

A Designer's DREAM

A contemporary house in Montauk, Long Island, by architect Steven Harris, has been given a makeover by Rebekah Caudwell Design

Words: NICK LEE, NICHE PR Photography: PAUL RAESIDE

“Okay, I confess I am totally hooked on blues and greens. I start a project determined to veer away from them but they always find me sooner or later. But here with a swimming pool running along one entire length of the house casting an aqua glow, the rolling green lawn, and the sea stretching endlessly beyond, the choice was easy” explains Rebekah Caudwell of the design of her stunning Hamptons home.

The back of this stunning retreat, which Rebekah and husband Nick rescued from bland obscurity, is hugged by an L-shape of swimming pool blue, with the azure sea beyond. Rebekah and Nick fell for the house's sparse and simple architecture, which conceals interesting shifts of level and sightlines. “The front of the house isn't at all ostentatious – quite unusual for the Hamptons, which can tend towards overblown faux pillars and porticoes - but we liked its discreet character and location. Once you walk in you realise it's not short on beauty, its just all at the back of the house. And the architect also had the grace to allow the views and landscape their say” says Rebekah.

The property's varying levels create an open flow, yet quieter, more private nooks and



interesting turns are interspersed throughout. "The juxtaposition of cubes and cantilevering is quite striking, so we wanted to let the architecture still hold sway but we could see ways to create so much more interest and life inside its spaces," says Rebekah.

Rebekah had been eyeing this house for over a year but was biding her time, watching the market and aware they did not really have the funds for a new purchase. The seaside house is in Montauk, at the very eastern tip of the Hamptons, also known as The End. Formerly excluded from the Hamptons proper, it's now the hip place to hang out, with some great waterside restaurants, juice bars and of course, Soul Cycle.

The house had been presented for sale in a way that was plain and devoid of personality. Expanses of unbroken cream travertine, white walls and white surfaces, and Rebekah felt the pull to wave a magic wand. "It felt more like walking into a very expensive hospital rather than a home. I think when the architecture is fairly severe, spare ascetic interiors simply feel too cold. A house should never feel like a mausoleum. It needs to feel like a living entity, with its own pulse. I am a maximalist at heart but I did try to reign myself in a little with this house as I didn't want to drown its subtlety with too much 'stuff'" Rebekah explains.



"I brought the vibrant greens and shades of heather and lavender that flourish in the garden in summer into this space. The sculpture of the girl leading the giant is a favourite. I like the way it subverts our assumptions that the giant is the scary predator – it's a visual rewriting of a classic fairy tale."





The home was designed by architect Steven Harris in 2007

"I actually intended to do more with this room, continue the wallcovering round, Rebekah says. But we received an offer on the property – we were not looking to sell – and it was too good to refuse."



With Rebekah's love of colour she was itching to put some soul into the place. Once purchased, she swept through the interlocking series of white spaces spreading colour, pattern and warmth. Go-to shades of turquoises and teals, zingy greens and luminous aqua woke things up. The curvaceous mid-century designs, Jonathan Adler pieces and thought-provoking art breathed life into the house. The sculpture by Beth Carter in the living room Rebekah says, "muses on our preconceptions of storytelling and our obsessions with 'goodies' and 'baddies'; how if you tilt the angle of the story these distinctions are less clear or even totally subverted." The Patricia Traub oil painting in the master bedroom is similarly challenging. "Patricia works in the style of an old master, but poses very contemporary questions about humanity and our relationship with the animal world."

"Nick and I love working with different styles of architecture. I wouldn't say that we have a favourite though I am extremely drawn to history and perhaps Nick is more taken with contemporary design. We tend to represent the yin and the yang both in business and our personal lives. My interior design is always partially informed and inspired by the architecture and its setting, but colour is always the main springboard." adds Rebekah. ||||

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