

IF YOU IMAGINE a Southern Living beach home, you probably envision a pastel-colored, stilt-supported, porch-wrapped house resting between a sandy, panhandle-shaped beach and a blacktop highway. Surprise! Instead, we headed north and as far east as we could go (off the coastline, actually) to Bald Head Island, North Carolina, a car-free, accessible-only-by-boat barrier island located about 35 miles south of Wilmington, North Carolina, and 70 miles north of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Cape Fear River borders it to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. Bald Head's conservation ethos—nearly 10,000 of its 12,000 acres remain in a preservation easement—shapes a more organic “island style.” The homes may still be surrounded by porches, but they rest quietly on sand dunes or beneath the maritime forest canopy. Don't count on rows of condominiums or reliable Wi-Fi. Bald Head is a *real* retreat.

Enchanted by the unplugged lifestyle, we paired two Southerners—architect Eric Moser and designer Lindsey Coral Harper—with similar visions to build an authentic Carolina coastal getaway. “I wanted to fit a comfortable house in this landscape so it felt like it had been here forever,” says Moser. Harper's vision: “The interiors should nod to the locale and be light and comfortable—with a bit of beachy cheekiness.” Step inside our home to see how the duo balanced livable and lively ideas.



LIVING ROOM

Start with Earth Tones

“The chocolate-colored floors directed the home's warmer palette,” says Harper. Bronze windows and doors that “look more expensive and command attention” line both sides of the living room. To keep the browns from falling flat, Harper splashed out with a fern-print sofa fabric. “It's not for the timid, but it carries

the room,” she says. The “big but relaxed” printed sofa sets the living area apart in the house's open floor plan. A traditional English roll arm frame (CD8800E-2; crlaine.com) checks the sofa's wildness. A bodacious green ottoman that's for “sitting or plopping feet,” says Harper, balances the room's composition and grounds the corals. A sweep of vintage rattan and brass accessories completes the room's look.



Glass lanterns are a simple alternative to chandeliers (Morris Medium Lantern; circalighting.com).

“Play around with accessories on your mantel, but less is usually more,” the designer advises.

Harper wired together palm fronds (available at florist-supply stores) and put them in sandbags tucked into planters.

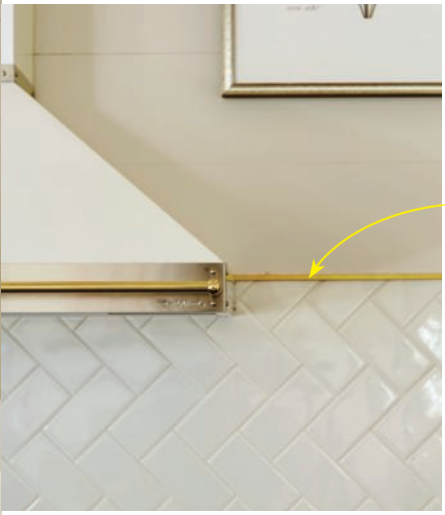
ARCHITECTURE 101
Building for the Southern Climate

HEAT AND HUMIDITY can take a toll on a home. Here are Moser's tips for beating extreme conditions.

ELIMINATE HIDDEN LAYERS The "ceilings" shown here are actually the bottom of the upstairs floors. This approach helps you instantly spot mold and mildew that can build up between layers of drywall.

USE STURDY MATERIALS Unlike drywall ceilings and walls, those made of tongue and groove and shiplap can expand and contract as the weather shifts without consequence.

Moser left this opening so heat would rise from the kitchen and drift out through the second-story porches.



Try This at Home (at left) Basic subway tile is applied in a subtle herringbone pattern and topped with a \$12 brass Schluter strip (schluter.com). "It gives the look more oomph," says Harper. Idea House project manager Nate Redetzke adds, "Anyone can do this—no special tools required."

KITCHEN

Design for Crowds

"No matter what, the kitchen will be the gathering spot, so I try to make it inviting while also defining it for the cook," says Moser about this free-flowing, open space centered around a 4- by 8-foot island. An opening in the ceiling lets hot air escape upstairs, cutting down on energy bills and creating a great vantage point from above. Harper marked the spot with an oversize lantern from Coleen & Company and had no qualms about combining it with two Hicks pendants. "It looks richer to mix finishes," she says. Cocoa touches—like the tan island cabinetry (Dormer Brown, SW 7521; sherwin-williams.com) and the outside countertops made of sand-colored quartz—warm up the kitchen. A modernized, Southern-made kitchen vent with polished-brass detailing hangs over the range (Vent-A-Hood Model PDH14; ventahood.com). Harper flanked it with art from Blackwell Botanicals.

BACK PORCH

Open for Service

The kitchen's bifold windows (Marvin Signature Series; marvin.com) fold open like a drive-through window, providing easy access to the outdoor serving area and the grilling station tucked in the corner. The window's striped cabana-like valance is double-sided, so you can admire it from inside and outside. Behind the bar on the porch is an outdoor seating area with a mix of different furniture styles, including the dining chairs from inside and pops of coral and green for continuity with the interiors.

