



# DOUBLE TAKE

A SHINGLED COTTAGE IN SOUTHAMPTON'S HISTORIC DISTRICT  
REVEALS AN EXCITING NEW VIBE BEYOND ITS PRIM FAÇADE.

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ARCHITECTURE / STUART DISSTON, AUSTIN PATTERSON DISSTON ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN / CHRIS DESMONE, HB HOME NYC  
HOME BUILDER / STEPHEN PARKER, KORAL BROS. INC.  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / TIMOTHY RUMPH, ARAIYS DESIGN



Architect Stuart Disston and his clients decided the home's façade should fit comfortably within the architectural vernacular of the neighborhood. The columned veranda, porte cochere, red cedar roof and stone chimneys reveal nothing of the streamlined modernism inside.

**S**hari and Len Potter are modernists at heart. So they weren't immediately drawn to the idea of Southampton's historic district as a place to build their dream vacation house. The story of how they arrived there begins with a bit of serendipity and ends with a design that mingles with the neighborhood's century-old cottages yet opens to reveal a truly modern soul.

The Potters spent years decamping to North Carolina's Outer Banks each summer while their children were growing up, but because several of their best friends and Shari's sister and her family had weekend homes in the Hamptons, they finally took a look—and quickly found an abandoned 1970s-era house that was ripe for a teardown. Their realtor referred them to architect Stuart Disston, who instantly understood his clients' desire for a contemporary aesthetic to shine through Southampton's Shingle-style vernacular. "We decided we would keep the exterior of the house reflective of the neighborhood," says Disston. "But the inside is all straight-edge molding and high-lacquered finishes—clean and more on the minimal side."

This balance can be seen as soon as one enters the home. The porte cochere entry under diamond-pane windows looks to the past while the front door opens to the 21<sup>st</sup> century with abstract-patterned wallpaper on one side and an oversize photographic work by artist Matthew Brandt on the other. The foyer continues onward, past a two-story wall of steel-paned windows and toward public spaces enclosed with the same dark metal and glass. "The stair hall is an event on the way through the house," Disston says, pointing out that this experience is exemplified by how the glass wall floods light through the home's front and back sections.

Disston put an updated spin on classic architectural elements throughout the house. Instead of dark hardwood floors, there is cerused white oak. Instead of marble kitchen counters, he used milk glass, while the cabinetry is lacquered and trimmed in stainless steel. "The blend of traditional and modern details that Stuart created can be found all throughout the house. This combination of wood, steel and stone—it happens in every room," says builder Stephen Parker, whose team reiterated the balance by hand-scraping all the floors, ceiling beams and stair rails to achieve their unique finish—a rough contrast to the high-gloss moldings.



A matte, hand-painted wallcovering on Japanese paper by Porter Teleo gives definition to a niche in the lacquered foyer. The custom bench, Circle in Square mirror and The Urban Electric Co. sconces were purchased through designer Chris Desmone's studio, HB Home NYC.

Designer Chris Desmone took the same approach with the interior design. On one hand, it had to feel like a traditional beach house—comfortable above all, with nothing too precious. “But it’s the yin and the yang,” he says. “You have the combination of the low-key and the luxurious.” The upholstered pieces—many of them from HB Home NYC, where he has worked with designers and owners Patricia Healing and Daniel Barsanti for 16 years—are durable and plush, while the bling comes through accent pieces, art and lighting. “What we found ourselves doing was designing most of the lighting ourselves,” he says of the sinuous sculptural pendants that hang in so many rooms and that he had fabricated by artisans from New York to Charleston. The library, which the Potters describe as a place of escape from

the open-plan main level, is anchored with a glass table on a golden ribbon-like stand, surrounded by shelves of all-white objects that Desmone and Shari collected during the three years the house was being designed and built.

A soothing palette of pale sea and sky colors throughout the house leans back toward the low-key. “We went through the subtleties of all the colors, nothing too saturated,” Desmone says. Adds Shari: “There’s a serenity to it—from color to fabrics and décor, our goal was to make the house inviting and relaxing.” The real sea and sky, meanwhile, played a significant role in a design that is always focused outward. “The connection to the outside was critical,” Len says. “We love the idea of having the whole outside flow to the inside.”

The living-dining area stretches the width of the house and is dominated by a painting of epoxy resin and pigments on wood commissioned from Markus Linnenbrink. The custom sectional is by HB Home NYC, and Desmone designed the coffee table; the flat-weave rug is by J.D. Staron.



**Opposite:** The kitchen's reflective glass countertops and backsplash complement the lacquered, nickel-trimmed cabinetry by East End Country Kitchens. Homeowners Shari and Len Potter collected accessories during the home's three-year design and construction process, including the white fruit sculptures on the island.

**Below:** Saarinen Tulip chairs gather around the breakfast area's custom table on polished-nickel bases with a gray-washed-walnut top, all available through HB Home NYC; the jute-wrapped chandelier is also a custom work. Desmone refers to his banquette design as a contemporary interpretation of a Louis XIV bench.



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In the music room, Yuki Onodera's *Transvest-Judie* decorates a wall across from a grand piano. A Gothic Neo-Geo chandelier by O'Lampia hangs over a vintage Lucite-and-brass cocktail table by Charles Hollis Jones.





A sculptural brass-base table from HB Home NYC sets an artistic tone in the library, whose shelves contain the owners' collection of vintage white vases and pots. The basket-weave sheers on the windows allow plenty of sunlight but maintain privacy from the front drive.

Though not directly on the water, the 2-acre property was designed with a summer getaway in mind, with an outdoor kitchen and two dining and lounge areas surrounding the large pool, a sunken tennis court and playing fields for the owners' three high school- and college-age children. "The indoor rooms relate to the outdoor rooms," landscape architect Timothy Rumph says. "So, we used materials that are clean and concise." This included such elements as Lena limestone surrounding the pool and a mixture of trees and perennial plantings that would provide beauty any time of year. "We made sure the planting design provides interest for the garden whenever they are there," he adds. In a nod to the

surrounding historic district, Disston designed a traditional mortise-and-tenon-framed pool house out back. "It just makes a neat open-air structure, because you have all that wonderful woodwork," he says.

With their vacation house now so close—less than a two-hour drive from their home—the Potters use the house on weekends and holidays all year long, and the nine bedrooms, movie theater, upstairs living room, and deck for the kids means it's equipped for friends and family well into the future. "I wanted to build a place where our kids, no matter where they live, will want to visit and bring their kids," Shari says. Adds Len: "It's everything we thought it would be." ■

In the library, HB Home NYC's Spa chaise is upholstered in Pindler's Raines Midnight; a similar hue is reflected on the shelving walls with Benjamin Moore's Old Navy. The walls are covered in a Phillip Jeffries metallic basket-weave grass cloth, also from HB Home NYC; the Tibetan rug is by J.D. Staron.





**Above:** The pool house was erected by Vermont Timber Frames using traditional mortise-and-tenon methods. It contains an outdoor kitchen and shower, full bathroom, a sauna and a laundry room. The lounge seating, dining table and dining chairs are all by Kingsley-Bate.

**Right:** Desmone juxtaposed the rustic pool house pergola with a modern bar area, designing a long live-edge teak table on a metal base to go with powder-coated barstools by Bend Goods. It is a prime perch for viewing a match on the adjacent tennis courts.



The covered terrace can be used well into football season with a television, fireplace and built-in ceiling heaters; the Regatta dining table and Darwin chairs are from Crate & Barrel. The family and guests can relax on poolside lounge chairs by Janus et Cie under Tuuci umbrellas from RH.



For the master bedroom, Desmone framed paint-can labels that Shari's father designed for a 1960s advertising campaign. The custom walnut bed is upholstered in a lavender velvet by Christopher Hyland; a Christopher Spitzmiller lamp rests on Hickory Chair's Renata nightstand from HB Home NYC.



**Below, left:** A vintage Wave chaise by Milo Baughman, reupholstered in Castel's Tavish faux fur, highlights the corner of the master bedroom. The bronze starburst mirror was purchased at Hidden Galleries, and the brass-and-stone accent table is from HB Home NYC.

**Below, right:** The master bathroom is awash in luxe finishes, such as Venetian plaster walls, lacquered cabinetry with nickel trim and a mirror-paneled tub. The custom Pick Up Stick light fixture by Billy Cotton adds to the sparkle.

