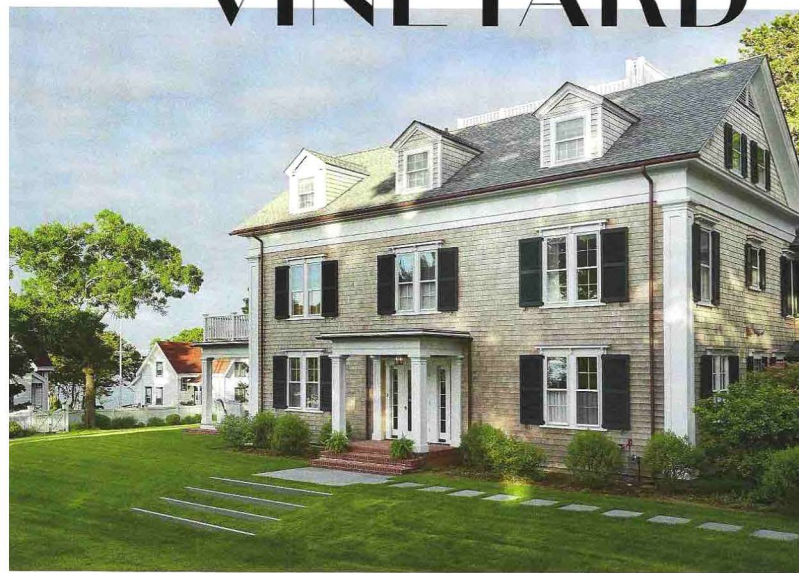




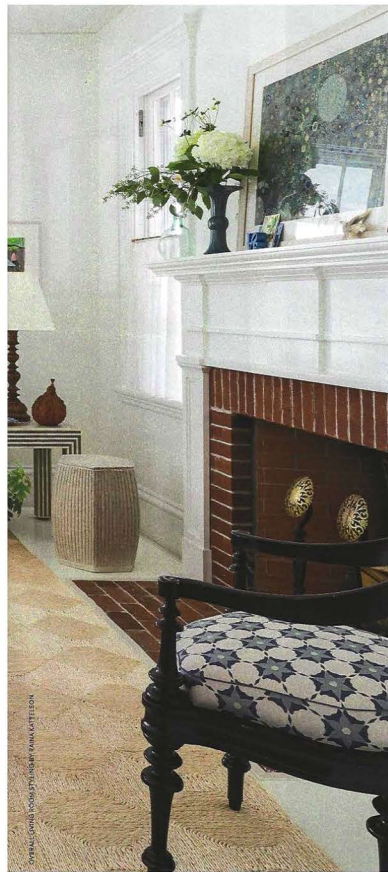
ESCAPE *to the* VINEYARD



In a historic shingled retreat on Martha's Vineyard, **Markham Roberts** mixes mellow beach house funk with the collected familiarity of home.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY **MARKHAM ROBERTS** • ARCHITECTURE BY **ANDREW HERDEG**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NELSON HANCOCK** • WRITTEN BY **CELIA BARBOUR**

Sumptuous upholstered seating designed by Roberts, including a leafy chaise (opposite), balances elegance with ease in the living room. Walls and trim, Snowfall White by Benjamin Moore



A SUMMER HOUSE IS A PARADOX of sorts, combining the freedom and novelty of being on vacation with the familiarity of home. For one New York City–based family with a house on Martha’s Vineyard, it’s also a place where time slows down, allowing small moments to resonate. “We’re apartment dwellers for much of the year, so we wind up experiencing a lot of important life events here,” says the owner. “It plays a central role for us.”

Think of it as a part-time residence with year-round virtue, which called for both fullness and ease in its design. What it didn’t call for, says interior designer Markham Roberts, was a clean-slate, start-from-scratch beginning. Rather he wove together elements from past and present, here and there, that were reflective of the house—a shingled three-story beauty—and his amiable history with the couple. Which goes back a ways.

As newlyweds they had been among the first to hire him when he was just starting out, some 90 years ago. Since then his star has risen, but their connection has remained strong—and those early purchases from the just-married apartment? They had been sitting in storage for a decade, waiting for a fresh opportunity. So into the Martha’s Vineyard entry hall came a Saarinen table, Georgian settee, and wire chandelier, newly radiant against an ebullient backdrop of custom citrine Schumacher paper and fresh white paint. Rescued from storage, too, were the family room table, revived with a coat of cinnabar-red lacquer, and an accompanying banquette, reupholstered to suit.



ABOVE: Plum lampshades bring rich contrast to parrot-green wallpaper (Lisa Fine Textiles). Globe light, Noguchi

RIGHT AND OPPOSITE: A dashing breakfast nook (banquette fabric, Perennials) tucks into a corner of a laid-back kitchen and family room. Indigo sofa fabric, Cowtan & Tout. Coffee table and kitchen lighting, Serena & Lily



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—INTERIOR DESIGNER
MARKHAM ROBERTS

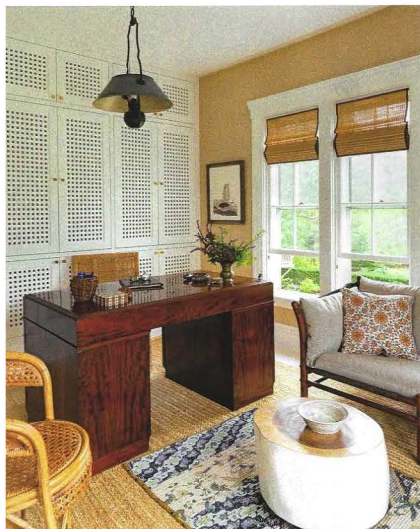


Still other items came with the house. Island tradition values repurposing objects rather than ferrying them to and from the mainland, so large pieces from previous owners—like the dining table and the *escritoire* in the main bedroom—remained to be mixed with new elements such as ultracomfortable upholstered pieces and fabric-and-grass cloth-clad walls. “The rooms don’t have a lot of stuff in them—they’re charming and quirky, like a beach house should be,” says Roberts, “so I wanted to use materials with impact.”

To welcome in additional light and logic, the owners turned to architect Andrew Herdige, who rebuilt the kitchen, added a screened porch and breezeway, and realigned and opened up the interiors. A newly created viewshed, for example, means you can now see from

the kitchen at the back of the house straight through the front porch to the ocean beyond. “We want to connect people with landscapes around them,” says the architect. Thus, too, the subtlety of the modern screened porch: “Its columns are very thin, to emphasize the ocean views,” says Herdige, “and the dark-stained wood allows it to recede, so the traditional architecture comes forward.”

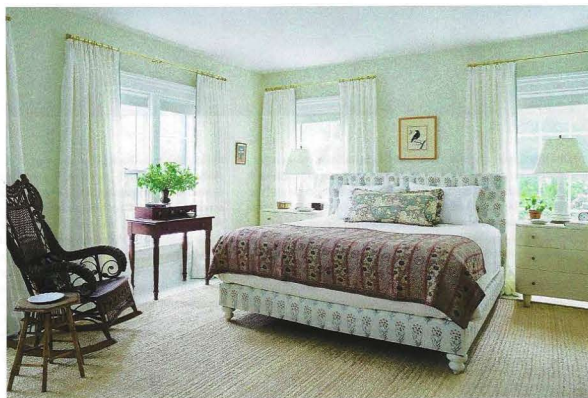
Roberts’s eye for livability helped bring it all into harmony. “There is a pool of wisdom to draw from when designing a seaside house,” he says. “But you want to make sure it’s all relevant, comfortable.” Classic beachy items, like the rattan coffee table in the living room, are paired with a Colonial-style, barrel-back wing chair; a tufted Napoleon III, small-scale armchair; and an Edwardian-style armchair on casters. In



ABOVE: In an upstairs office, a mid-20th-century Danish desk (Frika Henningsen) and custom lattice cabinetry, Woven wall covering, Stroheim

RIGHT: Roberts upholstered the owners' bed in a Penny Morrison linen floral. Nightstands, Made Goods

OPPOSITE: One of the Vineyard's five lighthouses stands guard over summer suppers. Cushion fabric, Pierre Frey



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—HOMEOWNER

the family room, a splatter-painted floor recalls a farmhouse kitchen. Lighthearted fabrics enliven antique furnishings.

And the sequence of the home's rooms now traces a progression of themes and moods, from the breezeway at the back, where "you'll see 50,000 pairs of flip-flops in the summer," through the hip, family-friendly kitchen and into the gracious dining room, where Roberts added blue and plum to the green-and-white palette. "We can have formal spaces in this house," says the owner, "because most of the hard living—kids who don't use coasters, for instance—happens on the porches or up on the third floor."

For a family whose urban existence often feels like a relentless flow, this Martha's Vineyard house offers life at the rhythm of the tides: back and forth, out and in. There's comfort in these cycles of familiarity and renewal. Roberts, too, takes solace in knowing whatever comes and goes will come again. "I'm in my 50s so I'm always worried I'll be taken out to the curb with the next load of recycling," he jokes. "It's gratifying to hang on to good things and make them work." ♦

