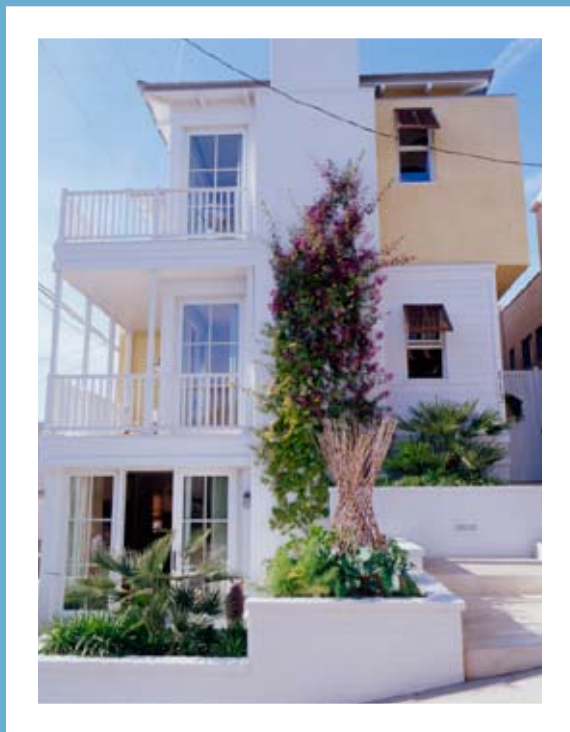


# SAND

This California beach house is so casually comfortable you can't help but relax

# CASTLE

Imagine the quintessential Southern California beach town, its cottages nestled cheek-by-jowl on sandy pedestrian streets. As people amble by, salt-dusted from an afternoon chasing children and waves, they'll say hi to one another even if they've never met. Neighbors call across the bougainvillea to offer a drink, which may stretch into an impromptu barbecue on Saturday night, with gaggles of kids



running and shrieking in the dark.

This is where Suzanne and Rick Ascher found a corner lot, and hired architect Grant Kirkpatrick of KAA Design Group, who lives in the same community,

to design their house. "Suzanne hails from Long Island and Rick is a California boy, so she has an East Coast meets West Coast sensibility," says Kirkpatrick. "Certain elements like shiplap siding and white-painted eaves are straight out of the Shingle Style, but then we mixed in Caribbean influences like brightly colored plaster walls." Shake all that up, add stacked porches, a standing-seam metal roof, and

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This page: The front door (on the second floor) opens onto a vignette of a vintage French railroad poster and a spiffy pedal car, purchased when designer Suzanne Ascher's four-year-old raised her hand at an auction. Opposite: Reaching for the sky on a sliver lot, architect Grant Kirkpatrick put all the main living spaces on the top floor, which has an unobstructed view of the ocean. Plenty of porches allow Rick Ascher to check the surf every morning.



Writer: Christine Pittel

Photographer: Victoria Pearson

Producer: Char Hatch Langos



This page: The dining room table is made out of an Indonesian rain barrel, with an ebony-stained palmwood top. Garage-sale chairs get a new lease on life with bright coral paint and zebra-striped cushions. Opposite top: Designer Debbie Fogel helped with the living room, finding the Rose Tarlow herringbone silk for the wing chairs and designing the bookcases. The pillow fabric is by Scalamandr ; barrel stool is Balinese. Opposite below: In the family room, washable slipcovers are Waverly ticking. The children can make any mess they like on the turquoise-painted picnic table, available from S.E.A. Design & Co.



adds Kirkpatrick, “and she carried it through with cool white walls and Brazilian cherry floors stained a deep, dark brown—as rich and thick as a chocolate bar.” On a 30-by-90-foot sliver lot, every inch counts, and his job was to maximize the buildable square footage without making the house feel overbearing. The composition is relieved by jigs and jogs, and porches make the house feel porous.

Kirkpatrick inverted the typical floor plan and put all the main living spaces on the top floor to take full advantage of the panoramic ocean view. Up here no formal walls separate the living room, dining room, family room, and expansive galley kitchen—just a huge span of space open to the white-painted rafters. Right in the middle is the most unusual feature in the house—a napping nook fitted with a king-size mattress and rimmed with pillows. “It’s unconventional, but it works,” says Suzanne. “My father loves to lounge here with my two girls and read to them while they watch the sailboats go by. I grew up on sailboats, and I was thinking of those wonderful front berths.”

Such quirks make it hard to tell that the house is brand new, and vintage details like beadboard contribute to the timeless appeal. It’s the kind of place where people feel free to lounge





This view: Suzanne Ascher saw the Samarkand rug in *House Beautiful* and thought it would be perfect in the master bedroom. British Colonial-style bed and bench from British Khaki, bed linens from Frette. Club chair from Les Beaux Interiors. Lamps by Jamie Young. Top left: The staircase, a composition in black and white with sisal-covered treads, makes running up and down a pleasure. Below left: The ground-floor entryway is the California version of an East Coast mudroom, with cubbies to hold all the beach paraphernalia.



This page: The napping nook is the most popular port in a storm. The drawer underneath holds blankets. Opposite, clockwise from top left: An extra-thick slab of Carrara marble tops the kitchen island. Pendant schoolhouse lamps light the 13-foot-long island, faced in beadboard and set on legs to look like a piece of furniture. This top-floor porch off the kitchen comes with a fireplace to warm up chilly evenings; furniture from Teak Warehouse, fabrics by Sunbrella, seashell mirror from S.E.A. Design & Co. For more information, see Resources.



around and not worry about straightening out the pillows when they get up from a sofa. Most of the furniture is casual, with washable slipcovers. Lush accent colors like jade green and cornflower blue enliven the basic black and white palette.

Susanne's business is making custom bedding and slipcovers, but so many customers asked whether she could help with their houses that she has launched a new career as an interior designer: "It's snowballing now, and I can hardly sleep because I'm always thinking about my next project."

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

- Kids like to help, too. Suzanne Ascher arranged her kitchen so that all her children's plates and cups are in one easily accessible drawer.
- Every house needs an intermediary zone where you can brush off the outdoors. Beachgoers shower outside and then drop sandals and sunscreen into hallway cubbies. No shoes allowed indoors.
- Hardwood floors are easier to keep clean than wall-to-wall carpeting.
- Toys stay in the playroom, next to the girls' bedrooms, and are designated common property. Artwork is consolidated onto display shelves. Twin desks are wired for future computers—out in the open where Mom can monitor what's on screen—leaving the bedrooms as quiet retreats.
- Storage is the secret to a shipshape house. Built-in drawers under the family room windows hold craft supplies, photo albums, and DVDs.
- An ottoman—with a washable slipcover—substitutes for a hard-edged coffee table in front of the family room TV.

