



# Jewel Box

*Using a few tricks of the trade, architect Mark Marsh and designer Ellen Kavanaugh transform a beachside cottage into a polished retreat that lives large on a small footprint.*

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Previous pages, left and right: The foyer sets the blue-and-white stage for the home's interiors. These pages, opposite and above: The mirror-backed bar area further reflects outdoor hues while tricking the eye into believing the room is twice its actual size. Left: One of two outdoor patios seamlessly transitions activity to the outdoors. Below: A corner of the living room showcases family photos, export porcelain, and blue bottles.

When architect Mark Marsh and designer Ellen Kavanaugh were hired to revamp an ocean-front, one-story patio home overlooking the Atlantic, they were given one request from their clients: Create an easy, simple place for the family to relax. “We wanted this to be very different from our more formal Georgian brick home in the Midwest,” says the husband. “We purposely chose this compact cottage so we don’t have to shout to find each other.”

The family had wintered in the area for years and loved the location, close to Palm Beach and Delray Beach yet far enough away from the fray of the two towns. “It’s perfect because of its proximity to things, yet it’s peaceful, unspoiled, and feels like the old Florida we love,” says the husband. So when they were faced with the rare opportunity to purchase the beach house, the couple acted quickly. In no time, Marsh and Kavanaugh set to work on a complete renovation that would remove everything except exterior walls.

A periwinkle front door wordlessly conveys the wife’s favorite color, while a palette that reflects the ever-changing hues of the sea and sky continues inside. “We chose these colors to emit peacefulness and calm,” says Kavanaugh. “It’s what this house is all about.”

For the entry, Kavanaugh chose a geometric gem-patterned limestone floor intersected with turquoise-colored sandblasted glass tiles that appear like watery rills. Overhead, an old-growth cypress tray ceiling adds height and interest, while a pale blue-colored trellis outlines a door opening and is effectively







The dual-purpose living room keeps the family together for socializing or watching TV. Seascape artwork and antiques create interest, while monogrammed white chairs are upholstered in a woven, easy-care Perennials fabric called "Rough 'n Rowdy."





repeated around the large mirror on the facing wall.

In order to make the most of the 2,500-square-foot home, the design team carved out attractive areas in the living room, where a long, mirrored bar and back-to-back sofas serve distinct purposes of admiring the view or watching television. At first, the almost pie-shaped kitchen posed space issues, but once the asymmetrical Carrara marble-topped island was installed, it immediately created more options as a cocktail venue, dinner buffet, or place for snacking. The multifaceted, uncluttered room is as efficient as a yacht galley

Above: The tiny, but highly efficient kitchen is a study in careful planning with zero tolerance for clutter. The marble island offers the perfect spot for casual meals, children's art projects, and laptop messaging. Right: The mostly blue-and-white kitchen helps the bold colors of freshly cut flowers to shine. Far right: The dining area showcases a custom marine table with a durable, high-gloss top that seats eight, made by American Yacht Restoration in Palm Beach.



Southern  
home





with storage for everything. Within the space, an inviting breakfast room includes a comfy, upholstered banquette and custom table surrounded by wicker chairs that add to the beachy scheme.

Across the house, the pale-blue master bedroom features louvered cypress doors, a custom king bed dressed in pristine linens, and a cozy seating area, as well as a panoramic view of sea and sand. Nearby, two beautifully appointed guest rooms are always ready for a steady stream of guests, including the owners' four grown children.

"Because the actual physical space was so diminutive, I knew we had to fool the eye into believing it was larger," says Marsh. "Among a plethora of tricks, we used consistent materials to create flowing spaces, and we excavated above for lofty tray ceilings. Plus, we allowed for plenty of storage. But there's no denying that the real crescendo is the vast ocean view, so we concentrated on making the little house work efficiently around those mesmerizing views."

As the husband explains, "Everything they did works just right. We can effortlessly cook a meal and dine inside or out while enjoying that beautiful view. And the way Ellen integrated the two patios was brilliant. We feel comfortable having a drink or dinner with just the two of us out there, or we can easily accommodate 30 friends for cocktails. This is more than just a second home; it's our beach oasis."



This page, top: Icy-blue walls in a guest room are faux-painted with ethereal white palm trees. Above: A second guest room features floating, yacht-style tables. Opposite, clockwise from top: For the master bedroom headboard, Kavanaugh replicated a vintage rope design she found in the West Palm Beach Antiques District. Cypress louvered doors open to the master bath.

