

FAMILY STYLE

Just blocks from the boardwalk in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, a vibrant weekend retreat blends memories old and new



The coffee table and seating on the screened porch are from Allegro Classics. The hanging chair is from Anthropologie. Opposite: The Sumner family on the Rehoboth Beach boardwalk





THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS time travel, of course, no fancy flying machine that can take you back to your childhood—those endless summers, the feeling of running barefoot through a sprinkler in the front yard. But when Meredith Sumner packs up the car each weekend and travels two hours from her Washington, D.C., home with husband Martin and three children in tow, she certainly feels transported back to another era. Everything in the seaside town of Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, looks almost exactly as it did when Meredith frequented it with her own parents many years ago. “It’s authentic Americana, with a boardwalk and lots of rides, and everybody on bicycles.”

There is one notable addition to Meredith’s Delaware vacations, though: the lovely Shaker-style home that she and Martin constructed on a prime plot just a few blocks from the Atlantic Ocean. “We were actively looking at houses, but we just couldn’t find anything that wowed us,” says Meredith. “When we found this property, we were immediately excited at the idea of getting to build exactly what we wanted, something



The walls are painted Palladian Blue, and the cabinetry is painted Alpine, both by Benjamin Moore. Opposite: The cedar home is just blocks from the beach.



that would work for our family.” Luckily, they already had a dream design team lined up to help bring their vision to life. The Sumners had recently worked with architect Chris Snowber and interior designer Liz Levin on renovations to their city home and knew they would be the ideal pair to tackle their beach town abode.

The mission was simple: to craft a light, bright house inspired by its coastal environment. Levin and Snowber developed the home’s open floor plan—with a joint dining room and kitchen area overlooking a cozy living space—and introduced natural materials such as wood, glass, stone, and cement for added depth and dimension. “The Sumners wanted a house that was warm and welcoming,” says Snowber. “So we were careful to find lots of ways to invite sun into the house. Even though the beach is a few blocks away, it almost feels as if you’re on the sand the minute that you step inside.”

That day-at-the-beach feeling is helped along by Levin’s careful curating of the furniture, textiles, and paint colors used throughout the interiors. An ethereal palette of sandy neutrals and dreamy watercolor blues recalls the ocean in the living room, allowing sleek silhouettes and interesting architectural details to take their turns in the spotlight. For example, the concrete fireplace surround is designed to mimic the look of driftwood, which provides handsome contrast to the midcentury-style sofas upholstered in rich linen.

“All of the different textures play off of each other really well,” Levin says. “There is a subtle layering that makes it feel as though everything here was collected over time.” And it’s an aesthetic approach that is especially effective for lending the home the character and gravitas necessary to fit in alongside its much older Rehoboth Beach neighbors.

The living room walls are painted White Sand by Benjamin Moore. The white lacquered console table is by Bungalow 5. Opposite: The driftwood table is by Roost.

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The walls in the master bedroom (left) are painted In Our Eyes, and the beds in son Wes's room (below) are painted Hale Navy, both by Benjamin Moore. Opposite: Daughter Charlotte reads on a built-in window seat in the girls' room. The fabric is by Holland & Sherry.



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TAKING FURTHER CUES FROM THE home’s surroundings, the adjoining kitchen and dining room borrow from the same seaside palette with lots of bright whites (which pop on the millwork and cabinetry), watery blues (on the walls and subway tile backsplash), and glass accents (like the oversize globe pendants). “We definitely wanted it to feel coastal and casual, but not kitschy,” says Levin. “It’s sophisticated, but it’s also a getaway. We didn’t want anything that felt like it was trying too hard.”

And while the designer continued her laid-back look upstairs, she also shook off the soft, subtle hues that prevailed on the first floor in favor of colorful bedrooms for each family member: bold coral for Mom and Dad; vibrant sunset shades for the Sumner girls, Grace and Charlotte; and nautical blue for the youngest boy, Wes. As a result, the spaces are both restful and cheery, capturing a sense of fun highlighted

by accents like curvy orange lamps, graphic Serena & Lily bedding, and oars painted bold primary colors hanging on the wall.

Much like the seaside weekends Meredith recalls from childhood, the house imparts a carefree and deeply personal vibe of summers at the beach. The family-centered spaces—like the fun-loving mudroom, complete with a cozy built-in banquette for the kids to squeeze into and stamped concrete tiles that she hunted down herself—are steeped in personality. There’s also a sunny, screened-in porch, which is designed around an eclectic hanging seat Meredith scored on a whim from Anthropologie and has become a beloved spot for the gang to gather. “For me, this house is about a feeling,” she says. “When I walk in, I’m instantly relaxed.”

For more information, see Sources, page 102.

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