

Custom Home

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Pacesetter Awards



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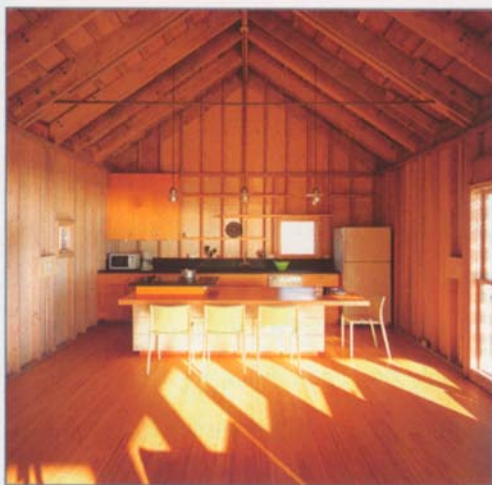


Perched on pilings to ride out storm tides, this beach house is one of a vanishing breed: the summer home that is only used in summer.

Project Credits: Builder: William Svingos, Ocean Beach, N.Y.; Architect: Stelle Architects, Bridgehampton, N.Y.; Living space: 4,000 square feet; Site: .24 acre; Construction cost: \$300 a square foot; Photographer: Jeffrey Heatley.

- Resources: Bathroom plumbing fittings/fixtures: Chicago Faucets, Circle 489 and Kohler, Circle 490; Dishwasher/Oven/Range/Refrigerator: GE Appliances, Circle 491; Entry/patio doors and windows: Pozzi, Circle 492; Hardware: Modric, Circle 493; Kitchen plumbing fittings/fixtures: Kohler, Circle 494; Paints/stains: Cabot, Circle 495.

Summer Break



Architect Fred Stelle got hooked on the romance of simple beach cottages—open-stud walls, simple furniture, a wood stove to take off the morning chill—during childhood summers on Cape Cod. But clients today lean toward year-round vacation homes, and the affordable waterfront property appropriate for basic, seasonal dwellings has all but disappeared. So Stelle relished the chance to design this summer retreat on New York's Fire Island. Located in an older development of small lots and unheated cottages, its beachfront site strongly suggested a seasonal building. Not only that, Stelle says, the municipal water supply is turned off in the winter, "So [the clients] almost didn't have a choice." ■ Stelle's Modernist take on the classic beach house consists of three connected pavilions, arrayed in a pinwheel configuration that creates a number of sheltered outdoor spaces, including a pool deck that seems to float above the dunes. Code required that the house be elevated above its fragile site—"The house touches the ground very lightly," Stelle says—but the resulting effect is aesthetically as well as ecologically positive, enhancing both privacy and the sweeping views out to sea. ■ The building's simple forms are dressed in materials that will stand up to salt air and Atlantic storms: red cedar siding, fiber-cement fascias, corrugated concrete roof panels, and bronze light fixtures made for marine use. In a nod to industrial chic, deck and stair rails are fabricated from 1-inch galvanized re-bar connected with thread-on nuts. Interiors are clean and spare, with exposed structural elements that are orderly enough to be decorative while conveying the informality that is this home's reason for being. Says Stelle: "We wanted it to be easy, fun, light, just not take itself too seriously." —B.D.S.

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