

BALANCING ACT

DESIGNER **JOHN BJØRNNEN** STRIKES A BALANCE BETWEEN FORMALITY AND CASUAL COMFORT IN A FAMILY-CENTERED WEEKEND HOUSE IN BRIDGEHAMPTON.

BY JEAN NAYAR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COSTAS PICADAS

Many East Enders cherish the Hamptons because its atmosphere is at once sophisticated and relaxed—but that’s a tricky balance to achieve when it comes to home interior design. John Bjørnen is one designer who has pulled off the feat with finesse in many of the rooms he has fashioned here over the years. And the spaces he recently designed in this sweeping Bridgehampton home are a testament to his talent.

“The owners had a clear idea that they wanted a really classic Hamptons beach house,” says Bjørnen. The young couple, who have two small children, “wanted it to be comfortable for the kids to come into from the beach with sand on their toes, but they also wanted to be able to host formal dinner parties, so the house needed to have some elegance and formality, too.”

To accomplish both goals, he devised a concept that combines levity with gracefulness and revolves around a mostly blue-and-white color scheme inspired by two paintings from the owners’ collection that now hang in the dramatic double-height foyer. A mix of predominantly clean-lined, high-quality furnishings reflects the couple’s taste for refined modern spaces, while the fabric and wallpaper patterns, art, and accents express the family’s love of sun and sea as well as sports, games, and fun.

Exemplifying the dual spirit of the house is the family room, where >>

The dramatic double-height foyer of a home with interiors designed by John Bjørnen, who was tasked with creating spaces that could accommodate both formal dinner parties and kids with sand on their feet.



SPACE *BEACH RETREAT*



a vibrant palette of navy, turquoise, and lime green energizes a tailored sectional and streamlined wicker chairs set off by two whimsical beach-ball beanbag ottomans. A number of framed *New Yorker* covers collected by the owners continue the themes of sea and sports along hallways in various parts of the house, including the lower level, which features a game room, a media room, a play space, and a sauna. Even the formal dining room balances polish and playfulness by incorporating hints of the family's equestrian bent. "Both the wallpaper and a Ralph Lauren chandelier feature shapes of horse bits," says Bjørnen, "and framed

photographs of horses play up the theme with a witty wink to their love of horses and riding."

The lighthearted yet elegant ambience is carried through to the "poolside and oceanside" guest suites, which were designed with the differing styles of the couple's parents in mind. It's also evident in the garden and pool area, which Bjørnen refined with a clean, open lawn, "where the children can play and kick around a ball," he says, as well as twist tables and plush chaises, where adults can lounge in relaxed and sophisticated style. 144 *Main St., Sag Harbor, 725-0946; bjornen design.com* ■



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The furnishings reflect the couple's love of refined modern spaces as well as sea and sun; the backyard includes an open lawn for the kids and chaises for the grown-ups; the dining room's blue-and-white color scheme continues throughout the house.

