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House of Summer & Joy

Designer Lisa Sherry makes her 1970s throwback beachworthy and beautiful

BY JILL WALDBIESER // PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS EDWARDS

THE THREE-BEDROOM Bald Head Island retreat that won over Lisa Sherry and her photographer husband, Ron Royals, didn't look like anyone's idea of a beach house. For one, it's not on the beach, but on the third fairway of the island's golf course, and the water view is not of the ocean but of an alligator-infested lagoon. The dark, dated façade was more suited to a mountain ski chalet than a summer vacation home, and the interior was an homage to the 1970s: dark wood paneling, a lime green bathroom, and a painted mural on one living room wall that "looked like a bad LSD trip," Sherry says. "When we bought it, it was still stuck in 1974."

It took the transformative powers of Sherry, an interior designer, to lighten and brighten the dark, cramped rooms, and make them live up to the potential she saw in the house's clean-lined architecture. Using her signature style—neutrals, lots of them, with plenty of texture thrown in—she gave the place a summer-casual makeover. A fresh coat of a white paint brightened stained wood walls, and a natural palette of rattans, linen, and wood allowed once-oppressive spaces to open up and breathe.

The look is calm, but also casual, informal enough to fit in on an island where the preferred mode of transportation is golf cart. Equally as important, washable white slipcovers and sleek travertine tile floors stand up to sand, wet bathing suits, and whatever else guests might track in. "We wanted the house to feel open and inviting, never too precious," Sherry says. "In the summer we live and entertain here, and the main thing is not having to worry—about anything." In that regard, Sherry's summer home is now the very definition of a perfect beach house. 🏠



HOME AWAY FROM HOME
Throughout the year the interior designer spends weekends at her Bald Head Island home, her home away from home. Funky but comfortable pieces like the Eero Aarnio acrylic bubble chair ("it's like an indoor swing") make the home a relaxing getaway.



ABOVE: LAIDBACK AND LUXE

Despite a stark palette, nothing ever feels cold in Sherry's rooms thanks to texture galore. Sheepskin throws cover the Belgian linen sectional that surrounds a rattan Ralph Lauren cocktail table where, Sherry says, "no one is afraid to put their feet up." A wooden deer head is a nature-approved nod to the island's native fauna.



TOP: CLEAN PALETTE

Sherry preps for guests at the quartz-topped island in her renovated kitchen. "The cabinetry has a driftwood glaze, so I wanted to keep the countertops really modern and clean," she says. Removing a wall to open the kitchen to the adjacent dining room meant sacrificing additional cabinet space, so Sherry improvised with open shelving, and built in a six-inch-deep "can cupboard" for pantry necessities that hides behind chalkboard-painted doors.



RIGHT: BEYOND THE PALE

A vintage wooden horse statue, lamp, and assorted shells make a serene study in Sherry's favorite color atop an Oly faux bois demilune console table upstairs.



ABOVE: SECOND NATURE

The wood-paneled walls in the now-open dining area are among the few untouched by Sherry's paintbrush. "They were originally done to look like driftwood and we loved that," she says. An Oly Capiz tile chandelier hangs above a white lacquer Parsons dining table, but during the day there's plenty of light from the windows that overlook the golf course and lagoon out back.

TOP LEFT: OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Sherry likes the graphic contrast of smooth white lacquer shelves and rattan baskets, which stand in for a dresser in the master bedroom. "It feels unified and casual but not too messy," she says. A Le Corbusier chaise lends a modern touch.

LEFT: SERENE DREAMS

Because the house was one of the first built on the island (it originally ran on generator power), architectural details like the master bedroom's second-story porch were grandfathered in and can't be found anywhere else. "It gets great views," Sherry says. "This room is like a treehouse." She threaded grommeted white cotton drapes on an industrial plumbing pipe to fashion a privacy curtain, and upholstered the custom headboard in Belgian linen.

Jill Waldbieser is an editor and writer whose work has appeared in Women's Health, Popular Science, Philadelphia HOME, and New England Travel & Life, among other titles.

SURF'S UP

The screened back porch is where the whole family really lives each summer, Sherry says. Baskets stocked with summer necessities—towels, sunscreen, water toys—fill a white lacquer shelf for grab-and-go access.

