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6 Dreamy
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Stripes



Summer
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Hampton Light

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{ At this family - oriented house on Long Isl

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[this page] Bob Andrews and Peter Vaccaro love to fill their summer place with relatives. Barbara Destree, Bob's sister, checks out the action around the pool. Bed linens and blankets by Ralph Lauren Home Collection.
[facing page] A Destree dives again.

and, carefree comfort is a permanent guest }



(White with blue fills the house, from indigo and navy to periwinkle and delphinium)



AS A DESIGN VET, PRESIDENT OF PAULI RALPH LAUREN IN NEW YORK, BOB Andrews might have been sorely tempted to turn the vacation house he shares with his partner, pediatrician Peter Vaccaro, into a major decorating statement. "We didn't want the place to be ostentatious or overdecorated," says Andrews. "We just wanted it to be easy and comfortable. I don't like decorated rooms, anyway—just plain, simple things. I have a tendency to take away more than I add. The basement is fuller than all the rest of the house."

In fact, most of the owners' effort went into finding the just-right place to begin with. Over the course of two years, Andrews and Vaccaro had seen some 150 properties, mostly on the North Fork of Long Island. They had initially resisted looking in the Hamptons 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 first sight that this was what they had been waiting for.

[above] These summer slipcovers and pillows in the lofty living room alternate with winter versions. Coffee table from Cobweb Antiques, New York City. [right] The library, the coziest room in the house, is crammed with dog portraits. Seating, fabric, pillows, and paint all by Ralph Lauren Home Collection; rattan tables from Craft Caravan, Zebra-skin rug is vintage.



"What we liked about the house from the minute we first saw it," recalls Andrews, "is that it's very unassuming from a distance. But as you walk down the breezeway and up to the front door, it opens up and unfolds. It's got all these wonderful nooks and crannies where people can go off by themselves if they want to. But it's also very party-friendly, and people never feel hemmed in here."

The gregarious pair both come from large clans and are happiest when surrounded by their relatives and friends, so no furnishings are fragile or high maintenance. Although the sprawling house is indeed a splendid advertisement for the Ralph Lauren Home Collection—no room lacks examples of its products—the rooms also feature stylish but low-cost and easily replaceable finds from Crate & Barrel, Habitat, and Ikea. Above all, the decorating exudes the quality the owners most desired it to have: a welcoming feeling for their guests.

The kitchen is very much the heart of this house. "We love to cook," says Andrews. "Peter is Sicilian and I'm half Italian, so this is very much an Italian kitchen. When his cousins come from Italy, it's like nothing you've ever tasted before." The foreign visitors feel completely at home. The outdoor dining terrace, set with a big, blue-and-white tile table, screened with evergreens, and scented with big pots of lavender, has a convincingly Mediterranean warmth, down to an orange tree in a terra-cotta tub. Like most things here, that four-decade-old citrus has a family connection. As Vaccaro relates, "One of my brothers bought it for our mother in the Miami airport on his honeymoon in 1961. It cost 59 cents." Now a revered heirloom, it spends the winter at the greenhouse of Mecox Gardens in nearby Southampton, more precious to its owners than the rare orchids that surrounded it during its off-season vacation. ●

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[above] Bob Andrews, an avid gardener, works at a potting table from Mecox Gardens.
[right] Mudroom, next to kitchen, is used as a prep area for the big family meals Andrews and Vaccaro love to host. Metal storage racks from Metro Shelving.



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Beamed, slant-roofed guest loft above the garage continues the summery, blue theme of the main house. Seashells and maps evoke the nearby Atlantic Ocean and Peconic Bay. Curtains from Habitat, London. Rug from Ikea. Wood and canvas deck chair and sisal matting from Crate & Barrel. Bed linens, blankets, club chair, and ottoman all by Ralph Lauren Home Collection.

