

# 47 GLASS HOUSE

A SEAMLESS INTEGRATION OF LANDSCAPE, ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN ALLOWS A MODERN BEACH HOUSE TO EMBRACE ITS GLORIOUS BAYSIDE SETTING.

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ARCHITECTURE / VIOLA ROUHANI, STELLE LOMONT ROUHANI ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN / ELEANOR DONNELLY, STELLE LOMONT ROUHANI ARCHITECTS  
HOME BUILDER / JOSEPH LYNCH, RIVERBEND DEVELOPMENT  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / CHRIS LAGUARDIA, LAGUARDIA DESIGN GROUP







With spectacular natural vistas, cool breezes and the entrancing sound of crashing waves, the Atlantic coast is an alluring location for a weekend getaway. So when a Manhattan couple with a young son found a unique property located on Mecox Bay in the Hamptons, they decided to build just such a retreat. The result is a three-level steel-and-concrete structure clad with western red cedar siding that will weather over time like a piece of driftwood. “The cedar will ultimately end up matching the boardwalk and the deck on the side of the pool,” explains architect Viola Rouhani. “The goal is for the building to really recede and allow nature to be the star of the show.”

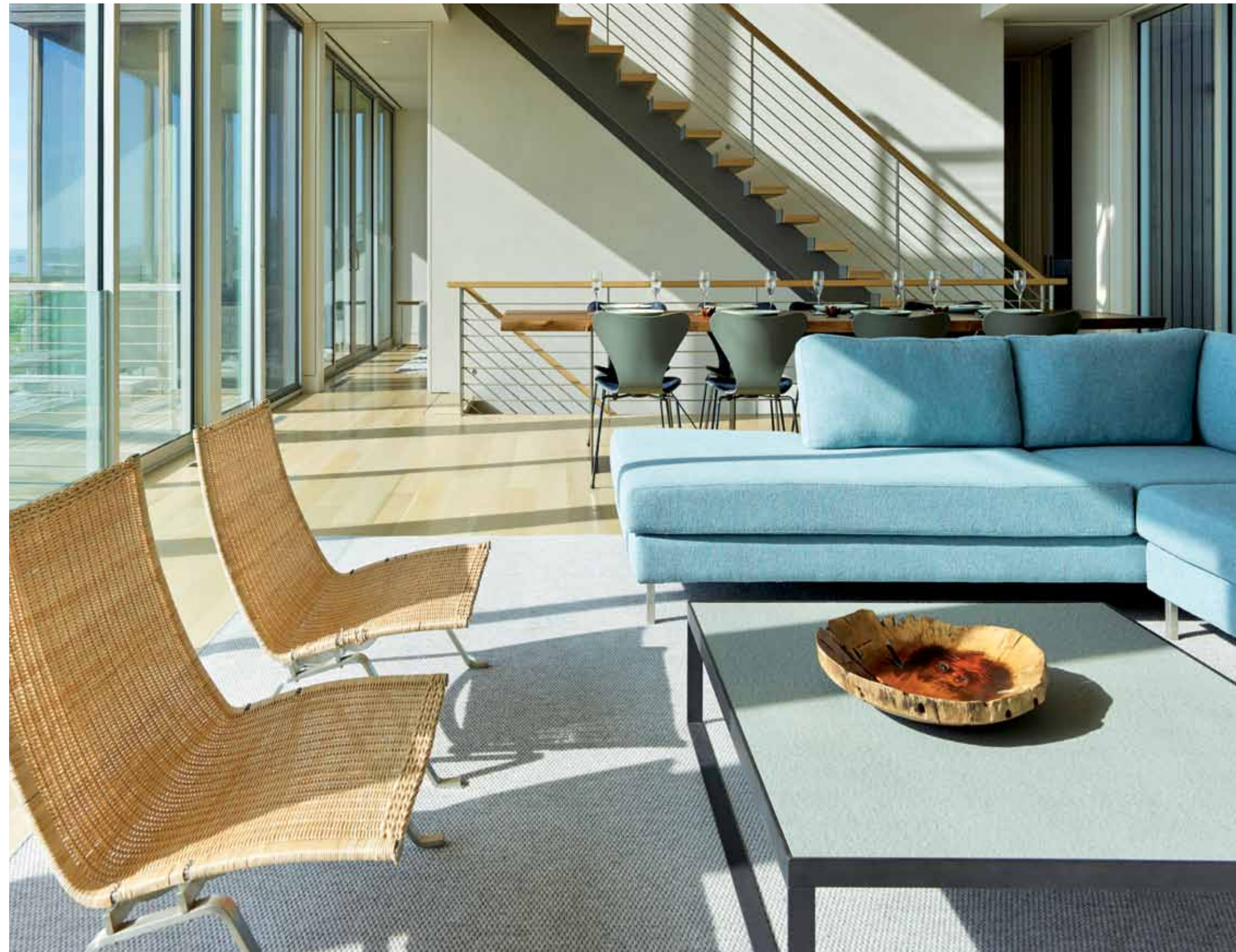
To prepare the sandy lot for construction, contractor Joe Lynch demolished the original home that once stood on the site and created a stable foundation for the new one by driving 75 wood pilings 40 feet into the ground.

“There was an enormous amount of engineering required to make the foundation work,” Lynch says. The modern structure has two volumes: one for the public spaces, and the other for more intimate spaces. A central core housing the main staircase links them and frames an ocean view that is visible from the large expanse of glass at the front entrance. “It was very important to us that there be an indication as you approach the house that there is this beautiful landscape on the other side,” Rouhani explains.

Indeed, Rouhani’s design features floor-to-ceiling windows facing the bay to the west and curated views of the ocean to the east. To maintain the minimalistic look her clients’ envisioned, the architect eschewed draperies in favor of shades that are concealed in the ceiling and wood screens on the exterior. “The architectural screening creates beautiful shadow patterns in the space,” says interior designer Eleanor Donnelly, who selected finishes and designed many of the home’s furnishings. In the open

**Opposite:** The home’s cedar siding has been laid out in horizontal and vertical orientations for both aesthetics and functionality. The horizontal boards help create an exterior balcony on the second floor, and the vertical boards form a screen that conceals an outdoor shower, storage and other utilitarian functions on the lower level. The anodized-aluminum door and window system is by Arcadia.

**Below:** A sectional from Viesso, covered in a fabric blend from Maharam, and a pair of brushed stainless-steel-and-wicker chairs by Fritz Hansen from Hive in Portland, Oregon, form a relaxed seating area in the great room. The custom cocktail table has a black-steel base by Battle Iron & Bronze and a bluestone top.







kitchen, for example, Donnelly incorporated custom built-in white Formica cabinetry that conceals a bar, additional refrigeration and storage. "It's an industrial finish that holds up to family life and entertaining," Donnelly explains. "Everything kind of happens in one large space, so we needed to house a lot of the clutter and mess of everyday life behind doors."

The gleaming white built-in complements the custom kitchen cabinetry, which is made of a wood veneer that resembles driftwood. The open space also includes areas for dining and conversation in front of a bluestone-clad fireplace, which echoes the soothing palette of blue-green hues that can be found throughout the house. "Viola and I believe in a minimal palette, functional spaces and

honesty in materials," Donnelly says. "We tried to repeat the materials and color throughout, so that the design is cohesive and you have one experience versus many different moments that are collected together."

Custom shelving continues in the third-floor hallway, this time made of walnut. The material reappears in the live-edge dining table in the great room and custom cabinetry in a casual den on the top floor, which has a screened-in porch overlooking the bay. The view from that space is Rouhani's favorite thing about the modern abode. "It gives the sense of being on your own perch elevated above the water with views in all directions," she explains. "We hoped to recreate the quintessential beach house that brings the outdoors in and the indoors out, and I think we accomplished that." ■

**Above:** Landscape designer Chris LaGuardia created a plan to replace the original deck with a more compact version made of mahogany and remove invasive plant species, as well as installed native grasses and vegetation. The adjustable beach chairs are from Dedon.

**Opposite, clockwise from top left:** The staircase's floating treads are made of rift-cut white oak. A bed from Modernica is positioned to take advantage of the Mecox Bay views. Custom walnut cabinetry offers storage in the upstairs hallway. *Crystal Beaches of Jökulsárlón* by Matthew Carbone resides in the family room.