

House Beautiful

Lighten Up!

JUNE 2007

DREAMY
ROOMS

LITTLE LUXURIES

FRESH
COLORS

WIN!
ALL NEW
KITCHEN
APPLIANCES

VOTE FOR
what's
beautiful
now?
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House Beautiful

"I leave the French doors open all the time. It's easy to go in and out—a standard part of the deal in California."

INTERIOR DESIGNER MICHAEL S. SMITH, KITCHEN OF THE MONTH, PAGE 134

Lighten Up!



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KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Bare floors,
unlined curtains:
Get real,
bungalow style

INTERIOR DESIGN BY CHAD EISNER
INTERVIEW BY CAROL PRISANT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARYN R. MILLET

A “little supper club” in the dining area has an orange banquette covered in top-stitched custom-dyed leather from Caldelle, Ltd. Chair upholstery and the unlined striped curtain fabric are from Clarence House. An agate bowl on a 1940s Jansen side table is from Ruzzetti and Gow and the vintage Moroccan lantern was found at Kim Fiscus. Center table and lamps were designed by Chad Eisner.

CAROL PRISANT: Except for all that fabulous light, it's hard to believe that this is a California beach house.

CHAD EISNER: My client and I wanted something different from the usual beige Orange County decor. But you don't have to paint things lemon just to be different. You don't want to make it look like Tanzania or France, either. I wanted more of an old beach bungalow feeling, kind of “salon at the beach.” That's why it's got heavier fabrics, which are unusual for a beach house—leather, corduroy, and silk velvet.

This is a row house, though. Tell me how you kept it from feeling claustrophobic.

First of all, the curtains. There are absolutely no linings, so you get diffuse, filtered light. And no carpets—not just because the floors are beautiful, but because my clients lead an active life here, and that means sand.

The floors really are beautiful.

They're hand-planed walnut, which add to that ramshackled bungalow look I was after, even though this is obviously new construction. In a way, too, bare floors add to the feeling of an old beach cottage.

I like the dining room curtains. They look like a man's shirt.

They do! Striped drapery fabric looks like an Etro shirt.

And that chandelier?

Well, the chandelier was kind of a stretch. It's so gold. But it does pick up the gold on the picture frames in the art collection.

The way you've hung the art is remarkably unstuffy.

There are several really important pictures here, but I didn't want to display them reverentially. It seemed better to say "Look, we have some great art in this house, but we're not taking ourselves too seriously." So I mixed really good paintings with groupings around a mirror, for example, and even around a small TV. I didn't go so far as to put any in the kitchen, though.

I take it these aren't kitchen people.

My clients joke that they can burn water, so the kitchen is really set up primarily for entertaining, with that big table as the buffet. We tried a center island, but it looked like a behemoth. Then we found that table. It had been used by an artist and came with lots of scars, which is why no one ever has to worry about staining or cutting it. The built-in millwork and the surrounding cabinets are the same dark color we used throughout the house.

Speaking of color, your choice for the master bath is gorgeous.

And the bath is probably the "beachiest" room in the house.

It's a lighter version of the paint in the bedroom, which I first saw at an art gallery in France. In our original design for the bathroom, there was a long cabinet along the window wall. But we decided that paneling would not only improve the view from the bedroom, it would create a small shelf for bottles and toiletries. Given the room's small size, it also turned what would have been side-by-side sinks into back-to-back sinks. I like the way they look—though you can see your mate in the mirror! The curtains are almost as fine as a linen napkin, and we hung them on the lightest rod. I thought the painting of the nude and the mahogany pot cupboard would add some wit and weight to the room.

There's wit and weight in the guest room, too.

Definitely, though it may be more subtle. For example, you know how the English typically do a room in one floral chintz? Well, we did a modern interpretation of that. We used a geometric graphic print on everything. Then we put an old ship chest at the foot of the bed as a kind of subliminal nod to the idea of the weary traveler. More than anything, I wanted guests to feel really special in this room. And I kept the bedding light in the bedrooms—we're in Southern California.

PRODUCED BY KATHERINE PEARSON



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: In the living room, Moth Gray paint from Pratt & Lambert creates a velvety backdrop for a sofa covered in Ralph Lauren corduroy and for Rogers & Goffigon's Crosswalk II curtains. The coffee table is a custom piece by Eisner. Kitchen cabinets painted Pratt & Lambert's Flint have Waterworks hardware. Patio chairs are in DeLany & Long fabrics. Above an English chest in the master bedroom, a salon-style grouping of art brilliantly incorporates the flat-screen TV. The only wallpaper in the house is the Farrow & Ball stripe in the guest bedroom, where the custom-designed bed is smartly turned out in Rogers & Goffigon's Toccata headboard and skirt, and covered in an antique textile from Nathan Turner Antiques.





OPPOSITE: In the master bathroom, walls painted in Solitary and paneling painted in Silver Birch, both by Pratt & Lambert, are a perfect complement to Waterworks sinks, faucets, ceiling fixtures, and marble flooring. THIS PAGE: The antique chair in the master bedroom is covered in Colefax and Fowler's Clandon fabric. On the walls, Pratt & Lambert's Woodgate paint. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.

