


out at sea

THE CLEVER USE OF DESIGN AND DÉCOR ELEMENTS HAS HELPED THE INTERIORS OF THIS BEACH PAD SEEM LIKE IT'S ONE WITH THE DEEP BLUE.

BY SAXON HENRY/REDCOVER.COM PHOTOGRAPHY KEN HAYDEN/REDCOVER.COM



Nothing inspires greater flights of fancy than the sight of water stretched as far as the eye can see. And nothing takes fuller advantage of its sweeping Atlantic Ocean views than this Jupiter Island home designed by Scott Hughes and John Umbanhowar of Scott Hughes Architects, an architectural firm with offices in Virginia, California and here in Florida.>

The modern, minimalist living space is dotted with a pair of Le Corbusier chairs and Saarinen tables. In the dining area, Eames office chairs are used.







Shutter louvres help to cast linear shadows on the wooden staircase to create a visual effect. **Top:** Floor-to-ceiling sliding doors at the balcony help to bring the sea scenery into the open concept kitchen. **Left:** The owner's love for the sea and his leisure pursuit of surfing is evident in his use of a surf board to decorate the space.

"All of our solutions for this house were driven by the desire to take advantage of the long views," says Hughes. "We wanted the setting to be dominant, so we organised the house around a circulation spine that runs down the middle. This also means that the homeowners, who love to sail, can interact with all of the space, almost all of the time, just as they do on their sailboat."

From the largest to the smallest detail, everything that makes the home feel as if it bobs on the ocean was intentional. "The house seems to float because it is built so close to the water, and because it has elevated living spaces and cantilevered decks," explains Hughes. "Putting the pool on the roof also left the house somewhat anchorless — had the pool been on ground level, the house would have seemed more connected to its surroundings."

It was the sturdiness of the structure, which was designed to withstand 225kmh winds, that made it possible for the architects to situate the pool on a rooftop terrace — a realisation that came about after the design process was underway. This level of discovery was due in part to the homeowners' zest for adventure. "They were open to all of our suggestions for making this a 21st-century beach house," says Hughes. "They gave us a free hand to present what we really felt would be the right solutions after we got to know them. They helped us at every turn to accomplish what we had envisioned."

Meshing their vision with the homeowners' own, the result is a riff on the firm's signature minimalist style. "They asked us to push the architecture a little toward the extreme, which we did with features like the dominant glass box that holds the living room and offices, and the skylights beneath the pool," says Hughes. "Because the homeowners like to cook and entertain, we put the kitchen in the centre and organised everything around it." >



The master bedroom boasts expansive ocean views through large window frames.

The middle section of the house that holds the kitchen is alive with patterns: Long countertops interplay with splayed vertical columns and twin diagonal stairways. "This portion of the house is also filled with light patterns," remarks Umbanhowar. "The louvred shutters on the west-facing façade create a sort of grid of shadows during the afternoons, and the Plexiglas skylights at the bottom of the pool spray the interior spaces with glinting light patterns when either sunlight or moonlight shine through them."

Flooring and wall finishes throughout the house are kept muted, while custom carpets and paintings by the male owner dot the spaces with colour. His bright compositions are both a product of and a natural ornamentation for the ocean-front setting. The iconic furniture is more of a surprise given its ultra-modern roots, though no less comfortable in the spaces. "We used furniture that might be considered a little edgy for a beach house," says Hughes about the Le Corbusier chairs and Saarinen tables in the living room, and Eames office chairs in the dining room. "We didn't want anything heavy to interfere with the transparency and openness that we'd achieved with the architecture."

The most cloistered portion of the home, a stucco cube that adjoins the mid section opposite the glassed living area, holds the bedrooms. Though more privately encased than the rooms in the rest of the home, even the least open spaces are filled with ample light, thanks to skylights over the showers and a long mirror over the master-bath sink that reflects the ocean from the opposite wall of windows.

"We had to sacrifice a little bit of size in the sleeping areas because we were quite dramatically constrained by the existing footprint, which we had to build upon," explains Hughes. "But we worked carefully with the clients to discover what their real day-to-day needs were, so we were able to give them what they desired with a little less square footage."

The stirring result of their meeting the long list of architectural challenges, which only began with the existing footprint's restrictive size, brings Hughes and Umbanhowar well-deserved satisfaction. "We all have a natural tendency to seek a symmetrical solution to any problem," says Hughes, "but it's very rare that we get an opportunity to express one that isn't actually more of a compromise." ■



Top and right:

A rectangular "porthole" at the bottom of the swimming pool acts as a "skylight" and also helps to take the routine out of doing laps. **Far right:** The roof terrace is a sunny retreat on its own, with a swimming pool, sun loungers and more endless views of the deep blue.

