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great escape

*Fashion photographer
Jim Reiher works and
lives part-time in
Manhattan, but considers
the Hamptons home.
Steeped in nautical style,
his family's newly built
residence satisfies summery
beach house sensibilities
year-round.*



Jim's globe and pond yacht collections accent the mahogany-rich home office. Worthy of a shipwright, the space overlooks the canal running behind the house and the bridge leading to the beach.

Left: Jim, Kate, Hunter, Scott, and Joan Reiher



*I*nteriors utilize Joan and Jim's favorite collectibles. On this table rises another of Jim's pond yachts surrounded by family snapshots, some of Joan's mermaid figurines, and part of her vast shell collection.





Joan showcases some of her shells under the coffee table's glass-top surface. Below: The Reihers chose antique pine dining chairs with short backs that won't block water views. Above the table, a metal ring holding a variety of candles makes a contemporary statement.



THE OWNERS' OBJECTIVES

Joan and Jim had definite ideas of what they wanted when they built. Here's the list and how they—and their design team—made it happen.

- **TO USE NAUTICAL ELEMENTS.** Brass or nickel-plated hardware adds a ship's shine. Bunkbeds in Hunter's room resemble a ship's berth. Beaded board covers walls and some ceilings.
- **TO COMBINE ELEMENTS OF COUNTRY AND BEACHY STYLES.** Broad hardwood planks give a casual look at ground level, while striped and chintz fabrics seem country comfortable. But sand and sea colors, along with shells, pond yachts, and ship barometers galore, say "by the sea."
- **TO DISPLAY COLLECTIBLES.** Large collections, such as Jim's pond yachts, are spread across several rooms. Smaller collections, such as tin toys, work best in condensed spaces.
- **TO MAKE A NEW HOUSE LOOK OLD.** The kitchen's textured tin ceiling and the master bath's clawfoot tub recall an earlier period.
- **TO SAVE A DIME OR TWO.** Instead of doing custom built-ins everywhere, they started with a few unfinished pine pieces and constructed alcoves around them.

Fashion photographer Jim Reiher's studio/apartment in Manhattan epitomizes urban living, with a contemporary white-and-gray scheme and creative use of every speck of space. But it's not home, and he's eager to get there. He flips through the log that tells him his week's work is done. "Now I'm ready," he says to himself.

He hops on the jitney, a posh bus service that rolls Long Islanders away from the sea of city streets and takes them to more peaceful shores. Jim's headed for a fanciful, oversize version of a traditional New England-style home, bordered by a broad slab of canal water that runs past his backyard. "People think of living by the coast just for the summer," he says as the bus rambles along. "We enjoy it year-round."

Jim grew up on the Jersey Shore; his wife, Joan, on a New York lake. Today, they relish their 3-year-old waterside

home. Despite the house's 6,000 square feet of living space, its rooms have the warmth and comfort of a sunny beach cottage that's stood for decades. "We wanted it to feel like an old shoe," Jim says, relaxing now against the jitney's seat. "It's new but built to look lived in."

Contributing to that look, few stretches of plain plasterboard stand in the house. Instead, beaded board, generous wood moldings, and built-in shelving give the appearance of a sturdy, long-standing Hamptons home. A tin ceiling in the kitchen, pine beams in the master bedroom, and a coffered ceiling in the living room add character and architectural interest.

"It was a project we all worked on together," says Connecticut interior designer Charles P. Moran. "I looked at my job as sort of the keeper of their vision." The couple spent two years working with Charles, Connecticut



Kate and friend Bevin Kenny take over Joan's hardworking, spacious kitchen. A high pine table fitted with a cutting surface works as an island. Pots and pans dangle from the custom-made rack. Framed black-and-white family photos, all taken by Jim, cover walls in the wood-paneled game room, while in the sunny breakfast nook, starfish shine along the top window casing.





architectural designer David Stanton, and Westhampton Beach builder Joseph P. Spano.

"The most important thing we did was get a lot of people involved from the beginning," Jim says. Even kids Kate, Scott, and Hunter had input. Kate, for instance, wanted her bedroom walls painted sea-glass green, something Jim hadn't considered. "I gave in," Jim says, "and she was right."

The couple used greens and blues along with sand-colored hues on walls throughout the house, contributing to its beachy look. While striped upholstery in warm reds, deep grassy greens, and tans add color in the main living space, soft yellow walls connect interiors to the sun-drenched outdoors. When light streams through the many windows, the whole house glows like someone plugged it in. "As a photographer, I'm really sensitive to light," Jim says.

To forecast how the sun would affect interiors, the couple set an architectural model on the homesite. They could see, for example, that the kitchen, where Joan spends hours perfecting her culinary skills, would get morning and afternoon light.

Her love for cooking wasn't the only family interest considered in the grand design scheme. Jim flies aerobatic planes for fun and has competed nationally; motifs of B-52s and other vintage aircraft complement the home's mostly nautical decor.

The designers found ways to incorporate the couple's collections. In the main living space, an antique linen press holds Joan's precocious mermaid figurines. Jim's antique pond yachts, with threadbare sails resembling parchment paper in the filtered sunlight, regally stand in rooms upstairs and down, giving interiors continuity.

From the starfish resting above breakfast nook windows to scallop shell-studded lampshades in the master bedroom, sea treasures make an appearance in almost

In the master bedroom, sheer fabric laced with shells drapes the canopy bed. A mirror framed with driftwood hangs over the fireplace.



every room. Mirrors with frames made of driftwood that Joan collected hang over a bedroom mantel and in a powder room. A compass rose painted on the front hall's hardwood floor greets visitors. Shiny nickel-plated and brass hardware worthy of any yacht adorns doors, windows, and sinks.

The nautical theme is no glib nod to the home's locale, which the family

savors. Almost daily in summer, the kids head over the canal bridge to the beach, Kate and Scott toting surfboards. Joan and Jim go there every morning for a run. They all ski and enjoy taking out their 53-foot sailboat, *Sky*. Even in winter, when snow blankets the grassy backyard and melts into the canal, the Reihers love living beside the water.

On this day, the bus stops near the

village Quogue, and soon Jim stands before his house. Inside await Joan (a model) and children as photogenic as anyone he's shot back in the city. With his experienced eye, Jim knows his carefully crafted house wouldn't look too bad on film either. Suddenly, he's relaxed—his intensity left back in that stark studio. Here, he's home. 🌿

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In a nod to Jim's piloting pastime, Scott's room features an airplane motif on quilts that cover twin beds. On shelves in a second-floor passageway, vintage tin airplanes dip their wings alongside other tin toys.

A ship-style ladder on the second floor leads to a loft. From there, the family has access to a catwalk with views over the canal to the Atlantic. Built-in shelving houses more of Jim's globes and his vintage tin toy collection.

