

# NO FUSS IN OAK BLUFFS

A waterside home on the Vineyard  
is designed for laid-back family time.

**By Marni Elyse Katz / Photographs by Jared Kuzia**





**B**lue and white is perhaps the most popular color scheme for coastal retreats, and Newton-based interior designer Vani Sayeed had created just that for these clients in the past. But this time around, for their Martha's Vineyard home, they wanted a family-friendly design with absolutely no fuss. "They wanted to create a place where they could cook, read, and be lazy," Sayeed says.

Before the design work could begin, the circa 1920s shingled home, which sits on the edge of Nantucket Sound in Oak Bluffs, needed to be lifted onto a newly built foundation. Then the gutting process could begin. Like many homes of the era, the original layout consisted of small rooms with a kitchen sequestered behind the public spaces, cut off from both people and views. Oak Bluffs architect Chuck Sullivan reconfigured the interior to function the way modern families like to live—in a wide-open space.

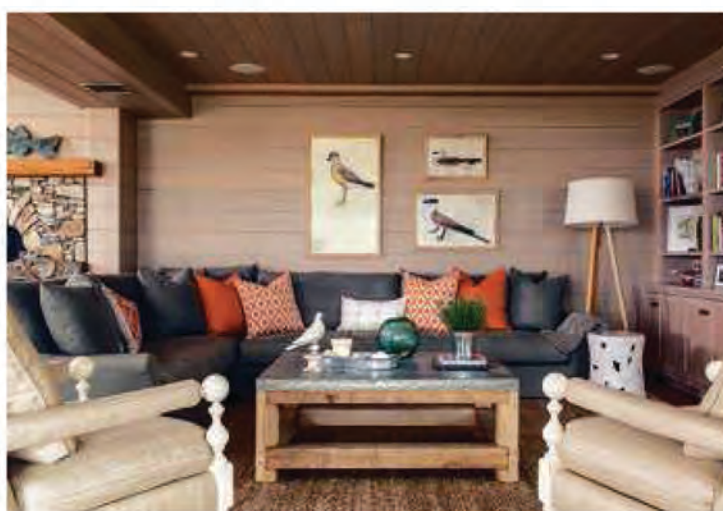
By pushing back the fireplace (local mason Seth Abbott built a new one out of beach stones and granite slabs) and extending one end of the house about 6 feet, Sullivan created an expansive great room oriented toward the beachy vista. Three sets of French doors were added to access the existing porch, which runs the length of the house, so the family could move easily from indoors to out.

Square-edged horizontal paneling clads the walls and ceilings, except in the dining room, where original beams and bead board were preserved. It sets a modern, pared-down tone for the space, echoing the neutral colors and materials found in nature. Sayeed worked with the homeowners to find just the right gray-tinged stain, to which she matched the kitchen cabinetry and living room built-ins.

It's the perfect backdrop for the modern meets hand-hewn furnishings, all of which fit the family's requirements to a T. They invested in solid pieces that will stand the test of time, including Windsor dining chairs with a matte milk-paint finish made by Sudbury-based woodworker Ray Bachand of

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A teak dining table on the porch, with its view of Nantucket Sound, extends to accommodate larger gatherings.



## PLANNING THE PERFECT OUTDOOR SHOWER

Designer Vani Sayeed offers these tips for a beach house basic:

Choose a location convenient to a beach path for the entry to the outdoor shower.	Include a spigot for rinsing feet and a hand-held sprayer for kids and pets.	Be sure you have sufficient fencing and a latch for privacy.	Install hooks for towels and wet swimsuits.	Add a built-in bench, especially if there are little kids to keep an eye on.
If there's space, include a separate semi-dry area for changing into clothing.	Include a shelf for soap and shampoo and a ledge for shaving legs.	Choose fixtures that can be removed offseason.	Pay attention to proper circulation and drainage.	It doesn't hurt to choose a spot with a beautiful view.

## FACING PAGE

The bathroom (far left, top) has a Carrara marble counter and floor and a shower lined with subway tiles.

Bird prints from Williams Sonoma (far left, bottom) make more sense than expensive artwork in the living room — the couple's young kids like to jump on the sofa.

Sayed designed this hand-blocked bedding (left), which was printed in India and sewn at a Boston workroom.

## THIS PAGE

The coffee table and side tables (right) on the porch are from Restoration Hardware.

The fireplace pizza oven in the dining area (below) ranked high on the homeowners' wish list.



60nobscoot, an enormous slip-covered Verellen sectional, and a sturdy, tin-covered reclaimed-wood coffee table made by an Atlanta-based artist and purchased at Artefact in Belmont. The project's builder, Josh Flanders, used barn wood to make the top of the dining table, which sits on a base crafted by a local metalworker.

The outdoor furniture is just as practical and casually elegant, from the polyurethane “wicker” seating by Janus et Cie (“Pricing is similar to upmarket big-box brands,” says Sayeed, “but the quality and styling is far superior”) to the Barlow Tyrie expandable teak dining table from Didriks in Cambridge. The cushions come in, but the bases remain on the porch during the offseason, uncovered. “The wood slowly silvers,” says Sayeed. “The owners don’t want to do any more maintenance than absolutely necessary.”

This sentiment is honored at every turn. Iron lanterns over the dining table don’t have glass panels to clean, and counter stools, armchairs, and bench cushions are upholstered in all-season fabric. Although a soapstone counter traditionally needs oiling, the homeowners forgo such upkeep, preferring to embrace its patina.

Accessories with a global feel enhance the design without disrupting the quiet. An inlaid side table Sayeed brought back from India adds a subtle but fanciful pattern in the living room, as do delicately patterned boudoir pillows by Brooklyn-based design studio Eskayel. In the master bedroom, Sayeed upholstered a bench with hand-blocked fabric by Seema Krish and chose throw pillows made from one-of-a-kind Middle Eastern textiles purchased at Cambridge shop Beyt.

“There’s nothing bright or pop-y that takes away from the ethereal essence of life on the island,” Sayeed says. “It’s all just sort of chill. That was the agenda, to chill.” ■

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