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home beautiful

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5 STEPS TO DECORATING CONFIDENCE

KELLY HOPPEN SHOWS HOW

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Pack your bags and get ready for a weekend of pure relaxation at this carefree holiday house

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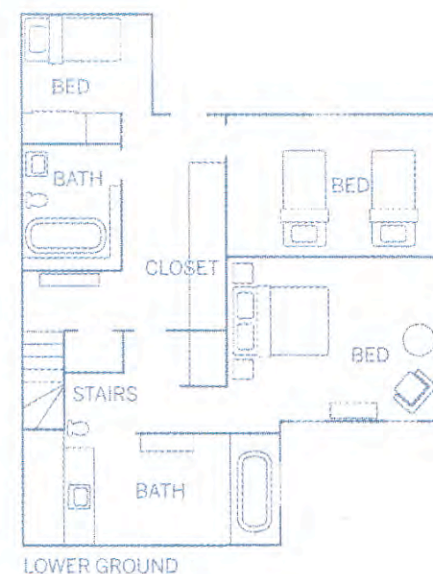




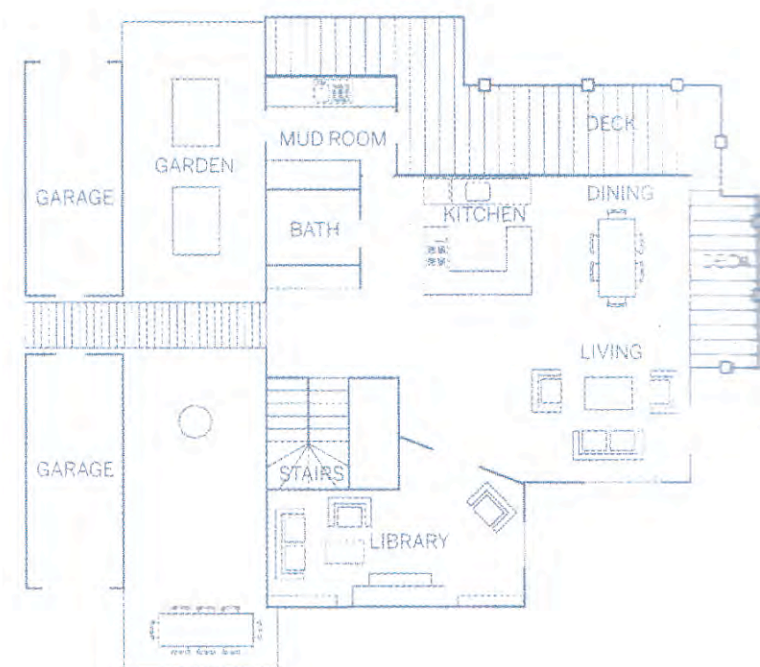
The living is easy: white slipcovers and casual timber furniture create a laidback feel in this beach home's living area. An arched clerestory window floods the room with natural light.



Potting around: Bob, an avid gardener, takes time out from replanting.



LOWER GROUND



GROUND FLOOR

True confessions

Who lives here?

Bob Andrews, vice-president of Polo Ralph Lauren Accessories and Peter Vaccaro, Pediatrician.

Who's the decorator?

Bob: "That would be me. I took care of all of the decorating and gardening."

How often do you come here?

"Every weekend. Even in the winter it's beautiful!"

What's your favourite spot in the house?

"The library. We love curling up and watching movies in there."

Describe a perfect day at the house.

"Relaxing by the pool with family and friends, then enjoying a huge Italian feast cooked by Peter's Sicilian cousins."

Your decorating style in three words?

"Classic, simple and eclectic."

< they want to. But it's also very party-friendly, and people never feel hemmed in here."

And, luckily for Bob and Peter, the house required the bare minimum of renovation work, allowing them to start decorating from the word go. "All we did was paint the walls and refinish the floors," says Bob. Then they began filling the home with their favourite pieces of vintage and new furniture, all with a casual, holiday style.

The gregarious pair both come from large families and are happiest when surrounded by their relatives and friends, so here, guests won't find fragile or high-maintenance furnishings. Instead, each room in the sprawling home is filled with relaxed pieces from the Ralph Lauren Home Collection. There are also stylish but low-cost and easily replaceable finds from IKEA.

Above all, the style of decorating exudes the quality the owners most desired it to have: a welcoming feeling for their guests.

Family and friends from interstate and overseas can't resist the pair's relaxed holiday house, where they feel completely at home. "We love to cook," says Bob. "Peter is Sicilian and I'm half Italian. >



When you wake here, leave your worries at home, rest and relaxation are the orders of the day. Have a pool drink at cocktail hour, or find your own spot to chill out— the house and garden are full of nooks where you can unwind.

As vice-president of Polo Ralph Lauren Accessories in New York, Bob Andrews might have been tempted to turn the holiday house he shares with his partner, paediatrician Peter Vaccaro, into a major decorating statement. Instead, they chose a style that's relaxed and comfortable. "We didn't want the home to be ostentatious or overdecorated," says Bob. "I don't like decorated rooms — just plain, simple things. I have a tendency to take away more than I add. The basement is the fullest room in the house," he laughs.

In fact, most of Bob and Peter's efforts went into finding just the right place to begin with. Over two years, the pair had seen some 150 properties, mostly on New York's Long Island. They had initially resisted looking in the Hamptons (160 kilometres east of New York City) because of the glitzy reputation of the area, but when they drove up a hilly, winding road in the hamlet of Water Mill, they knew at once that their search was over.

"We liked the house from the minute we saw it. I think it was because it's very unassuming from a distance," Bob says. "But as you walk down the entryway and up to the front door, it opens up and unfolds. It has all these wonderful nooks and crannies where people can be by themselves if >





