

MARCH/APRIL 2023

coastal STYLE



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Beachside at Burnie's

A CUSTOM-DESIGNED BETHANY BEACH HOME IS SOPHISTICATED
YET PLAYFUL, CONTEMPORARY AND COASTAL

Written by **Kristen Hampshire**
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Inspiration and collaboration are essential elements of a custom-home-building project — as is creativity, particularly with complex zoning and lot restrictions. But Marnie Oursler has a different perspective. “It can be hard to get spaces to fit the way you want, but that is also what makes it fun,” she said of the Bethany beach house she navigated with owners Mike and Jennifer Burnstein.

Every aspect of the 3,000-square-foot Bethany home was intentionally designed to maximize the space and function for their lifestyle. Flow was essential.

At the same time, the couple invited a rich sense of character into every room. Distressed ceiling beams in the family room “add more context,” Mike Burnstein said. A grayscale beach-scene mural extends across the third-floor stairway wall. “Surf” is inlaid into the guest bathroom’s mosaic-tile floor. A reclaimed door for the walk-in pantry is personalized with a decal, adding texture to an overall modern vibe.

The Burnsteins went into their first new-home construction project with a strong sense of style.

“What makes a project successful is bringing their ideas to life,” Marnie said, calling their aesthetic “coastal contemporary.” The modern, neutral palette strays from typical seaside colors, yet finishes like shiplap are a nod to their location, a short walk from the beach.

Wide-Open Spaces. In desirable downtown Bethany, zoning is largely based on lot size, with guidelines like “build set to,” which determine where a home can be placed on the property. There are also rules related to the size and ratio of first, second and third floors. In a flood zone, pilings are a must. The regulations are designed to maintain the community’s charm, and they do shape the home-building experience.

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"You can only build what you can build," Mike said simply. But that also provides avenues for innovation. For instance, the primary suite is open, with glass doors to the shower and bathroom stall. Exposed ductwork in this primary suite offers an industrial-modern touch while adding lift to the room.

The main living area, on the second floor, boasts nine-foot ceilings, with some areas recessed to accommodate beam detail or lighting. Dual sliding doors in the family room that open to a generous patio tuck into the walls. "You can open up the whole side of the house and feel the breezes flow through," Mike said.



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Touches like floating shelves by the kitchen windows are an airy alternative to cabinets alone. The same treatment applies to custom bathroom vanities, along with open storage. In one of the four upstairs bedrooms, bunk spaces with millwork allowing for a vanity are cozy yet have room enough for children or adults.

Functional Flow. Discussing “how” was integral to designing a vacation home that would function for the Burnsteins, who have a son in his 20s and entertain often. They considered the path from beach to shower to door to kitchen. But first, they tackled the garage, which doubles as a hangout. It extends the length of the home, includes a bar and opens on both ends, to the back alley and front driveway.

A shower at the side of the house is positioned next to an entry, and the first floor includes a washer/dryer and mudroom with a beach-prep nook. “We are a one-minute walk to the beach, so you can throw your stuff in the garage, take a shower and dip into the side of the house,” Mike said.



UNIQUELY COASTAL The home’s modern, neutral palette strays from typical seaside colors, yet finishes like shiplap and creative surfing inclusions are nods to its location, just a short walk from the beach.



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Cuisine Creative. Borrowing an idea from Marnie’s own home, the Burnsteins selected staggered, oversized pendants for the kitchen that add sophisticated whimsy. They’re set into a tray ceiling that gives depth to the space and again emphasizes height and openness.

Clean, white cabinet and subway tiles juxtapose the black base of an 18-foot split island, where a dining table in walnut is moderately raised to define the eating and cooking areas.

“We liked the idea of integrating the table into the island rather than an antiquated kitchen area with a circle or square table,” Mike shared. “The bench area is a fun place to make drinks, prepare food, and there’s a coffee station there as well.”

Champagne-gold hardware throughout is the icing — a top-shelf look.



DETAIL ORIENTED The first floor of this home includes a washer/dryer and mudroom with a clever beach-prep nook.



Statement Stairway. Marnie treated the staircase as she would when designing a room. It’s a package deal involving hardwood, lighting, accents and art. White-oak treads and an integrated banister with steel braiding scale three flights, with two Bluetooth-controlled skylights ushering in natural light. In a sense, the landing is a stage showcasing a nearly life-size mural of a wave and surfers bobbing in the water with boards. Stairway lighting illuminates the path to bedrooms after dark.

What’s ‘In’ for Out. Weather-ready exterior materials were a must, and the Burnsteins selected a combination of Hardie Board and NuCedar engineered shingles. “The synthetic cedar shake looks better on the front and on curves, and the Hardie Plank is on the sides,” Mike explained. Pilings are wrapped in board and batten. You’d never know they were there. And rather than landscaping, the couple opted for maintenance-free hardscape, mainly river rock. “It’s a nice look, and you don’t have to worry about a thing.” **CS**

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