marble flooring provides a striking contrast.





fireplace surround in the primary bedroom. Though the designer and the homeowners steered clear of overtly nautical décor, they chose to display white coral statuary in the open shelving above the kitchen cabinets and thread thick, nautical-style rope through the upper-bunk guards in the bunk room. Asked to describe the décor, Wolf tries out "classic coastal," then "elevated nautical" and finally "timeless nautical."

The décor, especially on the decks, is also distinctly resort-style—something the homeowners, who entertain all summer long, specifically requested. Wolf achieved that by choosing most of the furniture from only two different lines, as a hotel or resort might. "Consistency of décor on the exterior is what gives you that hotel feel," she says.

But if guests sometimes forget that they're not staying at a five-star hotel, the house is happy to remind them. "We were looking to build a home that felt really calm and comfortable for the four of us, a place where we could spend our summers and create lifelong memories," says Valerie. "But we also wanted it to feel that way when we hosted extended family and friends." Thanks to a careful, two-year collaboration between creative homeowners and an inspired designer, the house is a thing of beauty that celebrates its setting and never feels less than welcoming. †

This page: Starburst-patterned tiles add pop and playfulness to the bunk room's adjoining bath. Opposite page: The bunk room comfortably sleeps 12. To ensure that it didn't feel crowded, the designer kept the bedding consistent throughout.

