

SHORE THING

THE COMPACT GETAWAY HOME OF REAL ESTATE POWERHOUSE **LOUISE PHILLIPS FORBES** AND HER FAMILY PROVES THAT LIFE'S SIMPLE PLEASURES ARE OFTEN THE BEST.

BY JEAN NAYAR

The story of Louise Phillips Forbes's family getaway in the Hamptons starts about eight years ago, with a walk on the beach in Bridgehampton with her eldest son, Douglas. Barely 5 years old at the time, "he pointed his finger at a guy on a surfboard and said, 'I want to do that,'" recalls Forbes, a leading New York-based real estate broker, whose team is ranked among the top 100 in the country by sales volume. And so, prompted by her son's desire—and the idea that "the family that plays together stays together"—she and her husband, Christopher Forbes, took up surfing in ripe middle age; encouraged Douglas and later their younger son, Kenneth, to do the same; and commenced searching for a house in the Hamptons that would not only support their sporting activities, but also their family-oriented lifestyle.

Ultimately, the couple found the property that met their needs in a derelict estate home in a little-known beachside community in Montauk. "It's a magnificent secret," says Forbes. "People call the area a trailer park, but it offers all the comforts I grew up with in Nashville, where children can safely roam in groups and fish or play hide-and-seek without constant supervision. The home hadn't been touched since the 1960s, and we made an offer without even going past the door." After closing the deal, they worked with the town of East Hampton to gain approval to demolish the old structure and build >

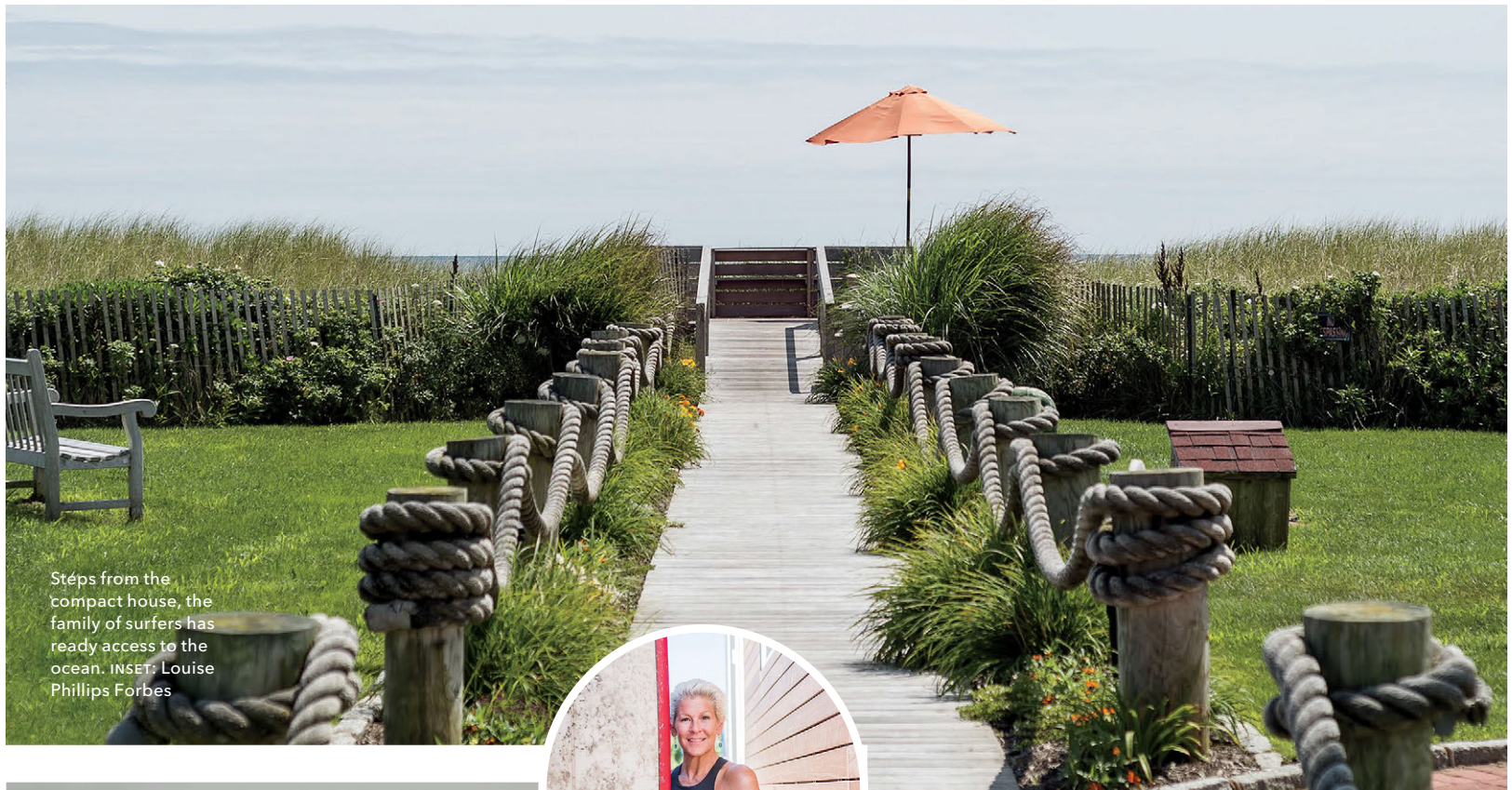
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Keeping the living space low-maintenance, the barstool seats at the breakfast bar are covered with neoprene, while a vintage 1940s sculpture picked up on a trip to a whaling town accents the windowed space beneath the vaulted ceiling.

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SPACE *BEACH RETREAT*



Steps from the compact house, the family of surfers has ready access to the ocean. INSET: Louise Phillips Forbes



Forbes and her husband worked with the Novogratz design team to finish their home with fabrics in subtle patterns and fresh colors from the team's own collections by Kravet, including the Hot Coral fabric used to reupholster the headboard of a West Elm bed.

a new one from scratch.

The secluded neighborhood, known as Montauk Shores, emerged during the '50s, '60s, and '70s and is populated with modest homes, including several old midcentury Airstreams. The family's petite new 1,160-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath residence was premanufactured in two parts in Illinois, then constructed on the existing foundation. While the house meets the requirements of one of only two plans allowed by the town, the couple was able to customize it in many ways to suit their tastes. "I wanted it to blend with the environment and the community," says Forbes, "but also to pop with design."

To that end, they wrapped the exterior with stacked siding made of ipe

wood and collaborated with the Novogratz design team in Los Angeles to outfit the interiors with fresh, easy-care furnishings and works of art by East End artists, such as Tony Caramanico. "Every room is a postage stamp, so it all had to be connected aesthetically," Forbes explains. Against a clean white backdrop with bleached wood-look floors, fabrics in lively colors and subtle patterns energize the compact rooms, while classic and custom modern furnishings add substance and function.

"We call our home a jewel box," says Forbes. "It gives us the freedom to be present for the kids and not be fussing on the house. It also allows our kids to understand that we don't need much; we just need to be together." ■