

BY THE SEA

NEW WAVE



A FRESH TAKE ON COASTAL CHIC SHOWCASES COOL HUES AND RICH PATINAS.

Design by **TOMMY SMYTHE** and **LINDSAY MENS CRAIG**

Text by **JEREMY FREED** | Photography by **VIRGINIA MACDONALD**



In the sitting room, designers Tommy Smythe and Lindsay Mens Craig took inspiration from the home's seaside location in Connecticut with textural elements such as an antique steamer trunk turned coffee table and soft furnishings in varying patterns and shades of blue and white. **Star pendant**, Residential Lighting Studio; **bench**, Christie Antique & Vintage Show; **bench upholstery fabric**, Bilbrough & Co.; **sofas**, Sarah Richardson Design; **white table lamp** (background), Primavera. **OPPOSITE**: "The first time we walked the property with the homeowner, we fell in love with this house," says Tommy (pictured with Lindsay Mens Craig). He was immediately taken by the century-old home's white clapboard exterior.

Produced by Meg Crossley



STEPS FROM LONG ISLAND SOUND and boasting views of the water, this century-old Colonial Revival home in Connecticut has a charmingly maritime feel. When its longtime owners decided to update the interior three years ago, they turned to Tommy Smythe and Lindsay Mens Craig of Sarah Richardson Design, whose work they had admired in the pages of *H&H*. The result is a refreshing take on classic coastal style.

Q&A

HOUSE & HOME: *How did you approach this design?*

TOMMY SMYTHE: When we start any project, one of the first things we do is look out the window to see what we see. It may seem counterintuitive to *interior* design but, in every case, the view at least partially informs the colour palette.

H&H: *How did that translate in this case?*

TS: The home has a really special location. It's about 15 metres from the breakwall, and it's so close to the water that, when you're in the upstairs rooms, you almost feel like you're on a boat. There's an incredible view of the ocean and the skies that changes with the storms and the sunsets. All the colours we used in the house were derived from the sand, the sky, the grass and the sea.

H&H: *What else helped to convey a sense of place?*

LINDSAY MENS CRAIG: The finishes we picked. The fabrics we used are cotton or linen, so they feel relaxed. The wood finishes aren't high-gloss, and the antiques have a story behind them but don't feel too precious.

TS: Sarah Richardson always says that if you can't be in a waterfront house in bare feet and



LEFT: Despite steering away from typical nautical themes, Tommy and Lindsay allowed themselves a gallery wall of seafaring prints along the stairway. In mismatched frames, these images add maritime charm. **Stair runner**, J&D Oriental Rugs Co.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT: Tommy and Lindsay scoured antique markets to source furniture and accessories like the living room's bamboo armoire. The pieces are perfect in their imperfection. "They have a soul and a history, and it's OK if they get more wear," says Lindsay. "You don't want to have to tiptoe around." **Armoire**, Cristina's Antiques.

Combining an eclectic array of classic furniture styles such as a gilded Rococo-style chair and tailored sofas delivers a refined yet easygoing feel. **Sofas, high-back skirted chair, chaise**, Sarah Richardson Design; **high-back skirted chair upholstery fabric**, Y&Co.; **chaise upholstery fabric**, Primavera. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Slate grey tiles in the breakfast room call to mind a stormy sea and balance cheerful sunshine yellow accents in the upholstery and lamps. **Sideboard**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **dining table**, Sharon O'Dowd Custom Furniture; **dining chairs**, John Rosselli Antiques; **armchairs, lantern**, Greenwich Living Antiques & Design Centre; **floor tile**, Saltillo Imports.



"We were mindful of not over-renovating the house," says Tommy of the decision to turn one small window above the kitchen sink into two larger ones, which opened up the wall space they needed to place the appliances in more logical positions. "Little things like that made big impacts." **Stools**, TK Collections; **wall tile**, Saltillo Imports; **cabinetry**, Hanford Cabinet & Woodworking; **cabinetry hardware**, The Door Store; **roman blind fabric**, Primavera; **pendants**, Vaughan Designs. **OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT**: New warm wood floors, a worn antique runner and brass hardware in the kitchen offset the coolness of the white cabinetry and grey countertops. A variety of similar-but-different lantern-style light fixtures helps demarcate each zone. Custom **vent hood**, Beaver Creek Metal; **runner**, J&D Oriental Rugs Co.; **flush-mount light fixtures**, Visual Comfort.





The butler's pantry just off the kitchen features a handsome hutch filled with beautiful dishware. **Hutch**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **rug**, J&D Oriental Rugs Co.; **dishes**, Cynthia Findlay Antiques.



wet bathing suits, you haven't done your job as a designer! This project was all about practical living and comfort without sacrificing refinement. You can put your feet up on the sofas because they're covered in white denim. The house has an air of sophistication, but it feels casual at the same time.

H&H: Did you consciously focus on nautical style?

LMC: We wanted to suggest nautical style without overdoing it so, instead of sailing motifs and seagulls, we chose things like the wallpaper for the entrance hall. It's evocative of stormy skies at sea, but it's not thematic.

H&H: Do you have a favourite moment in the house?

TS: The entrance is mine. The mix of antiques and the dramatic wallpaper immediately establish a connection to the area. You know when you walk through the door that you're in New England.

H&H: How did the homeowners react?

LMC: They were really pleased! I think their reaction was partly due to their desire to be surprised a little bit. That was fun for us, too. **H&H**

RIGHT: To maximize the owners' enjoyment of the space, Tommy and Lindsay divided one large formal dining room into two sitting areas, using contrasting rugs to give each its own distinct feel.

Rug (foreground), Y&Co.; **drapery fabric**, Ralph Lauren for Kravet.

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An antique carved wooden shell above the fireplace mantel in the den is a standout piece in a home full of one-of-a-kind finds. "It doesn't just speak to the oceanside location but also to craftsmanship, age, soul and that kind of new nautical flavour," says Tommy. **Drapery and roman blind fabric**, Y&Co.; **grasscloth wallpaper** by Schumacher, Bilbrough & Co.; **trim colour**, Charcoal Slate (HC-178), Benjamin Moore.



THE NEW COASTAL CHIC: 5 WAYS TO GET THE LOOK WITHOUT GOING OVERBOARD

- 1 FOLLOW THE RAINBOW.** In addition to classic blues and seafoams, a wide range of colours including pastel pink, slate grey and seagrass green can look just as coastal.
- 2 BE BRASSY.** Warm metals such as brass and bronze help balance cool greys and blues while adding a subtle maritime feel.
- 3 GO MATTE.** Glossy finishes can sometimes be at odds with a relaxed, seaside vibe. Instead, opt for weathered antiques, soft linen upholstery and patinated finishes.
- 4 EARN YOUR STRIPES.** A judicious use of stripes in wallpaper and upholstery can add whimsy to a room while evoking the classic sailor's tunic.
- 5 COMFORT IS KEY.** Deep sofas and chairs, plenty of small tables and blankets to pull over your legs on cool evenings are important elements.



LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT: A charming guest bedroom is tied together by shades of white and blue inspired by the sea and sky. **Drapery fabric,** Primavera; **wallpaper,** Farrow & Ball; **mattress fabric,** Lee Jofa; **plates,** Cynthia Findlay Antiques. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The blue hue of the vanity in this second-floor guest bathroom complements the warm-toned mirror trim, hardware and faucets. **Mirror, sconces,** Hamptons Antique Galleries; **faucet,** RH.



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— Tommy Smythe, designer



The principal bedroom takes its colour cues from the garden. The floral linen drapery fabric was used in reverse, to give it a faded, watercolour quality. Because the bedroom has windows on three sides, the designers used cooler tones to balance the plentiful summer sunshine. **Draperies**, Lee Jofa; **dressers**, Ribbehege & Azevedo; **rug**, J&D Oriental Rugs Co.; **table lamps**, **sconce**, The Antique and Artisan Gallery; **wall colour**, Clunch (2009), Farrow & Ball.



TOP LEFT: Soft, unfussy surfaces give the home a luxe comfort. **Sofa, chaise**, Sarah Richardson Design; **chaise upholstery fabric**, Primavera. **TOP RIGHT:** Sunsets and sandy beach pinks inspired this bedroom. Striped **grasscloth**, Kravet Canada; **bench**, Christie Antique & Vintage Show; **armchair** by Lee Industries, Cocoon Furnishings. **CENTRE RIGHT:** The main floor powder room's wallpaper and vanity are striking. **Wallpaper**, Farrow & Ball; **faucet**, The Rubinet Faucet Company. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Moody hues in the den are a welcome contrast to the rest of the home. **Sofa**, Sarah Richardson Design; **sofa upholstery fabric**, Bilbrough & Co. **BOTTOM LEFT:** "Using brass hardware throughout the home was both fashion-driven and made sense for the style and age of the house," says Lindsay. **Washstand, faucet**, RH; **wall colour**, Pink Ground (202), Farrow & Ball. **CENTRE LEFT:** A stunning rug complements the entryway's antiques and accents. **Rug**, Woven Treasures.

