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REAL ESTATE | ANATOMY LESSON

Hamptons Décor That's Urbane But Not Uppity

In a shoreside retreat, strategic design brings beachy elegance to a dining room without going overboard



PHOTO: TINA GIOVANNI

By Tim Gavan

3 COMMENTS

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DESPITE BUSTLING SUMMER crowds and a soothing ocean soundscape, the Hamptons can sometimes seem more like an exercise in competitive gentility than a vacation. In this dining room—part of socialite Louise Grunwald’s weekend retreat in Southampton—designer Brian Murphy found a way to reconcile elegance with a laid-back beachy vibe.

“A lot of people overdecorate out here, and you end up feeling like you’re still on Park Avenue instead of at the beach,” Mr. Murphy said. “We wanted to make it sophisticated but still keep that relaxed, barefoot feel, despite the formal aspects of summers in the Hamptons.”

In this dune-nestled room—featured in the recent book “Out East” (Vendome)—Mr. Murphy used whitewashed furniture and white walls to create a summery atmosphere, but added ballast with an antique chandelier, a 19th-century English sculpture and Louis XVI chairs. Glimpses of seashell pinks, oceanic greens and corals reflect the scenery outside, and pickled whitewood floors blanketed with a herringbone sea-grass rug invite visitors to kick off their shoes or, if the occasion calls, leave on their heels and oxfords.





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9. Look sharp

A series of mid-18th-century engravings by natural historian Albertus Seba (later watercolored) are more Darwin-in-the-Galapagos than Long-Island- tourist. Appear erudite on the cheap with Seba's "Sea Whip, Coral, Cabinet of Natural Curiosities" Print, \$10, art.com