



Color Splash

Vibrant hues move this
open and airy beach home
beyond tradition.

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Photography by Eric Roth Photography



In the quaint, picturesque town of Rockport, Massachusetts, this classic summer retreat sits on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean on three sides. No detail was overlooked in creating this cozy shingle-style vacation home. From the many built-ins included for storage space along the staircase and the mudroom to the radiant heat in the floors and the second story screened-in porch, this home is full of features that make it cozy and comfortable.



While in many ways this is a classic New England seaside home, the unique color scheme sets it apart. Bold colors and patterns were used throughout by designer Andra Birkerts, who worked to balance the spectacular views outside with the eclectic styling inside. “The interior was designed to acknowledge the outside, of course; my task was to make it not overwhelm the view, keep the open space open, but still create moments for your eye and body to land ... the color is what makes it happen,” Andra says. “There’s a rhythm to the use of color: enough to keep you aware of your surround[ings], and hopefully delight you, but not so much that it takes over.”

Open shelving and the light-orange island help differentiate the airy kitchen from a typical beach house kitchen. The colors, runner, clean lines and accessories give a very modern feel while the white wood ceiling offers a nod to a more traditional look. The wood floors throughout vary in color. On the main level the natural wood floors add a hint of rustic flair, while upstairs the floors are painted to add a cottage vibe.

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(opposite) Bold and bright colors invigorate the kitchen, while the open layout facilitates cooking and entertaining. The kitchen island provides ample seating and is inviting for family and guests alike.

(above, left) Storage is a critical component to the function of this house. This is most aptly shown in the mudroom, with extensive cubbies, baskets and benches.

(above, right) Hardwood floors and a fresh white ceiling add elements of traditional seaside style without distracting from the ocean view.

(left) A funky rug gives an upbeat feel to the stairwell. A window above the stairs facilitates airflow for the whole-house fan.





Two of the bedrooms have built-in beds and bunk beds with custom ladders, allowing these rooms to sleep many people. The vibrant runner along the stairs adds punches of color and geometric pattern, providing another break from traditional seaside décor. “I use the color both architecturally, on walls, built-in furniture, window details, door details, etc., and through use of color in accessories and floor coverings,” Andra says. “Some reference to the outside is good (greens, blues, etc.), but some unexpected accents are important.” ★

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(above) Custom built-in beds maximize sleeping space. The bedroom floors are painted in pastels, a lovely and inexpensive way to add a fresh look to old or worn floors.

(opposite, top) Furniture doesn’t always need to be placed against a wall. Arranging the bed in the center of the room makes better use of the space and view, while giving the room a more contemporary feel.

(opposite, bottom) The kids’ bathroom is finished in traditional nautical colors with a unique star-patterned ceiling.



GET THE LOOK

Designer Andra Birkerts offers these tips for giving your home warm, eclectic style.

1. Live in the house for a while and observe how it's used. From there, think about special locations where something unexpected could happen.
2. Find a great or interesting object to use as a starting point.
3. Be creative with color. "It takes a whole palette of elements to make the 'look': the texture of the fabrics against the furniture, the wall colors, the window treatment details, the accessories, the surprise of the stair runner or the juxtaposition of the inevitable found objects from summer life with other, more intentional things like furniture, lighting, bedding, etc.," Andra says.
4. Use art because, as the designer says, "Art makes everything better."