
HOME

SUMMER LOVE

Turn the page to see four vacation homes that pair style with function, including this one by Jamie Merida Interiors.





A trifecta of patterns in wallpaper (Schumacher) and textiles (Manuel Canovas, Pindler) are connected by a red-green-and-blue palette.

Four Vacation Homes We Love

From a lake-house compound to a quiet bayside cottage, these summer homes are tailored for the rhythms of beach and lake life

By Charlotte Safavi

A Beach House in Rehoboth

When a Potomac couple with four daughters hired Barbara Noguera to redesign the main floor of their 3,500-square-foot summer house in Delaware, the designer drew inspiration from the colorful scenery of the beachfront town in Puerto Rico where she grew up. “My clients love bold colors and wanted the space to be better suited to entertaining,” says the owner of Barbara Noguera Interiors in DC.

She first eliminated the excessive mill-work throughout the main floor, including painted vertical wall panels, indoor plantation shutters, and fussy built-ins. Then she opened up the floor plan—the once-choppy kitchen, which used to be cut off from the dining room, now lies in a clean-lined L shape that’s open to the rest of the space, with a large functional island. Seating and gathering options abound.

Next, Noguera layered fun colors against the new neutral background of grass-cloth



Cabinets painted Benjamin Moore “Harbor Haze” and Tangier’s zellige backsplash tiles in “Moroccan Sky” bring the ocean to the kitchen.

Sliding glass doors at this Dewey Beach condo connect the kitchen to the outdoors for effortless hosting around a table from Williams Sonoma Home.



A double-sided sectional in a Kravet fabric maximizes flexibility on the open floor plan.



A rift-cut white-oak built-in provides a drop-off zone for going to and from the beach.

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walls and white-shiplap ceilings, from the light-aqua kitchen cabinetry to a bubblegum-pink sectional in the living room. But the most charming space is undoubtedly the tiny TV room/den, featuring a custom, extra-deep, wall-to-wall striped sofa, a pair of laminated-print ottomans, and vibrant tropical wallpaper.

“Color is powerful and affects emotion,” says Noguera, whose goal was to use it to bring joy into the space while improving function. “Ultimately, I want you to step into your home and smile.”

A Custom Condo in Dewey Beach

Combining two townhouses into one home with a seamless layout was a unique opportunity, says interior designer Jodi Berger of JLA Designs in Rockville, referring to a complete redesign she did with architect Greg Hastings in the Seagate ocean-block condo community in Dewey Beach.

The resulting 4,500-square-foot residence features seven bedrooms, each with its own en suite bath; an open layout on the main level featuring white-oak floors and

custom built-ins; and a wall of glass doors in the kitchen that opens the entire space up to an indoor-outdoor dining area and lounge.

The Rockville homeowners, a husband and wife, have three college- and high-school-age children who enjoy spending their summers with friends at the beach. (The surf is steps away via a communal private beach access.) With the literal nitty-gritty of oceanside living in mind, Berger opted for dual washer-dryers in the spacious laundry room and included a mudroom as a second transitional

Low-profile Wesley Hall swivel chairs in a Thibaut vertical stripe create the illusion of height but don't block views of Broadkill Beach.



Bleached-wood Uttermost stools with caned sides add a coastal spin to this cottage-style kitchen.



space. Both serve as “easy drop zones for sandy items after the beach,” the designer says.

The first floor also houses a kitchen and a living/dining space, the primary suite is on the second level, and the third floor includes the kids’ suites—all affording a degree of privacy among the generations.

“Our overall design [goal] was to create a light, airy, contemporary home, with a subtle nod to the beach environment,” says Berger. Still, it is the beach, so the clean-lined furniture was chosen with intention: “We prioritized durability, incorporating performance fabrics and resilient materials that can withstand moisture, sand, and the natural wear that comes with a beachside environment and an active family.”

A Bayfront Cottage on Broadkill Beach

There was a reason two empty-nesters chose a prime yet unspoiled location at Broadkill Beach, adjacent to Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, for their vacation home.

“Our clients are not big entertainers—they wanted a very quiet, serene weekend escape, a place to relax and read, have intimate dinners, sip coffee or a cocktail on the porch,” says Jamie Merida of Easton’s Jamie Merida Interiors, who worked with lead designer Leigh Mayhew on the charming cottage. “They deliberately didn’t want to be in the hustle and bustle of, say, Bethany or Rehoboth.”

Though the home originally sported orange shag carpets; a massive stone fireplace; knotty-pine walls and ceilings; and a choppy layout, Merida and local contractor Todd Valentine set out on an extensive renovation to create a clutter-free coastal design “with a touch of nautical, but nothing too beachy.” He and Mayhew opened up the floor plan by removing non-load-bearing walls, then added a pair of glassed-in porches to the main living space, which created a fishbowl effect offering Delaware Bay views for miles. The designers chose a crisp blue-and-white palette and transitional-style cottage furnishings,

says Merida, with low-maintenance textiles including performance fabrics, leather, and indoor-outdoor rugs. Caned and woven elements add organic texture, while geometric patterns in accent pieces lend visual interest—all selected to not detract from the water-front scenery.

Says Merida: “The design was about maximizing the amazing views and creating an easy-to-maintain sanctuary.”

A Family Compound on Lake Anna

When the house next door came up for sale, a McLean family of seven—who had been summering at their second home on Virginia’s Lake Anna for years—didn’t hesitate. They bought the property, creating a compound, with a total of ten bedrooms on two lakefront acres, ideal for gatherings of family and friends.

Carrie Armstrong of Lapis Ray Interiors in Reston set about giving the spaces a fresh look that was authentic to the lake setting without being overly themey. Bathrooms and bedrooms were revamped—including what became a family-centric bunk room in the main house with a set of built-in bunk beds and a queen bed, plus a teen-friendly room in the second house with four bunks.

Armstrong says that when designing vacation homes, where stays are typically shorter and primarily in the summer, she encourages clients to embrace a more playful, expressive design—a “perfect opportunity to introduce bold, memorable choices that people might hesitate to use in a full-time residence.”

Woven and caned furniture, lake-inspired art, and texture were brought in throughout both houses. The palettes remained neutral—with yellow, blue, and green accents—to keep eyes trained on the lake views. It wasn’t all about aesthetics, Armstrong says: “With all the lake watersports and boating excursions, we made sure to be practical with indoor-outdoor furnishings that could hold up to the wear and tear of an active lake life.”

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A neutral palette, including walls in “Snowbound” by Sherwin Williams, keeps the focus on Lake Anna views.



The homeowners opted for steps to the upper bunks rather than ladders. Osborne & Little’s shoji vinyl grasscloth wallpaper is easy to wipe clean.

