

In a coastal Massachusetts house designed by Liliane Hart and Santa Barbara, California, architect Marc Appleton, shingled walls and sash windows create a traditional, porch-like ambience in the breakfast room. Linen window panels can be left loose for seaside views or pulled taut with hooks and grommets to shade against the sun. An antique American ship's lantern hangs from a beadboard ceiling in Benjamin Moore Crystal Blue. Artwork, Stan Murphy. Rug, Patterson Flynn Martin.



# NEW OLD SOUL

*Architectural quirks and character-rich decor give a brand-new house on the coast a timeless spirit and a carefree vibe.*



# THIS NEW HOUSE FEELS AS IF IT'S BEEN WATCHING THE TIDE FOR A CENTURY.

**MARC APPLETON:** Our client asked for the unpretentious, easygoing informality of an old Shingle Style place. She and her husband had spent many summers in a 19th-century house nearby and loved the accumulated layers of detail and patina. It wasn't winterized, though, and as their children neared college age, the owners wanted to vacation here year-round. The challenge was to create a comfortable all-season house that looked as if it had been built by anonymous locals, casually added onto, and happily lived in long before this family "found" it. Nothing could look precious or designed with a capital D.

**DOUGLAS BRENNER:** It certainly reads authentic—like someone's grandmother sewed those cushions, and their great-grandpa installed those picture windows after the war.

**LILIANE HART:** A lot of that hand-me-down atmosphere comes from Marc's seamless use of reclaimed materials and traditional millwork. For my part, I tried to create interiors that feel as though they were collected and decorated over several generations. Because I grew up in this area of New England, I was comfortable mixing different styles and balancing practicality with quirkiness. Most of the furniture is antique, even the upholstery, which we simply re-covered or left as is. My client and I searched for furnishings from Massachusetts to England and Scotland. Besides hunting for wicker, oak, and vintage fabrics, we scouted period plumbing and lighting fixtures. Luckily, we found an amazing local artisan-plumber who's truly a historian of faucets and porcelain. A fabulous old tub or scone gives special character to a room.

**Was it hard to compete with those stunning views?**

**LH:** The client really wanted the interiors to be a backdrop to the view—a complement, not a distraction. Window treatments are very minimal. Even the master bath has an ocean view! We

stayed true to her vision by using plenty of whites, sandy colors, watery blues, and natural wood tones. Because the family room has a second focus in addition to the picture window—a wonderful, wide fireplace—we arranged two seating areas, separated by chairs that can turn either way for flexibility. The grouping with a wing chair near the mantel feels more wintry to me, while the low-slung sofa under the windows says "summer." We made it 12 feet long so two people can relax toe to toe, reading or looking out.

**You've placed the ocean at the head of the long dining-room table.**

**LH:** Actually, my favorite moment is the tiny table tucked beside the window. It's romantic to imagine my client sitting there in the morning—hugged by an Orkney chair and having coffee with her husband. The sea-glass colors of the wallpaper are so pretty coming off the view. The oak-leaf pattern is a nod to the native trees that stretch far beyond the porch, and the hand-blocked paper has a painterly irregularity.

**MA:** I love Shingle Style architecture for its imperfections. It's not rigid; it's not classical. Even when there's symmetry, what's intriguing are the things that are slightly off. A lot of different elements are welcome to live together. This really is a house where the dog runs in and out. You can put your feet up on the coffee table.

**LH:** I'm lucky to have a client who wants to see the linen wrinkled, and who believes that the texture of a hand-woven rug matters more than a little wear and tear. We worked the old-fashioned way, picking pieces because we loved them, without knowing exactly where they might go. Everything didn't get delivered at once for a big *ta-da*. We brought furniture in and played around before settling on the right spot for it.

**Does this open-endedness encourage future beachgoers to leave their own marks on the house?**

**MA:** A home like this one isn't some jewel box that will be ruined if somebody decides to make alterations to the layout one day. It's doing its best to charm the people who live here now, and later it will have another life for the next generation.



PHOTOGRAPHER MATT WALLA (EXTERIOR)



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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Lush plantings and rustic stonework visually link the pool terrace to coastal terrain. In the family room, antique wicker drinks caddies pull up to vintage Paolo Buffa armchairs; a sofa from Drennan Edinburgh was covered in a Sanderson fabric, and a pair of 19th-century Howard & Sons armchairs have slipcovers in prewashed ticking. The breakfast room features 18th-century pottery on a 1940s French gueridon. The family room was designed to “feel collected over time,” notes Hart; the custom Dmitriy & Co. sofa is in a Castel fabric, and the Victorian wing chair is from Drennan Edinburgh; the rug is by Elizabeth Eakins.





**RIGHT:** Hart designed the dining room to be flexible: At holidays, the family and their guests can gather around the 10-foot-long Early American table. Meanwhile, Hart placed a pair of 1920s Orkney chairs at the picture window so that the owners can enjoy their morning coffee with a view of the water. **OPPOSITE:** On the back porch, Hart assembled a set of Bar Harbor wicker furniture from Corner House Antiques. Pillows in a Twigs glazed chintz rest on cushions covered in a Janus et Cie performance fabric. Lightweight “floating” reed chairs are easily moved around as needed. Remnants from fabrics used indoors cover the mismatched cushions.







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Airy hand-blocked Marthe Armitage Oakleaf wallpaper in the dining room sets off a 1920s English ladder-back chair, an Edwin Dickinson oil painting, and a toile sconce. The master bathroom's deep 1890s J.L. Mott Iron Works tub (complete with original hardware and bun feet) came out of a New Jersey beach house; cotton rug from Agra, India, from Doris Leslie Blau. On the breakfast-room sofa, pillows in an indigo floral fabric and a Kathryn M. Ireland stripe lean against an antique suzani. The stair landing doubles as a sitting room and scenic overlook.



The sloped eave clipping a master-bedroom window frame exemplifies the tongue-in-cheek oddities that Appleton and partner Andrew Scott devised to suggest the mak-dos of some bygone carpenter. Sanderson's Mirande fabric freshens up an antique slipper chair. An Elizabeth Eakins rug enhances the cottagey mood, revealing hand-hewn floors. The walls and ceiling are in Benjamin Moore White Heron; the trim is White Dove. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES