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The Made Goods stools in this Newport entry hall sport a dalmatian print. "The unexpected element always makes a design," observes designer Janelle Blakely Photopoulos. **FACING PAGE:** Famed architect Horace Trumbauer designed the mansion known as The Elms as well as this caretaker's house a few blocks away. A new asphalt roof mimics the slate original.



AN OASIS REBORN



In Newport, a turn-of-the-last-century worker's cottage transforms into a home that celebrates family time.

Text by FRED ALBERT | Photography by GREG PREMURU | Produced by KARIN LIDBECK BRENT



A

playground for America's elite since the nineteenth century, Newport, Rhode Island, is best-known today for the gilded mansions bordering Bellevue Avenue, where the families of industrialists and financiers idled away their summers in sybaritic splendor.

Two blocks east of that fabled thoroughfare, a couple from Florida has put their own twenty-first-century spin on the classic summer retreat. Casual, contemporary, and filled with light, their home's open plan and resort-like backyard are all about celebrating family time, from the first morning swim to the last fireside s'more.



The home's original millwork couldn't be saved, so new trim was introduced, including this oak coffered ceiling in the living room. **FACING PAGE:** Chairs from Brownstone Furniture surround a Palecek dining table in an open area between the kitchen and living room; the Visual Comfort & Co. chandelier's brass accents are repeated in the curtain rods and bar hardware.

“THE WOOD KEEPS IT CASUAL, SO IT’S NOT AN OVERLY FORMAL ALL-WHITE KITCHEN.”

—Interior designer Janelle Blakely Photopoulos



“We really wanted the kitchen to be the ‘wow’ moment,” says Photopoulos, who opted for shelves in lieu of upper cabinets so the space feels more open. **FACING PAGE:** The wife loves to cook, so there’s plenty of room for an audience at the thirteen-foot waterfall island, which is topped with Silestone and paired with stools from Brownstone Furniture.

There wasn’t much to celebrate when the pair first laid eyes on the house three years ago. Long abandoned and riddled with mold, it smelled awful and functioned even worse. “There was nothing in the house that worked,” notes the wife with a resigned laugh. “What we really loved was the location. It was on a very quiet street, but easily walkable to so many things in Newport. It’s sort of this oasis in a busy town.”

Originally a two-family home that was built in 1901 as workmen’s quarters for a nearby mansion, the property had

passed from hand to hand in recent decades. “Thank God the clients had the foresight to buy it,” confides Spencer McCombe of Cordtsen Design Architecture. “It was in really rough shape.”

Working with project architect Chris Pernice, McCombe gutted the cloistered interior and reconfigured the spaces, opening up the common areas on the first floor so they flowed into each other and out to the yard. To achieve that, builder Jeff Lipshires of J2Construct surgically removed sections of the





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: In the three-year-old twins' bathroom, a trough sink saves space and feels more playful. In the six-year-old's bedroom, custom bunk beds are sleepover-ready. "This is probably the most 'coastal' room in the entire house," Photopoulos says of the bedroom shared by the twins, which features Benjamin Moore Lakeside Cabin on the ceiling, baseboard, and closet doors. Linen curtains add a summery touch to the primary bath. **FACING PAGE:** A bed and bench from Taylor King anchor the ethereal primary bedroom.



massive brick wall that had divided the house down the middle since its days as a duplex. The colonial revival exterior was left largely intact, although the entry porch was rebuilt and the two front doors were consolidated into one. Stepping through that door, you're greeted by a foyer that quickly dispels

any expectations of period propriety. "The owners wanted a casual approach: not stuffy and formal, but someplace light and bright where they could really spend quality time with their kids," says Janelle Blakely Photopoulos of Blakely Interior Design. Subtle wall paneling nods to the home's turn-of-the-

last-century roots but is paired with a rustic contemporary console, colorful kilim runner, and lithe stools upholstered in a cheeky dalmatian print. ("It's not an actual animal hide," assures the designer, dispelling any Cruella de Vil connotations.) The owners didn't want much color



Sliding glass doors in the kitchen open to a dining terrace overlooking the pool and new pool house, which was designed to complement—but not mimic—the main house. **FACING PAGE:** The property originally included greenhouses to supply flowers for The Elms. Today, it's a summer playground, with outdoor spaces defined by subtle plantings and varied surfaces that help break up the expanse of hardscape.

ARCHITECTURE: Cordtsen Design Architecture
INTERIOR DESIGN: Blakely Interior Design
BUILDER: J2Construct
LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Elemental Designs

in the home, so Photopoulos started with white walls and neutral furnishings, then layered in understated hints of pattern and color, avoiding overt “coastal” references save for touches of blue and gauzy linen curtains that billow in the breeze. White-oak flooring and built-ins add a warming note that’s echoed in the living room’s coffered ceiling and in the oak drawers that punctuate the kitchen’s white cabinets. “The wood

keeps it casual, so it’s not an overly formal all-white kitchen,” Photopoulos notes.

Sliding glass doors open onto a bluestone terrace that’s linked to a new carriage house and pool house by landscape architect Colin Hynes’s refined design. “You’re taking old and blending it with new,” Lipshires says, “and it all seems to fit together really well.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see *Resources*.

