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21 pages of
inspiration

**DESIGNER
INTERIORS**

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STATEMENT ARCHITECTURE

BREATHTAKING BEACH HOUSES



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MOSCHINO TOOK HIS CUE FOR THE DECORATION FROM THE SEA, AND HAD THE SUBDUED NAVY PAINT FOR THE PANELLING IN THE STUDY AND DINING AREA SPECIALLY MIXED TO MATCH THE INSCRUTABLE WINTER WATER



come sail away

A WELL-WEATHERED FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE IS TRANSFORMED INTO A LIGHT-FILLED BLUE-AND-WHITE SEASIDE RETREAT

TEXT ROS BYAM SHAW PHOTOGRAPHS PAUL MASSEY



A collection of old pitchers is displayed in the dining area, whose crisp execution of the blue-and-white colour scheme gives it a subtle air of formality OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The home's nautical theme is evident in the palette as well as the art and artefacts on display; the cliff location offers unending views; a cosy window seat in the drawing room looks out onto the garden; the entrance hall leads onto an open-plan living space

Locally found fossils are dotted around the drawing room, whose focal point is the original chimneypiece. Stripes and simple contemporary pieces offset the classic coastal aesthetic



IT NEEDED TO BE BIGGER, LIGHTER, FRESH

one in London, two in Cornwall – were one too many. ‘We were terribly sad to sell the other house in Cornwall,’ the owner explains. ‘It had the most wonderful views. But, the views from here are even better, and we knew the house could be too.’

At this point in the story we meet Paolo Moschino who had decorated their other homes. The Italian designer, who has worked with renowned designer Nicholas Haslam for over 20 years and now owns the Nicholas Haslam Shop in London, earned a big fan base for his style through the company, and so began a career in interior design. ‘If anyone can make a space fabulous, it’s Paolo,’ say the owners. ‘My brief was to make the cottage as special as possible. It needed to be bigger, lighter, fresh and a little bit modern. They missed the other house, so I wanted to make this one divine, as compensation,’ says Moschino.

Planning permission was obtained to extend the footprint and change the internal layout. Extra height was gained

This is the story of an ugly duckling that grew into a swan. And, like so many fairy stories, it is the tale of a transformation. The owners bought this house 35 years ago, although they had known about it for much longer. Sitting just above one end of a bay on the north Cornwall coast, it was originally built as a fisherman’s cottage. The story begins with three daughters. ‘They were friends of my mother’s,’ explains one of the owners. ‘And, when the sisters decided to sell, we were first in line to buy it.’

For years it was their holiday cottage – a summer den with sandy floors and tiny bedrooms, a kitchen and sitting room just big enough for a family of four. In the interim, the owners bought another, much larger house on the south coast. Then there were grandchildren, and more buckets and spades, wetsuits and wellington boots. Eventually they decided that three houses –

downstairs by digging down to lower the floors. Upstairs, ceilings were raised into the pitch of the roof and up nearly to its apex above the staircase and landing, creating a generous space where light pours down through skylights. The ground floor has been reconfigured so that rooms flow into one another. Here windows at the rear of the house look out on to a garden scooped out of the low hillside that protects it from the worst of the weather, its sides reinforced with the thin slabs of slate so characteristic of Cornish architecture. Windows at the side look across the lawn and a low wall to sand, rocks and water. Upstairs, the views of the sea and sky are even more spectacular, especially from the main bedroom. ‘The sea never looks the same,’ says one of the owners. ‘It changes colour and mood almost by the hour. The garden is so sheltered that we can sit outside even in winter, but when there is a storm, the sea spray mists the windows and the lawn is white with foam.’

Moschino took his cue from the sea, and had the subdued navy paint for the panelling in the study and dining area specially

AND A LITTLE BIT MODERN’ PAOLO MOSCHINO

mixed to match the inscrutable winter water. The colour scheme throughout the house plays on the crisp, clean, nautical combination of blue and white and gives the interiors a continuity that contributes to the sense of spaciousness.

The oceanic theme is carried through in decorative details, from the galleons that sail across a toile de jony chair to the stone lighthouse lamps on the drawing-room windowsill, or the jolly group of painted wooden sailors leaning as if braced against the wind on a side table. A recent purchase of a giant whelk sculpture on the raised lawn outside the front door completed the makeover. And the owners are thrilled. ‘Paolo is so clever. We spend six months of the year here, and couldn’t be more delighted with it.’ So the story has a happy ending. And a moral. Which is that location is always paramount. That, and a good decorator. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT In the main bedroom is a portrait from the owners' collection of 19th-century prints; stripes abound in the wood-panelled sitting area, from the armchair covered in a wide gold-and-cream stripe to the chevron-upholstered coffee table; in a spare room the walls are painted in custom-mixed colours; on the landing a 19th-century bust from the owners' former house looks onto a collection of porcelain scallops

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