



Interior design by
KIM COLEMAN
& MICHELE GREEN

Interview by BOB MORRIS

Photographs by
JAMES MERRELL

BLUE AS THE OCEAN

Colors that
say sea, sky, and
nature



A Southampton, New York, guesthouse is built right on the dunes. OPPOSITE: For the walls of the “map room,” artist Lori Barnaby painted a nautical chart of Long Island in the style of a blueprint. “In keeping with the theme,” says designer Kim Coleman, “the blues of the sofa, chairs, rug, and accessories create an aquatic aura.” Barclay Butera Carmel sofa. Dash & Albert Diamond Denim rug. Ankasa pillows. Visual Comfort lamp. An antique library chair is covered in Edelman leather.

For this coastal location, Coleman painted the living room a soothing, watery blue-green, Farrow & Ball's Powder Blue. "This is a comfortable, restful, generous room, designed for entertaining on a big or small scale," Coleman says. Love seats and sofa are covered in Scalamandré's Harper Matelassé. The curtains and the lampshades on the vintage mirrored lamps are in Bellini Stripe silk by Cowtan & Tout. Milo Baughman chrome-and-glass coffee table from John Rosselli.





BOB MORRIS: It doesn't get any better than this when it comes to beach houses. A big, sunny place flanked by the ocean and the bay in Southampton, New York.

KIM COLEMAN: And there's nothing better for a designer than finishing a place that you wished you lived in yourself! This is such an open, airy, comfortable retreat. It's a new house with a quiet elegance—a clean, uncluttered version of traditional turn-of-the-century shingle, built right into the dunes.

Let me guess—blue is your favorite color.

Since I was a child! I've always been drawn to blue. It's a heavenly color to live with. I've never seen a blue I don't like, as long as it's a true blue. At one point my design partner, Michele Green, said, 'Okay, that's enough! We've got blue, we've got blue, we've got blue.' Yes, we do; but they're all so different. The navy and white in the 'map room' and pool house is incredibly crisp and fresh. The pale blue-green in the living room is soft and subtle. Turquoise with the black and white adds an element of surprise to the guest bedroom.

The turquoise room also seems urban and almost edgy for a beach house. Did you have to talk your clients into it?

I did. My two favorite words are 'Trust me.' And you know what? Everybody loves that room.

Do you ever get sick of blue?

I could never be sick of blue because of all those variations. In fact, if you take a fabric with a blue print and try to find another fabric with the same blue tone, it can be almost impossible.

So blues can be challenging, then.

Incredibly. They're hard to match. Turquoise is miles apart from navy blue, just as navy blue is from seafoam, or periwinkle is from cobalt. Blues act as independent colors and don't often work together. Navy can read as black, and seafoam can read as green. They are as different as night and day.

So you had to think about how the various blues here worked together from room to room?

I always think of each room or hallway as flow-

ing into the next, whether it's blue, orange, or red. To me, that's a key element of good design. There should be a harmonious, logical transition from one space to another.

What's the key to a good beach house?

Opening it up to the ocean—creating a wonderful indoor-outdoor space. I like to bring



the feeling of nature inside as much as I can. **You've brought in the colors of the ocean. And of the hydrangeas outside. And the master bedroom is the color of sand.**

Plus there's real sand in the powder room, under the clamshell on the vanity.

Talk about bringing nature in!

Yes, literally. Here's what happened. We put those wonderful mother-of-pearl tiles on the walls and ceiling. The mirrored van-

ity was custom-fitted with that enormous clamshell for the sink. I got Christa Wilm, who owns Christa's South Seashells in West Palm Beach, to make us that shell mirror. Then I went to Bed Bath & Beyond and got wastebaskets, and she put shells on those. And then I said, 'It has to go a little further.'

So I just went out to the beach, got some sand, and spread it around the clamshell. When the cleaning lady first saw it, she brushed it right off.

You combined a blueprint and a map of Long Island on a wall in the map room. How did you come up with that idea?

Well, you know, we have the ocean here. And I've done a lot of sailing, so I've seen a lot of charts of water. We were changing some things in the house, so we had blueprints out. I thought, 'What would be interesting here? How about a nautical map that's like a blueprint?' So we hired a local artist to paint a map of Long Island.

Ever regret a blue you used? Any blue bloopers?

So far I have never, ever regretted a blue that I've used. The only blooper is the one time when we had a huge needlepoint rug made in Portugal, and when it was delivered, the blues were all wrong. That, however, is not the downside of blue. That is the downside of interior design. A designer's nightmare.

What's the wildest blue thing you own?

A blue Masai beaded suede coat from Kenya with guinea fowl feathers.

Do you wear a lot of blue?

There aren't a lot of good blue clothes out there. It's even hard to find a great, sexy pair of navy shoes. I prefer to use it in my design.

Any places you'd like to get your designer hands on?

The Plaza. All of the old-world charm is gone, and the lighting is too bright. Eloise would be horrified—and she'd never get away with her antics in such an impersonal and overlit setting.

Is there a blue you haven't figured out how to use yet?

No. The possibilities are endless.

PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK
STYLIST GREGORY BISSENETTE

ABOVE: In the powder room, a mirrored vanity from Island Home, a giant clamshell sink, and a shell mirror are at home with Mother Of Pearl tiles by Maya Romanoff. OPPOSITE: Cedar-plank walls, more shells, a driftwood chandelier, and lots of blue give the pool house both a woodsy and beachy chic. Shell artwork from Palecek. Chandelier from Mecox. Sofa pillows from Restoration Hardware. Wisteria rug. William-Wayne artichoke lamp.







1. Urns from Mrs. Howard flank the living room fireplace. 2. In the large, open kitchen, Vaughan lanterns hang above the island, a favorite place for the children to eat. Granada barstools from Palecek. 3. The screened-in porch is “the perfect spot for a gin and tonic,” Coleman says. Green cushions—Suncloth from Sonia’s Place—blend with the dune grass. 4. The dining room’s antique mirrored table and shimmering grays “mimic the feeling of the moon shining on ocean waves.” 5. A cathedral ceiling and calm neutrals make the master bedroom a sensuous, soothing retreat. Walls are Sand Dunes by Benjamin Moore. 6. Blue cushions on the Janus et Cie poolside furniture match the clear blue sky. 7. Orange stools from C. Bell are a colorful welcome in the entry. 8. An oversize French clock face from Devonshire hangs above a Provençal table near the pool. 9. Nothing says crisp and clean like navy and white. Lulu DK Matouk bedding. Ankasa artwork. 10. The garden is lush with blue delphiniums. 11. The lavender bedroom was inspired by the hydrangeas and lavender just outside the window. Curtains and pillows from JA Design Studio. Blanket from Hildreth’s. Lavender lamp from Max and Company.







Bright royal blue glass tiles and the clear-glass wall-covering are meant to suggest the ocean and the foam on the surface of breaking waves. Tiles are from Southampton Gallery of Marble and Tile. Wall-covering from Bergamo. OPPOSITE: "The dune house is the ultimate guesthouse," Coleman says, "but it's also great for evening cocktails or a sheltered lunch on a hot day." The mosaic river-rock floor is by Cancos.

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Turquoise stripes around the perimeter of the room have a clean, geometric feeling that’s repeated in the Oly bed, the Devonshire mirror, and the Frette bedding. An Oly chair is covered in Teddy in Turquoise from DesignTex. Mecox lamps sit on Serpentine chests from Laneventure. Curtains are Hampton Fern Outline by First Editions. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



