

A dining room with a round wooden table, blue upholstered chairs, and a large window. The room features a white ceiling with a large circular recessed light fixture and several windows with white frames. The floor is light-colored wood. A blue circular rug is placed under the table. A vase of orange tulips sits on the table.

# NEO-NAUTICAL

A beach house revamp becomes a showcase for a collection of classic furniture with a twist.

*Photos by* RICKY ZEHAVID *By* KATHLEEN NICHOLSON WEBBER

THERE ARE AS MANY CLICHÉD BEACH HOUSE DESIGNS ALONG THE SHORE AS there are saltwater-taffy sellers. But for designer Jim Aman, who had conquered the genre in Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, the Shore was uncharted water. Approached a couple of years ago by a young New York couple who had just acquired a wreck of a house on Long Beach Island, Aman was asked to put his signature updated classic American spin on the beachfront home. The caveat: He had just three months to complete it.

“The house was like a ship at sea,” says the designer, who opened Aman & Carson — now a six-person boutique design firm — with Ann Carson in Manhattan in 1995. “It needed a fresh, new look. Now it’s like a new take on the traditional beach house.”

While Aman had the exterior of the house reclad and the decks rebuilt, he gave the interior a uniform backdrop: a coat of crisp white paint. The owners had asked that he make the house low-key and low-maintenance but stylish enough to have friends over for dinner and drinks.

To the delight of the clients, who have two young children, Aman gave them rubber with a sisal texture on the floors, which can be mopped up. With sun as a concern, he

used canvas and indoor/outdoor fabrics for most of the upholstered pieces.

Given his deadline, Aman knew he had no time to order custom furniture. Luckily for all involved, he, Carson, and codesigner John Meeks had just created their own line of furniture. Because their clientele to date had been split mostly among Manhattan, Palm Beach, and the Hamptons, a trove of pieces in the collection were ideal for a vacation home.

“The furniture line really came out of working with clients and trying to find pieces in the market,” Aman says. “If we couldn’t find something in the market, we would design it.” Much of the line, produced and sold by Holland

■ Previous:  
the dining room  
overlooks the  
beach. Below:  
the house’s  
spruced-up  
exterior.





■ Above: The master bedroom's centerpiece is the grand-scale canopy bed. Right: the living room's crisp stripes punctuate the clutter-free interior.

& Sherry, which has a showroom in Manhattan, is the designers' own take on the classics. "When we worked with clients, often the men would complain that sofas weren't deep enough," Aman says. "So we wanted to make beautiful, clever furniture with more generous proportions."

The LBI home amounts to a portfolio of the collection, and the furniture helped to turn the house into a calming place. "The owners tell me they love the dining room because of the views. When you're sitting at the dining room table, you feel like you are at sea," Aman says. The room, which has expansive windows that showcase the waves, features a round steel-and-teak table. The comfortable high-back grand deco chairs are done in cotton canvas with sleek chrome nailhead trim and white lacquer legs. There's not a bad seat to be had, and guests tend to linger long after dinner is over.

The living room, just beyond the dining room, offers a subtle, modern nod to the ocean. Its navy leather ottoman is made to look like a flag, with white stitched leather trim siddled next to a two-piece coffee table. "The white-and-blue lacquer pieces are like a signal flag when put together," Aman says of the clever design. The James chairs in white raffia have bold blue stripes.



The owners' other favorite haven in the home is their bedroom. Aman used a teak Seacrest bed that has chrome details and a headboard based on the grill of an old yacht. "The canopy of sorts is rubber mesh like the faille of a boat sail," he explains. The bedside tables are white lacquer, and the bedcovers pick up the white in the canvas tape stripes.

After finishing the project just in time for the life-guards to man their posts for the season, Aman breathed a sigh of relief and mused a theory or two about second homes: "They should be worry-free. If you spend just two to three months a year in these homes, keep clutter to a minimum. It should be the furniture, some plants, and that's it. You should never have that fear of upkeep with a beach house.

"The house needs to enhance your life, not hinder it. You should open the door to a beach house and instantly feel relaxed."

Aman & Carson is at 19 West 55th Street, Manhattan; 212.247.7577; amancarson.com. The Aman, Carson, and Weeks furniture collection is available to the trade at the Holland & Sherry showroom, 979 Third Avenue, Manhattan; 212.355.6241; acmfurniture.com. **NJL**

