

HAMPTONS COTTAGES & GARDENS | AUGUST 15, 2025

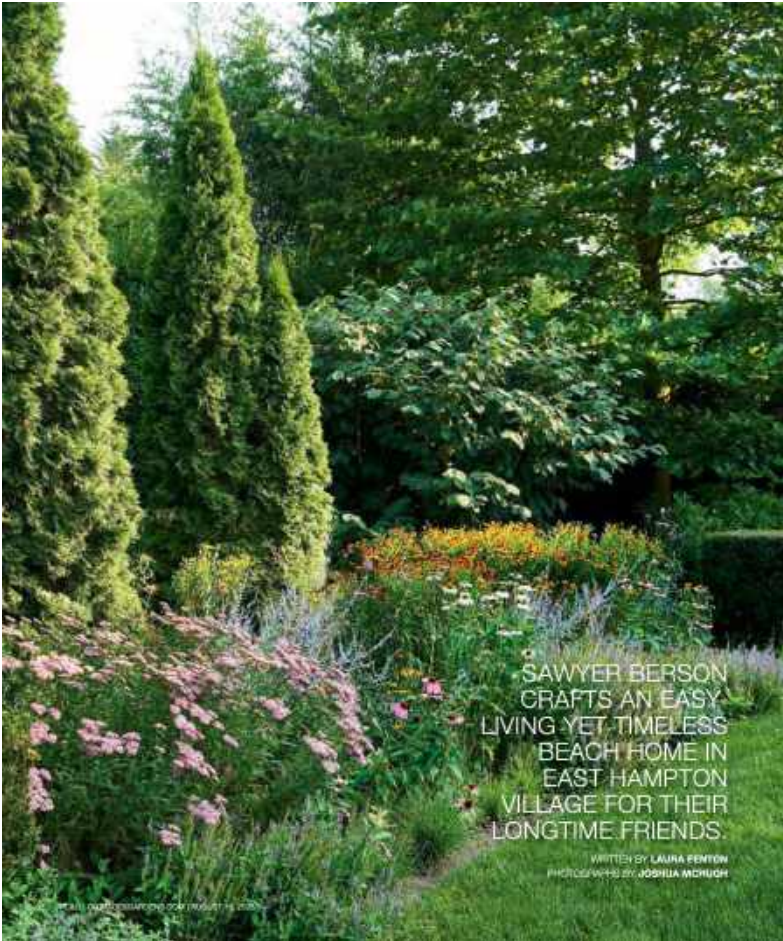
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SAWYER BERSON
CRAFTS AN EASY
LIVING YET TIMELESS
BEACH HOME IN
EAST HAMPTON
VILLAGE FOR THEIR
LONGTIME FRIENDS.

WRITTEN BY LAURA EMMETT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEPH MICHUGH



QUINTESSENTIAL COTTAGE



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Inspired by history Sawyer and Benson studied local history to gain architectural inspiration, including the unusual, multi-shaped windows. "It was a delight to take those guidelines," says Benson. [View the renovation project](#) and the living room is filled with classic 20th-century pieces that have been reupholstered. A painting by John Kirby hangs against the cream-colored walls and ceiling. See the rest of the



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ithout an agenda, a gradual, not working shatters a red clipped base wood bath, this man one cottage designed by Sawyer Benson looks like it could have always been a part of East Hampton Village. However, up and recently opened 1950s ranch house occupied the lot on Hippis Lane. The property's owners are longtime friends of architectural designer and landscape architect Brian Sawyer and architect John Benson, the co-founders of the firm Sawyer Benson.

"We'd talked about doing something with their house for years," says Sawyer. But after nearly three decades the owners decided they didn't want to renovate, they wanted to start over completely—and of course, they wanted to work with their close friends. Sawyer and Benson brought in H.D. Spawton Construction to build the new house.

The owners desired a modern house set up for outdoor weekend living with a primary suite on the ground floor and as many bedrooms as they could fit on the second. (The couple lives in town.) They were committed to how many square feet they could build, but Sawyer and Benson, naturally fit three organic bedrooms and a sitting room with a pullout sofa into





COOKING WITH LIGHT (left) The kitchen took longer than its budget thanks to additions on three sides and a bump-out built into the corner. "It is incredibly efficient," says Sawyer. **(right)** Island Pendant in Benjamin Moore's Cottage Red, the island and the Luxor Poulsen pendant overhead draw focus in the kitchen. **Capoverde** the white cabinets. **Dark** Parsons.



the second story. The architect also made strategic use of dormers in the roofline, making one which accommodates the handsome stairwell. Moreover, the living spaces all flow into one another with the primary suite tucked away in a roomy corner.

The H-shaped configuration at the back of the house creates a path between the primary bedroom and the kitchen, effectively creating an outdoor living room. Careful planning also went into how the house relates to the pool, lawn, tennis, swimming pool, and pool pavilion, all of which help bring the outdoors into the house. Sawyer was also responsible for the planting design, which includes a perennial garden, surrounded with arbutus and with hedges against a backdrop of clipped hedges and London plane trees.

Sawyer and Britton say their frustration of working with the owners helped the project run especially smoothly. "We know each other so well we were fielding each other's concerns," says Sawyer. "We have a similar sense of time, civility, and the process was very organic and comfortable."

Sawyer Britton works in a wide range of architectural styles, but in this instance they looked to local historic homes for inspiration. "We did very rigorous historical research and custom detailing," says Sawyer of the house's architectural language, which references 18th and 19th century profiles. The exterior detailing of this house is particularly successful.

Architecture: The arched opening under the stair adds charm to the space and directs the eye, providing clear sight lines through the ground floor.

Decor: Leonard Berner Berner had the dining table custom-made to pair with the vintage Christie Pankof chairs. The pendant lamp and woven chairs are also vintage finds. See [Photograph](#).





Showered in a former riverfront grandeur, the media room is anchored by a 10-amp wall-to-wall rug.

Primary bedroom is a calm retreat thanks to classic coastal furnishings, including a bed and two bedside tables.

Guest bedroom provides for an extra bedroom, with a vanity table nearby, instead of a mirror. The whole job cost in excess of \$1.5 million. — *Tom O'Rourke*

including how the pitch of the roof swoops dramatically down to the front porch. "We emphasized the rake profile under the eave at the public side," explains Sawyer. "These sorts of details become really important—when you get them right, they feel great." However, that refined architectural detail is counterbalanced by a few onerous details—like the original square windows patched into the house for the staircase and a chimney. "This kind of house needs a little bit of a silly gesture too," says Sawyer of the quirky openings.

The course discussion departs from tractors with modern furnishings, a juxtaposition that helps the house feel fresh. The tubular, minimalist palm-leaf chaise near the beach with light-colored wood floors, mosaic prints, and

printed cotton fabrics throughout. But there are a few surprises thrown into the mix, including a media room color-checked in lavender, a bold red kitchen island, and playful doodling splendor on the Marco Zucchi chairs in the living room. The mix of new and vintage pieces, including several house designs from the house, the feeling of having been collected over time, even though they had started from scratch with the furnishings.

What Sawyer and Benson love most about the house they designed for their friends has nothing to do with the eclectic notes of the architecture or the very useful furnishings—it's the overall feeling of the place. "The house lives really well," Sawyer says. "There's a level of comfort that is joyful."



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