

# MAGAZINE

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# How's this for a beach hut?

*It's hard to tell where the dunes end and the house begins in this boho Hamptons hideaway*

INTERVIEW Vinny Lee PHOTOGRAPHS Richard Powers



The upper-level living room with cedar louvres and folding glass walls revealing the seascape



**T**hey may be renowned interior designers, but when George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg first looked round their beach house in Amagansett in East Hampton, near New York, it was what was going on outside rather than inside that grabbed their attention.

"The house was clad with vinyl shingles and lit by bizarre chandeliers, and each time the estate agent tried to focus our attention on the interior, we just kept looking away to the outside," says Pushelberg. "The unspoilt beaches and rows of double dunes were what really appealed to us," adds Yabu. "But the strict planning regulations that have kept the shore so pristine meant we had to work hard to create the house we wanted."

The pair employed local architect Frederick Stelle and set to work on a plan that kept within the restricted "dune zone" limits while allowing the property an unhindered view of the sea. The original house was demolished and, in time, a new one rose in its place.

This structure is on two levels – one cantilevered over the other to avoid unsightly structural pillars and supports. When sitting in the lower-level dining area, the view is



**'In other, less relaxed parts of the Hamptons, New Yorkers bring their stresses with them. Here, we really unwind'**

uninterrupted. "The beach comes into the house and the house is part of the beach," says Yabu. Also unusual are the sliding panels of cedar louvers, which can be pulled across to cut down the sun's glare, but allow cooling breezes to waft through. When it is fresher, there is a second layer of folding glass doors that can be used alone or in conjunction with the panels. "At night, when the house is lit up, it looks like a lantern," says Pushelberg.

Another carefully considered aspect of the house was the guest accommodation. "It is all on the lower level and the rooms can be accessed individually from the beach, so everyone has their own space and can have time by themselves," says Yabu.

Much of the furniture has been collected on or reflects the duo's extensive travels. The waterfall painting in the sitting room is by the Japanese painter Hiroshi Senju, discovered when they were working on a project in Tokyo. The oversized oak dining table was custom-made by Dutch designer Marlieke Van Rossum, with whom they now collaborate through the company Avenue Road, which sells limited editions of high-end designer furniture, including pieces by Yabu Pushelberg.

There are chairs painted in a mellow grey by Paola Navone placed around the dining



**Clockwise, from top left:** kitchen with dumb waiter to the dining area; dune

dining area; guest room; exterior; George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg

table in the area off the kitchen and the shade is picked up in the weathered cedar panelling, which a year's worth of sea spray and wind has softened from brown to a silvery grey.

The floor of the open lower level is softened with vintage knotted Turkish rugs. "They were used among the desert sands, so are used to being picked up and shaken," says Yabu. The trio of basketwork lampshades is from Finnish stylist Tiina Laakkonen, who has a shop locally. They crown what Pushelberg calls the "boho hippy vibe" of the place.

"This area is more relaxed and informal than other parts of the Hamptons, where New Yorkers tend to bring their stresses with them. Here we really unwind, and both of us enjoy cooking. In fact, as we were preparing dinner one night, a New York friend was heard to whisper to his partner, 'Don't they have staff?' But within a day or two, he was shopping at the local stall and cooking us all breakfast. It's the effect this place has on people." ■

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