THE NEW
Traditional

Blue and white never looked so brilliant: California designer Mark D. Sikes switched coasts to take on our Idea House in nautical Newport, Rhode Island. The result is an East meets West Coast stunner that redefines classic coastal style.

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Traditionalism is not without its surprises. Preppy checks can dance across ceilings, and sandy SoCal surf photos can sub in for seascapes (on a groovy gallery wall in the basement, by the way). Classic decorators like Mark D. Sikes do abide by a set of rules, but they are his rules. And even in the old New England town of Newport, the site of this year’s Idea House, those rules are both beautifully familiar and refreshingly new.

The California designer teamed up with Newport-based builder Mark Horan and architect Alec R. Tesa to build the 5,276-square-foot cedar-and-shiplap home along Newport’s Easton Bay. “The lot itself is incredible,” notes Horan. “It’s directly across the water from Newport’s famed mansions. To the north is First Beach, which is a popular spot for paddleboarders in the summer, and to the south is where the bay opens to the Atlantic. So we wanted to build something really special here.”

Horan and Tesa wove in vernacular elements like wooden shingles, a hipped roof, and mortise-and-tenon joinery, all emblematic of historic Newport architecture. “Even the flared brackets are a bit of a throwback to the Gilded Age,” notes Tesa. Inside and out, classic style and well-established themes mingle with contemporary materials and new ideas. Here, a look at the team’s secrets to blowing the doors off today’s traditional design.

LIVING ROOM
Don’t overthink the great room.

They are a new beach house standard: open-layout great rooms that combine living, dining, and kitchen. They are designed to keep walls from dividing the crowd and blocking the views, but decorating these immense spaces can be tricky. “The key is to keep it simple,” says Sikes. “Ensuring each room relates well to the others and appears cohesive is always my top priority.” Here, he kept the palette very light, first with the white shiplap walls and trim, and then in the ivory furniture paired in navy wacting. “Then I layered in classic dark-wood occasional pieces, like the etlwood coffee table, and blue back and check patterns. These not only add plenty of visual interest, they help the space connect with the adjacent rooms.”

Meet the Designer
MARK D. SIKES

*The details of a home are very important—even the most important elements,* says the Los Angeles-based interior designer. “Good design is about getting those right, from layering in plenty of texture right down to great fabric selection.” Sikes’s first book, Beautiful, is a New York Times best-seller; in 2019, he launched a clothing line, MDS Stripes.
The lighting is by Circa Lighting, and the sink fixtures are by Delta Faucet. The backsplash tile is by Fireclay Tile. The cabinetry is by Wallborn Cabinet, Inc., with quartz and wooden counters by Cambria and Zurner Design, respectively. The windows are by Marvin. The dog bed is by Amy Berry Design; the dog food is Blue Buffalo. The shade fabric is by Hill Brown, with trim by Samuel & Sons. The striped wallpaper in the butler’s pantry is by Farrow & Ball. The artwork is by Kate Scheiter.

**KITCHEN**

**Colorblock the cabinetry.**

Light upper cabinetry, subway tile, and quartz counters make the kitchen appear almost weightless. "It’s a classic look, very easy on the eyes,” says Sikes. He painted the lower cabinetry a rich royal blue, and then added two style shortstops: bobbin-frame ebonized rush barstools and, above the windows, a blue-and-white Roman shade, which ties the cabinetry color scheme together.

**BUTLER’S PANTRY**

**Dress a tiny room to the nines.**

The butler’s pantry is like a pattern playground next to the kitchen’s straightforward solids. "I see it as a little jewel of a room,” says Sikes. Slim vertical stripes replace the kitchen’s white tile, and a medallion-print Quadrille wallpaper caps the room like a stylish top hat. Even the shade has a playful pom-pom trim.

**MARK’S ESSENTIAL**

**Papered Ceiling**

"I like to highlight beautiful light fixtures, like this schoolhouse-style glass pendant, with a peaky doiley wallpaper. The one above the sink up and gives it the stage.”

**BREAKFAST NOOK**

**Reassign hosting duties.**

Can an informal nook step in for its older, more formal cousin? Sure here, the dining area off the kitchen feels intimate enough for everyday meals (and super cozy; see page 67 for more on the reading bench), but it can handle a larger crowd. The African mahogany table seats up to eight when extended. Sikes outfitted the chandelier with a custom floral shade—talk about dressing for dinner!
CENTRAL HALL
Rock a superb center hall.

"The octagonal walls are designed to connect the whole house, from the basement stairwell all the way up to the tower," says Sikes. "The idea is that each room has its own palette and patterns, but they all relate back to this common center." Natural light pours into this second-floor landing through a parapet window and a skylight, illuminating a geometric artwork series in the stairwell.

Meet the Builder
MARK HORAN
Horan is a general contractor who has been building houses in Newport since 1992. With projects ranging from traditional New England single-style houses to Georgian and second-empire Victorians, the Cape Cod native has built more than 250 homes over the course of his career.

POWDER ROOM
Swing execute.

"I think good powder rooms (top left) can lean a little wild, so we really deepened the blues and went a bit more moody with the Quadrille knit wallpaper," says Sikes. "He hung a raffia monochromatic mix to give the room a layer of natural texture, and then added a single crystal vanity sconce. "It's very simple in form, which makes it perfect against all of that pattern."

GUEST ROOM
Aim for scale.

More than a place to hang your hat, Sikes doubled down on the saturated blues in the back corridor leading from the garage (just outside the powder room) with deep navy shipper walls and a built-in bench. Outfitting with a linen cushion and throw pillows, plus iron wall hooks for storing beach and dog gear, the short pass-through gams boast loads of nautical gravitas.

The wallpaper is a custom stripe by Pome & Ball. The lanterns are by Circa Lighting. The chandelier and new sconce are by Winter, and the parapet window is by Heath. The artwork is by Woodward Art Group. The chair is by Lin Indoor/Outdoor. The mirror is by Guinevere.

The woodwork is painted Stiffkey blue by Farrow & Ball. The fabrics are by Quadrille.

The sink fixtures are by Waterworks. The scurce is by Circa Lighting. The chandelier is by Barbara Barry. The door is parted Stiffkey blue by Farrow & Ball. The hardware is by Emtek.

The bed is by Roche Bobois. The bedding is by Montecito and Perennials & Co. The wallpaper is by Quadrille. The draperies are by Quadrille. The fabrics are by Quadrille.

The sink fixtures are by Waterworks. The scurce is by Circa Lighting. The chandelier is by Barbara Barry. The door is parted Stiffkey blue by Farrow & Ball. The hardware is by Emtek.

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Meet the Architect
ALEC R. TESA, AIA

"The views really made this house unique right from the start," says Tesa. "On the higher floors, you have 270-degree vistas of the water, so we really tried to maximize them as much as we could." Since his firm's founding seven years ago, he has specialized in designing shingle-style residences throughout Rhode Island, including in downtown Newport and Narragansett.

MARK'S ESSENTIAL

Bold Patterns

"Instead of decorating around dipped ceilings, I like to play them up with a great pattern and make them a defining part of the room."

In the girl’s room, the wallpaper and drapery/coverlet fabric is by Quadrille. The bed is by Serena & Lily. The bedside tables and dresser are from the Coastal Living Oasis collection by Stanley Furniture. The window is by Marvin, and the botanicals are by Wendor Art Group.

BOY’S ROOM

Revive the check print.

This fun kid's room is actually deceptively simple, says Sikes. "It's designed around three big ideas: the check, the daybeds, and the art," he explains. The designer chose the sofa-like daybeds over conventional twins to make it feel more like a lounge, and upholstered the walls and ceiling in a navy buffalo check. The modern art is a clever way to update the traditional pattern.

GIRL’S ROOM

Do classic botanicals in a new way.

"I see this lattice wallpaper as the feminine version of the check in the boy’s room," says Sikes, who used a white wicker headboard, an ivory dresser, and a botanical art series (24 pieces mounted in white matting and frames) to help lighten the dark blue patterned walls. The floral coverlet fabric is repeated on the draperies and trimmed in barrel-knot fringe. 
MASTER SUITE
Colormatch the sea.
The master bedroom is on the southwestern corner of the house, where the bay feeds out into the Atlantic. "The room is so oriented toward the sea that the design became as much about the water as anything else," says Sikes. He upholstered the walls in a floral vine print (of his own design) that harmonizes with the water, and chose a drapery pattern in a similar blue but "that has a little more air," he explains. "That's why they work so well together." Right: A five-foot oval soaking tub sits under a double window bank in the master bath. For a fresh spin on stripes, Sikes hired Northeast artist Kathryn Piscushe to paint trim and window borders that echo the striped tile arrangement on the floor. The tub filler is polished nickel. Opposite, left: The striped walls and crisp white seating in the master sitting room are upholstered in weather-resistant fabric and piped in marine blue trim. Opposite, right: Behold, the summerhouse closet: This one was designed with plenty of natural light, along with storage that keeps clothing and shoes in sight.

MARK'S ESSENTIAL
Walls with Trim
"Anytime I do a fabric on the wall, I always finish it with a really good trim. It adds definition to the angles, and gives the walls a very tailored, polished look."

Throughout the master suite, the upholstered furniture is by Lee Industries, the lighting is by Circa Lighting, and the windows are by Marvin. Above: The closet shelving and organization are by The Container Store. Left: The upholstery, cushions, and pillow fabrics are by Sunbrella, and the walls are covered in a Robert Allen stripe for Sunbrella. The rug is a custom Sunbrella rug by Colonial Mills. The side table, coffee table, and chairs are by Howard. The artwork is by Catherine Booker Jones. Opposite: The wallpaper, draperies, shams, and lumbar pillow are by Schumacher, and the wallpaper trim is by Samuel & Sons. The bedding is by Matouk, and the shades are by Horizons Window Fashions. The floor tile in the bath is by Fireclay Tile; the faucet and fixtures are by Delta Faucet. The wall stripes are painted Lulworth Blue by Farrow & Ball. The tub is by MirOil.
LOFT STUDIO
Let in the sun.
A trio of skylights and a series of casement windows wrapping the room on three sides make the third-floor loft a prime spot for a studio. Sikes anchored the space with a whitewashed central work table, natural armchairs, and an upholstered ottoman, and then added in a rattan daybed to allow it to double as super-private guest quarters.

ROOF DECK
Protect your perch.
The studio steps out to a roof deck that overlooks Easton Bay. "This house is very exposed to the sea, so we chose materials that can really stand up to the elements," says Horan of the cedar shingles, composite trim and decking, and blue casement windows. The sectional fabric and rug are also made from weather-resistant materials.

LOFT BATH
Create a suite deal.
A full bath and a kitchenette (not shown) ensure the loft functions like a breezy studio apartment. French blue patterned wallpaper, a quartz-topped vanity, and a rattan mirror continue the blue, white, and natural palette of the adjoining room. The sconce is bronze and white glass, and the faucet hardware is chrome.

Throughout, the windows are by Marvin, and the lighting is by Circa Lighting. Left: The skylights are by Velux, and the ottoman is by Lee Industries. The daybed and table are by Serena & Lily. The rugs are by Merida Studio. The chairs are from Sikes's collection for Henredon. Top, right: The deck and railing are by AZEK. The sectional is by Lloyd Flanders, and the fabric is by Sunbrella. The rug is by Dash & Albert; the garden stools are from Overstock. The accessories are by Garnet Hill and Williams-Sonoma Home. Bottom, right: The vanity is by Wellborn Cabinet, Inc., with counters by Cambria. The fixtures are by Delta Faucet.
MARK'S ESSENTIAL
Natural Texture

"I include organic materials in every room. Natural elements like grasscloth, sisal, and leather (seen here on the walls, floor, and occasional chair, respectively) add dimension and authenticity."

GAME ROOM
Turn game rooms into style icons.

These come-one, come-all party hubs are due for an image overhaul. (Navy felting on the pool table, anyone?) "My approach to the basement was to make it so cozy and functional that it lures everyone downstairs," says Sikes, who designed an ultra stylish banquette to wrap a pair of walnut-and-steel pedestal game tables, and then added Parisian blue leather armchairs for extra seating.

MEDIA ROOM
Bring on the Netflix binge.

This room is House of Cards ready. A cotton sectional with linen piping and an upholstered armchair invite plenty of full-series lounging in the basement media room. Behind it, a gallery wall mixes abstracts by Kayce Hughes with contemporary East-meets-West-Coast beach scenes by photographer Matt Albiani. "Glass doors are a nice way to break up a large room without separating the spaces entirely," notes Sikes.
Meet the Landscape Architect
PATRICK SWEENEY

"My advice for designing a great patio is to answer the simple questions," says Sweeney. "How many people will be using it, and what will they be doing? Do you need a kitchen or just a place to dine? Will you be outdoors at night or only during the day? These considerations will help determine the right dimensions." The certified horticulturist opened his firm, Infinity Design Group, in 2010; he specializes in designing residential landscapes in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

The windows and doors are by Marvin, and the railing is by AZEK. The pavers and fire pit are by Belgard. The furniture is by Lloyd Flanders, and the fabric is by Sunbrella. The lighting is by Carolina Lanterns.

REAR TERRACES
Find your yacht club swagger.

Classic East Coast style doesn’t get more polished than white wicker, crisp cabana stripes, and potted hydrangeas and boxwood. Everything from the seating and cushion fabric to the scalloped blue awning is weather-resistant, so it’ll keep its shine. Here’s more on the outdoor lounges, dining room, and pool, which add an additional 1,000 square feet of breezy living space.

1. UNCOMMON GROUND The patio is crafted of concrete pavers that resemble bluestone. Sweeney varied the sizes and colors, and set them at a 45-degree bias “for a slightly more formal look,” he notes.

2. PLAYING POOL Wicker chaise longues and bluestone coping line the 10- by 37-foot swimming pool. Sweeney planted ‘Fastigiata’ boxwood behind it to create an evergreen privacy wall.

3. COLONIAL STREET STYLE Concrete fire pit pavers mimic the classic look of cobblestones, which are common in Newport. The deep-seating lounge chairs feature a delicate woven center cutout.

4. RAISE A TOAST On the dining terrace, a woven oval table is fitted with tempered glass and paired with petite armchairs for intimate outdoor dinners.
THE FINER DETAILS
Give rooms a little leeway.

"I always look for ways to give a room some flexibility," says Sikes. "I think you get the most use out of spaces if a bit of variation is built into them." Here are four spots that double up on practicality.

1. **DINING + READING NOOK** Horan and Sikes added a built-in bench along one wall of the dining room. With a comfy cushion and throw pillows, it's a sweet spot to stretch out.

2. **MEDIA LOUNGE + LIBRARY** Lacquered blue bookcases stretch across a single wall in the media room, giving the subterranean seating area the tucked-away feel of a cozy— and well-appointed—library.

3. **BEDROOM + WRITING CORNER** "I love a writing desk as a bedside table," says Sikes. This one comes with no shortage of inspiration, as it boasts some of the best views in the house.

4. **STUDIO + GUEST QUARTERS** A rattan daybed is casual seating (and napping!) by day, guest bed by night. "Rooms with standout views should be extra versatile," says Sikes.

Throughout, the lighting is by Circa Lighting, the windows are by Marvin, and the paint is by Farrow & Ball. Clockwise from top, left: The cushion, pillows, and custom shade fabrics are by Pigott's Store. The bed and chair are by Lee Industries, the desk is by Engle & Deutch, and the artwork is by Kayce Hughes. The bookcase is by Jonathan Dahl Woodworks and painted Hague Blue, the hardware is by Emtek, and the burlled and wooden boxes are by MadeGoods. The rattan daybed is by Serena & Lily; the cushion fabric is by Schumacher; the rug is by Merida Studio; the pillows are by Carolina Irving Textiles, Raoul Textiles, and Lisa Fine Textiles; and the trim is by Samuel & Sons.