

DESIGN AT ITS BEST

HOUSE & GARDEN

JULY 2003

25 PAGES OF
OUTDOOR
DECORATING
IDEAS



07>

0 31946 08439 7

U.S. \$3.95 CANADA/FOREIGN \$4.95

A photograph of a modern interior space. In the foreground, a pool table with blue felt and a single yellow ball is visible. Behind it is a low cabinet with a yellow textured front and a dark top. On the cabinet are a blue jewelry box and a small white decorative object. Above the cabinet is a framed picture of a person on a beach. Large, white, teardrop-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The room is bright with light coming from windows on the sides.

SEA WORTHY

WILLIAM T. GEORGIS REINVENTS A TRADITIONAL SOUTHAMPTON BEACH HOUSE WITH VIVID, CONTEMPORARY INTERIORS THAT ENCOURAGE THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE



DESIGNER SAVVY Plush materials such as the fur carpeting temper the cool color palette. **TRADE SECRETS** FURNITURE Brunswick Anniversary billiard table, ca. 1945, from Senzatempo, Miami Beach. A/V credenza with glass top and caned doors, custom-designed by WTGA. Roche Bobois's chairs, from 1969, and Kappa coffee table, Gueridon, NYC. **FABRICS** Chairs upholstered in Spinneybeck's Sabrina white leather. Curtains are Rogers & Goffigon's Summerplace in Crème Fraîche. **ACCESSORIES** Honeycomb platter by Peter Lane Pottery, Troy, NYC.



DESIGNER SAVVY The transformed ballroom represents the striking dissonance of the interior and the exterior.

TRADE SECRETS **FURNITURE** Chairs and burled maple coffee table custom-designed by WTGA. **FABRICS** Chairs covered in Gretchen Bellinger's Yachting Cotton in Scrimshaw. **LIGHTS** French opaline glass pendants, ca. 1940, John Salibello Antiques, NYC. **RUG** Borego lamb by Patterson, Flynn & Martin. **ACCESSORIES** Handblown American glass teardrop bottles, ca. 1950, R 20th Century Design, NYC.

RECEIVED DESIGN WISDOM suggests that harmony between interior and exterior is a great virtue. Just ask Vitruvius, or Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, Jr. Certain houses, however, gain character, strength, and beauty through contrast. In the hands of skilled designers, dissonance can be a powerful tool.

Consider this oceanfront estate in Southampton, on the southern coast of New York's Long Island. Architect William T. Georgis's client, a European businessman with young children, loved the property—or, to be more specific, he loved the location, the scale, and the access to a prime stretch of Southampton beach. The residence itself was another matter.

Originally built as a coach house in the early twentieth century, the Georgian Revival structure was enlarged several times in the following decades, becoming ever more grand with each addition. The humble carriage house ultimately grew up to be an imposing manor, a model of traditional upper-crusty Hamptons propriety. And that was the problem: the staid, formal quality of the existing house seemed entirely incompatible with the adventurous spirit and progressive sensibility of Georgis's client.

"Our solution was to decorate against the grain of the architecture, to recalibrate the place so that it makes sense for a young bachelor and his children," explains Georgis, who worked on the assignment with interiors associate Joyce Louie, project architect William





“WE DECIDED TO CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE HOUSE BY REDOING THE INTERIORS ENTIRELY IN WHITE” —WILLIAM GEORGIS

McBarron, and landscape architect Mario Nievera of Mario Nievera Design. “We began by reconfiguring certain parts of the plan to accommodate our client’s casual style of living and entertaining.”

Georgis converted the formal dining room into a central entertainment zone with a dining table on one side and a casual lounge area on the other. The architect also transformed the second-floor ballroom into a private pleasure dome that can only be described as seriously sexy. With magnificent ocean views, the adult rumpus room features carpeting of plush white lamb, low-slung lounge chairs designed for sensual repose, and a mod pool table. This is a

club for committed sybarites; debutantes and stiff society matrons need not apply.

With only four months to complete the project—“You can’t postpone the start of the summer season,” Georgis laments—he tailored his design strategy for maximum expediency. “Every move we made was calculated for dramatic impact as well as efficiency. There was no time for major reconstruction, so we decided to change the character of the house by redoing the interiors entirely in white: white-stained wood floors, white walls, white fur carpets, and lots of white upholstery.” Presto change-o! Georgis’s whitewash did the trick. The

DESIGNER SAVVY The furnishings of the dining area, this page, have rigorous lines that still manage to work well with the casual lounge at the other end of the room. As with the portico, opposite page, the relaxed and the sophisticated are entirely compatible.

TRADE SECRETS **FURNITURE** Circular sunning lounger with a teak base, opposite page, custom-designed by WTGA. Fusion chaises in teak and stainless steel by Henry Hall Designs. Group 3 table in black walnut, this page, by David Schaefer for Schaefer Studio. Grand dining chairs in wenge finish by Homer, NYC. **FABRICS** Lounger in Gretchen Bellinger's Yachting Cotton. Chaise cushions in Sunbrella's Natural. Parachute fabric curtains by Henry B. Urban. **LIGHTING** Plaster chandelier, this page, purchased in Paris. Custom ceiling-mount fixture, opposite page, from Bevolo Gas & Electric Lights, New Orleans.





“OUR SOLUTION WAS TO DECORATE AGAINST THE GRAIN OF THE ARCHITECTURE, TO RECALIBRATE THE PLACE FOR A YOUNG BACHELOR AND HIS CHILDREN”
—WILLIAM GEORGIS

Southampton dowager was well on its way to becoming a bright young thing.

Of course, the house needed more than just a smart new coat and a few structural emendations to make its Cinderella story complete. Georgis decorated the place with a jaunty mix of vintage and custom furniture. Sleek twentieth-century designs mingle amicably with elements from Africa and Asia. Earthy pieces crafted of warm woods temper the cool white surroundings. The look is both playful and sophisticated—very much in keeping with the personality of Georgis’s high-profile client.

The architect’s interpretation of refined beach chic is underscored by an impressive collection of international contemporary photography. Assembled by art adviser Richard D. Marshall, the collection includes works by Nan Goldin, Vanessa Beecroft, Wolfgang Tillmans, Douglas Gordon, David Levinthal, Laurie Simmons, and Lynn Davis. Most of the images deal with nature or the human body, two relevant themes in a seaside house of leisure. “Another aspect of the collection focuses on images that are more conceptual, as opposed to strictly documentary,” Marshall says. “These photographs have an abstract,

painterly quality that suits the character of the house.”

In the end, timing once again proved to be everything. “Of all the projects I’ve worked on for this client, this one had the tightest schedule. Ultimately, I think the frantic pace worked in our favor. There’s nothing fussy or overwrought about this house,” Georgis concludes. “Besides, why go through the pain and expense of complicated surgery when you can get the job done with a thorough makeover?” ▶

DESIGNER SAVVY

The all-white environment creates a soothing atmosphere in the master bedroom suite.

TRADE SECRETS

FIXTURES Tara Classic faucet, Dornbracht.

FURNITURE Chaise, left, and bed and side tables, opposite page, custom by WTGA. **FABRICS** Chaise in a Holly Hunt linen velvet.

RUG Mongolian lamb, by Patterson, Flynn & Martin.

LAMPS 19th-century cloisonné vases, Treasures & Trifles, NYC.



