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# BEST DRESSED

A STYLISH HOUSE ON THE NEW JERSEY SHORE STRIKES A TRICKY BALANCE BETWEEN PLAYFUL AND POLISHED, ELEGANT AND EASY—WITHOUT CHASING TRENDS OR TRYING TOO HARD

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■ **Living room** Architect Laura Glantz created spots where a crew can gather, as well as “away spaces,” as she calls them, where people can retreat. Pocket doors behind the fireplace wall can separate the living room from the sunroom for privacy and noise reduction.





■ **Entry** The Tudor arch of the entry is one of many architectural moments sprinkled throughout the house. Fittings were approached with an edited perspective, including a curved railing made of blond wood in the ivory-hue foyer. **Living room** Glossy beams float over plump upholstery. **Powder room** European white oak paneling clads the walls. **Office** An arched doorway reveals a third-floor workspace. **Nook** Playfully swooped walls give elegant shape to a small seating area. **Hallway** A shiplap wall offers a linear contrast to a graceful wood console and an antique Belgian chair.



It's an extraordinary outfit that can go from the office to dinner, then end up at the beach—looking just as fresh and fashionable in one place as in the next. Designers Dana Bergman Falcione and Erica Vassalotti of Bergman Vass Interiors encountered a dress that could do it all—and inspired this home's design. Said wonder garment glided into their Pennsylvania office for a meeting—their client was wearing it, the very client for whom they were decorating a New Jersey home. Fresh from lunch, the client wore an off-white cotton shirtdress whose crisp silhouette was softened by a floral print. The designers were smitten. “We asked her to bring it to another meeting,” Falcione

says, “and we used it to create her home's spirit.” That explains why this home, just steps from the ocean, walks that fine line between breezy and buttoned-up in the same way the owner's chic shirtdress did. The coastal beauty is as well-suited for work (there's a wood-paneled office for calls and meetings on the third floor) as it is for dinner (with finely appointed kitchens both inside and out) as for the beach (just look at those ocean views). “Being casual was important,” Vassalotti says. “The homeowners wanted the house to feel special and collected—to have all those elevated moments in the design—but with an approachability.”

The design team included architect Laura Glantz and builder Winfield Developers, who obliged with a striking home that caters to the owners' adult children and their families. Each of the three floors boasts three bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms. “The bedrooms are clustered closer to each other and away from the public spaces via their own hallway,” Glantz says. Pocket doors allow the bedroom wings to be closed off. “It feels private and cuts down on noise from people who are still in the family room,” she says. The house has sweeping views of the water, so naturally wall-to-wall windows were part of the plan. On the ground



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—architect Laura Glantz*



**Sunroom** A colorful abstract painting on the sunroom side crowns the double-facing fireplace. Rugs throughout the house are a coir-wool blend: low-maintenance, textured, and soft on bare toes. **Kitchen** Butcher blocks on each side of the sink offer space outside the main cooking zone for several family members to help prep.



■ **Kitchen** Danby marble from Vermont stretches across the backsplash and island, which is long enough to seat several people who might want to keep the chefs company—or at least have a drink while dinner is cooking. The oxidized nickel finish of the new light fixtures injects a vintage industrial feel.





■ **Primary suite** The primary bedroom makes use of the angled rooflines, adding a layer of interest to the minimally outfitted room. A modern bed and bedside lamps contrast curvy tables. Nickel-gap paneling climbs along the walls and ceiling of the adjoining bathroom. **Guest rooms** One guest room has floor-to-ceiling closets with shutter-style doors; a wavy headboard spans the width of the wall. Another is dressed in a hand-block floral wallpaper pattern echoed on the bed's lumbar pillow. A third guest room is wrapped in wallpaper that depicts ships as a nod to the nearby water.







*Our client loves rattan, and its combination*

# WITH INTERESTING SHAPES BROUGHT A SPIRIT

*to the home. —designer Erica Vassalotti*

floor, where the family room accesses the backyard, the “windows” are glass doors that slide and tuck into the corner, opening up the entire room to the covered patio, pool, and sea breezes beyond.

Rather than compete with the view, Falcione and Vassalotti went with stylish neutrals in the public spaces. The fabrics, rugs, and furniture are effervescent, thanks to the textures of rattan and cane, savvy use of subtle stripes, and accent furnishings in sculptural shapes, such as

two swoopy armchairs in the family room and open-weave dining chairs on the patio. “Our client loves rattan, and its combination with interesting shapes brought a spirit to the home,” Vassalotti says. “We played with shape a lot and did a lot of repetitive rounds,” including round lamps, curves on chairs, and round pillows for the sofa.

The house’s beauty has plenty of brawn too. Every inch of the upholstery and flooring was chosen to stand up to the

elements. “All those interior fabrics are indoor-outdoor or performance fabrics,” Falcione says. “We do a lot of work at the shore, so we’re used to being practical about sand and things getting wet. Interesting shapes in the pillows and furniture make it feel really elevated, even though the actual fabric and materials are really practical.”

The checkerboard flooring was “another thing we obsessed over,” she says. “We wanted it to look old and be

durable, and we wanted to find the perfect shades of gray and white marble.” The gray tiles, which tend to look a little blue, extend to the covered patio, further blurring the lines between indoors and out. The family room is the first space you see upon entering the house, and your gaze goes all the way out to the water.

Furnishings and accessories hail from all over the globe: The sinuous rattan armchairs are Italian, the upholstery is American, the side tables came from a

■ **Family room** The family room supports a bounty of action. It shows off a seating area with a modern tailored sofa and sculptural Italian armchairs. A custom pool table transforms for table tennis. A bar straddles the indoors and out. **Exterior dining area** A built-in grill offers an alternative to indoor cooking. Outdoor chairs in a stunning arabesque weave gather around the dining table as yet another example of the designers using playful shapes to elevate the scheme.

plaster manufacturer on Etsy, and the bar lamps are antiques from France. In all, the designers drew from more than 100 vendors to outfit the house. “It puts together such an interesting space that feels collected over time,” Vassalotti says.

The result is a sparkling new home with the character and soul of something older, a house that’s hosted a crowd, weathered a few storms, and stood strong while families grew. “This house feels very traditional, but its timelessness is what you

notice first,” Glantz says. “It’s elegant and sophisticated with its palette, but also livable and casual.”

The impact is clear. “We always say it feels like you’re being embraced when you walk through the home,” Vassalotti says. “It’s like a warm hug. We’ve heard from people that it’s like nothing they’ve ever seen before. It’s a new point of view.” A very fashionable one at that. ■

**Interior design** Dana Bergman Falcione and Erica Vassalotti **Architecture** Laura Glantz