

Custom Builder

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Vacation Homes With Style and Pizzazz

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Expansive picture windows and glass doors
in this 1930s beach cottage in Malibu, Calif.,
provide breathtaking views of the ocean.

Builder: Kevin Babineau; Architect: Architecture Studio

Great Escapes

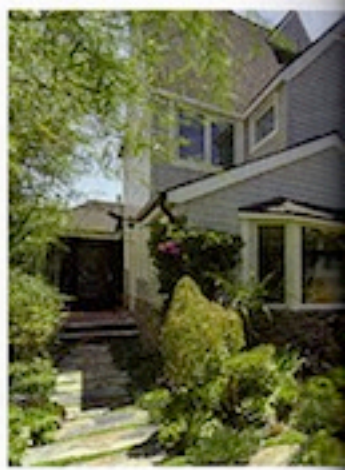
Not exactly the simple cottages you remember from childhood, these vacation homes are made for getting away — in style.

By Susan Body, Contributing Editor

Site constraints and design challenges are the norm with new vacation homes. Sometimes this has to do with the location (deep woods, mountains, coastal areas, etc.), but local regulations can also have an impact.

Take, for instance, the home in Indian Beach, Del., shown on pages 10-11. Community restrictions there virtually prohibit construction in July and August; Echelon Custom Homes met their

construction deadline on June 30, just under the wire. Had builder Kevin Babineau ventured outside the footprint of the coastal California home shown above (and on pages 8-9), it might have taken him up to four years to obtain the required permit for remodeling. And architect John Everett worked within the limitations of a tight lot on the Long Island Sound to create a cottage with the timeless appeal of older homes in the neighborhood (page 12).



The high-end finishes in this 1930s beach cottage in Malibu, Calif., include an onyx shower enclosure in the master bath (above), mosaic tiles in the secondary baths, and one-of-a-kind wall treatments. The kitchen was refreshed by blue granite countertops, a glass tile backsplash, and white cabinets (above, right).

Cooling Off in Malibu

Film director Hal Ashby, known for such classics as "Being There" and "Coming Home," used to chill out at this Malibu, Calif., beach house. Originally built in the late 1930s, the 3,200-square-foot home had undergone minor remodeling over the years. The current owners were planning a kitchen and bath makeover and an exterior facelift, but the project soon took on a life of its own.

"The house was pretty run down when we started the project," says Jeffrey Tohl, principal of The Architecture Studio in Los Angeles. "It was rustic and quaint, and we wanted to create more of a contemporary beach cottage and introduce materials that would warm it up."

The program continued to grow through the course of construction, Tohl says. "We ended up redoing all the bathrooms, ceiling treatments, flooring, lighting, mechanical systems, and plumbing." A small maid's bedroom was converted into a spa bathroom and changing area. No square footage was added and the floor plan remained much the same, but the exterior received some serious tweaks. Rooflines were simplified and stone wainscoting was introduced around the house and detached garage to tie the buildings together.

With a home of this vintage, structural problems were bound to surface. After Malibu-based builder Kevin Babineau discovered rotting wood behind the walls, he gutted the house and replaced



PHOTOS: VAL NEDDO

Windows were added to the ocean side of the Malibu house for better light and views. The windows are mahogany on the inside and aluminum-clad on the outside for protection from wind and salt spray. A wraparound deck off the kitchen provides a place to entertain, sunbathe, and relax in the hot tub.

as much of the framing as local codes would allow (no more than 50 percent). Babineau also added seismic panels, upgraded the foundation work, and replaced the existing septic system with a tertiary system that Tohl says is "almost like a mini-sewage plant." A whole-house automation system allows the clients to remotely control everything from the HVAC system and fireplace to the window coverings and hot tub.

But the interior finishes are the real show-stoppers. "Every material used was exquisite," Babineau says, from the blue granite countertop in the kitchen and the onyx shower enclosure in the master bath to the walnut floors and Venetian plasterwork on the walls.

Beaucoup Bay Views

Surrounded by marshland, this 4,447-square-foot vacation home in Indian Beach, Del., commands views of Rehoboth Bay. The Atlantic Ocean is within walking distance.

Echelon Custom Homes built a sea wall around the home, which "worked out really well, because as we started construction we had probably the worst rain and flooding in this area in 20 years," says Matt Adler, in-house designer for the Rehoboth Beach, Del., builder. Nearby Route 1 was flooded by water from Rehoboth Bay, "but that site stayed completely dry."

Architect Paul Kiss of Olivieri, Shousky and Kiss in Collingswood,