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New Wave

A Charlestown contemporary takes its cues from the ocean, with surprisingly sleek results.

By Dana Laverty Photography by Morten Smidt

The home is tilted slightly upward to take advantage of water views.



A glossy white kitchen features warm oak floors and kitchen cabinets. The white oak table is Design Within Reach; a golden Flos pendant light echoes the late-summer sun.
BELOW: The three-level home sits on the highest point of the property.



James Hardie siding that echoes the bark of the many nearby trees. “It’s quite a dramatic house,” Jefferys says. “It looks like it’s flying over the ground.”

She’s especially fond of the entryway and how it intersects with the home’s two main wings, which contain an adult bedroom and office suite on one side and the children’s bedrooms and bath on the other.

“You walk into this double-height space with a floating staircase and a glass door and window mirrored by a huge glass window looking out,” she says. “It’s a dramatic moment — it’s a simple, beautiful, light connector between the two wings.”

The wide, open-plan ground floor is tied together by white oak floors and a wall of Andersen windows and doors that lets the sun stream in.

“Big windows are a signature design aspect of our work,” Jefferys says. “They capture the light and the boundary between the exterior and interior starts to blur. It really brings nature into the space.”

A glossy white kitchen island, ringed by warm oak cabinets, reflects that light. A white oak table is Design Within Reach; a golden Flos pendant light echoes the late-summer sun. In the living area, a poured concrete fireplace — a nod to the rocks that surround the home — rises to the ceiling, completing the connection to



ABOVE: Floating stairs lead to the upper bedroom wings, with one area for the children and one for the owner. BELOW: Large Andersen windows and doors allow natural sunlight to flow into the open living and dining area.

When one thinks of a beach house, modern and sleek aren’t usually the first descriptors that come to mind.

But that’s exactly what a Charlestown resident envisioned when he asked New York City-based architect Sarah Jefferys to design his dream home, nestled into a woodsy two-acre lot with a view of the ocean beyond. He wanted something contemporary and bright, a landing pad where he and his four adult children could gather and be surrounded by nature.

“He didn’t find anything that suited his aesthetics when looking for homes,” Jefferys says. “So he wanted a custom house designed for him and his needs and aesthetics.”

A napkin held his initial design inspiration: a long, thin bar.

That was in 2018. Jefferys and her team started work in 2019 and wrapped up in 2021, after two rounds of construction with a pause in the middle thanks to — what else? — the COVID shutdown.

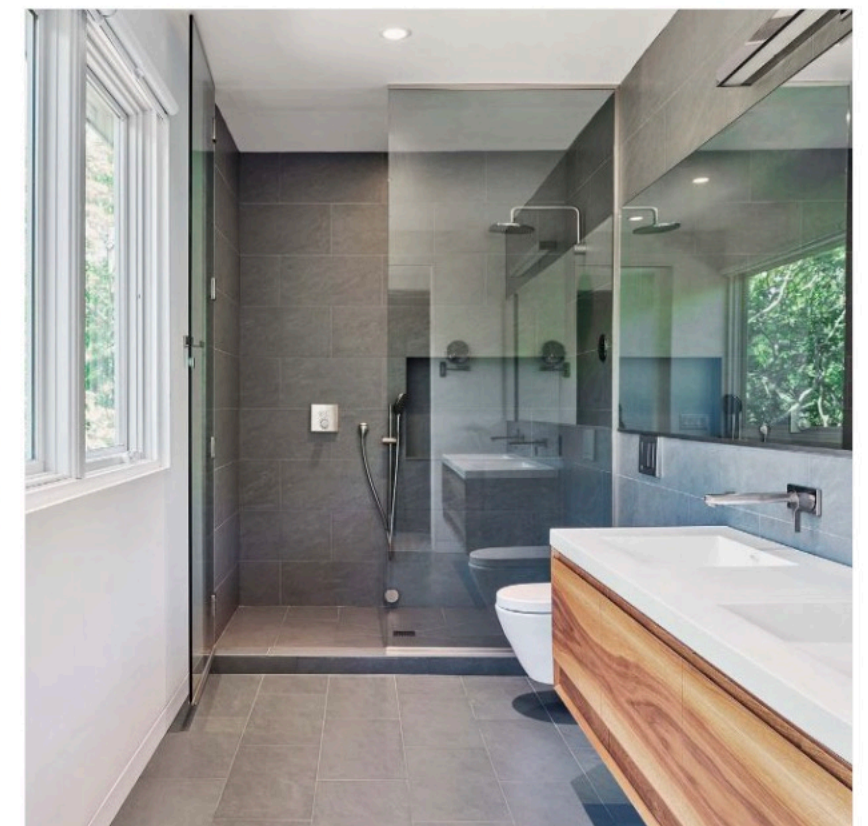
A Dramatic Design

Jefferys situated the home on the highest point of land, overlooking a gorgeous meadow and conservation area.

The bottom level of the 3,800-square-foot structure, which has four beds and four bathrooms, is light concrete, making it look as though it’s anchored to the earth.

She raised the ground floor up one level to take advantage of the ocean views, with a dramatic raised entrance on the second floor. The second and third levels almost look as if they’re floating, thanks to the dark gray





THIS PAGE: Custom-made stairs in the master bedroom lead to a private rooftop deck; the master bath features Stone Source tiles; an outdoor seating area. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sleek built-in shelving and cabinets provide plenty of storage space.

nature along with a low-slung Giorgio Soressi sectional and lounge chair in muted shades of gray and black.

A large deck runs along the length of the space, essentially turning the indoor and outdoor areas into a spacious three-season room when the glass doors are thrown open during the warmer months.

Jefferys, who's known for her modern and minimal designs, is based in Manhattan but has a summer home in Middletown. So she almost intrinsically knew how to design a warm coastal retreat for her client.

The bedroom wings on the upper level are just that: private, cozy and spa-like. A focal wall in the master bedroom is done in sage green, reflecting the serene wooded atmosphere just outside the window. A custom-made partial stairwell cleverly doubles as shelving and leads to a private rooftop deck.

"It's a lovely space with beautiful views of Block Island," she says. "It's his haven. He loves to entertain out there, have cocktails out there."

It has full sunlight all day, also making it a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee or watch the evening sun dip low under the horizon.

The master bath is a study in serenity, with Stone Source tiles that mimic the stone walls ringing the parcel, an oversized steam shower and a his-and-her vanity by Wetstyle. The children's bath is done in glass tile in azure hues, replicating the glassiness of the ocean.

Next up is crafting a pool and pool house to complete the project. That work should start in the spring.

It will be the crowning touch to a home that had its beginnings in a napkin scrawl and grew into a coastal retreat that takes its soothing, modern design cues from the world just outside its walls.

The owner, Jefferys says, could not be happier.

"He adores the house," she says. "He loves it. Occasionally I'll get texts saying, 'I love this house — this is so perfect for me.'" 