

JUNE/JULY 2022

# House Beautiful

## The *Outdoor* Issue

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HAWAII NATIVE  
BREEZE GIANNASIO CREATES  
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FAMILY ROOM ON MAUI  
P. 100

Turn your **GARDEN**  
into a **DINING ROOM** P. 26





**DINING ROOM**  
 Louvered oak panels let in light while recalling the 1970s development of Figure Eight Island, the site of this house by power design couple Barrie and Matt Benson. **Carpet:** ABC Carpet & Home. **Sideboard:** Made Goods. **Table:** custom, wood with a Saarinen edge and a faux antique parchment top. **Chairs:** vintage, in Cowtan & Tout fabric. **Table runner:** R. Runberg Curiosities.



**ENTRYWAY**  
 A colorful photograph by Tyler Haughey sets the tone. **Console:** 1stDibs. **Rug:** ABC Carpet & Home.

# PLAY IT AGAIN

This North Carolina beach house has all of the groove of a 70s classic—without any of the cliché.

*interior designer* Barrie Benson Interior Design / *writer* Hadley Keller  
*architect* Meyer Gresson Paulin Benson / *photographer* Paul Costello





#### SITTING ROOM

Barrie Benson outfitted this room off the kitchen with comfortable furniture so that guests or family members can keep the matriarch—a passionate cook and host—company while she party preps. **Sofa and armchairs:** Highland House in Perennials fabric. **Carpet:** Stark. **Side chair:** Anthropologie. **Side table:** Mecox. **Lamps and art:** vintage. **Pendant:** PET Lamp.

**T**his is a house of activity and gathering—of sandy feet and wet bathing suits,” says Matt Benson, principal of Meyer Greeson Paullin Benson, who designed this coastal build on North Carolina’s Figure Eight Island with his wife, interior designer Barrie Benson. This being Barrie’s third project on the island, she focused on differentiating it: “I’m big on personality, on making sure the house looks like it’s their house and not anybody else’s.” For an active, close-knit family who loves to host, that meant an easy, welcoming space with a stylistic nod to the 1970s when the island was developed. The setting very literally influenced

the design: Due to strict federal and state laws that protect the coastal ecosystem, all utilities have to be built a safe distance over the area’s “high water line.” As a result, the main living and dining areas are on the home’s second floor, creating a tree house effect that allows for views of both the ocean and the marsh. Matt worked to ensure that would feel as natural as possible for visitors. “As you arrive, an outside seating area draws your eye through the house and toward the water beyond,” he explains. **Special consideration was given to the best views, how the rooms were laid out based on the path of the sun, and facilitating access to the porches.**

To best serve the client’s constant rotation of houseguests, we “wanted all the interior rooms to feel connected but separate,” Matt says. They developed a motif of louvered oak that runs up the central stairwell and separates the centrally located dining room from

the outdoor patio, making space for a bar facing the outdoors. “We figured, Why don’t we create this screen so the room still gets light during the day, but it’s nice and cozy at night?” says Barrie. “When the owners have the guests stay over, the other side is a bar in the evening and a coffee and pastry station in the morning.”

The warm wood of the louvers—which is repeated on shelves in the kitchen—echoes designs of the 1970s. Beyond that, Barrie, working closely with project manager Avery Castellow, “kept things a little bit simply colored and light” with paneled walls in a warm white paint, pale striped textiles, and natural fiber accents. It’s a busy place, after all: “Throughout the day, there are morning swims, paddleboard trips, fish caught off the dock, and boat rides,” says Matt. “But afternoon naps and cocktail hour gatherings are all enhanced by the changing colors of the marsh.” ■



#### BREAKFAST ROOM

Warm wood on the furniture and open shelving tie the airy kitchen back to the ’70s-inspired louvers in the stairwell and dining room. **Pendant:** Made Goods. **Dining table:** Tom Dixon. **Banquette:** Hickory Chair in Perennials fabric. **Dining chairs:** vintage Harvey Propper.



## The Teak Alternative

For this deck, the Bensons opted for Brazilian Ipe, a dense hardwood known for its durability—and, when FSC certified, a sustainable choice. For alternative options that are eco-friendly, turn to a composite like [Timber Tech](#) or [Trex](#).

### DECK

A covered sitting area off the home's upper level provides views of the sound and ocean. **Sofa:** Century with Link Outdoor fabric. **Chairs:** Kingsley Bate with Perennials fabric. **Table:** Century. **Pillows:** Perennials.





AN EXTENDED WINDOW SEAT PROVIDES EXTRA PERCHES FOR GAME NIGHT.



**LIVING ROOM**  
The Bensons wanted to keep the lofted space light and bright to focus on the views. **Carpet:** Stark. **Armchairs:** Highland House in Perennials fabric. **Coffee table:** Nickey Kehoe. **Stool:** Sean Rush Atelier. **Side table:** Aleman/Moore for Tucker Robbins. **Lamp:** vintage, Chairish.



**POWDER ROOM**  
Verdant **Hermès wall-paper** from **Dedar** offsets the white walls in the living space. **Vanity:** custom. **Sconces:** **The Urban Electric Co.** **Sink:** Kohler. **Hardware:** Bird Decorative Hardware & Bath. **Faucet:** Brizo. **Mirror:** antique.

**BUNK ROOM**  
Custom beds by **Coastal Cabinets** are accessed via rope ladders. **Drapery:** Kathryn M. Ireland. **Bedding:** Isabella. **Acapulco chair:** vintage. **Carpet:** Stark.



**KITCHEN**

The cutout on the far wall of the kitchen is a coffee station for guests. **Cabinetry:** Coastal Cabinets. **Rug:** Charlotte Rug Gallery. **Hardware:** Rocky Mountain Hardware.

