

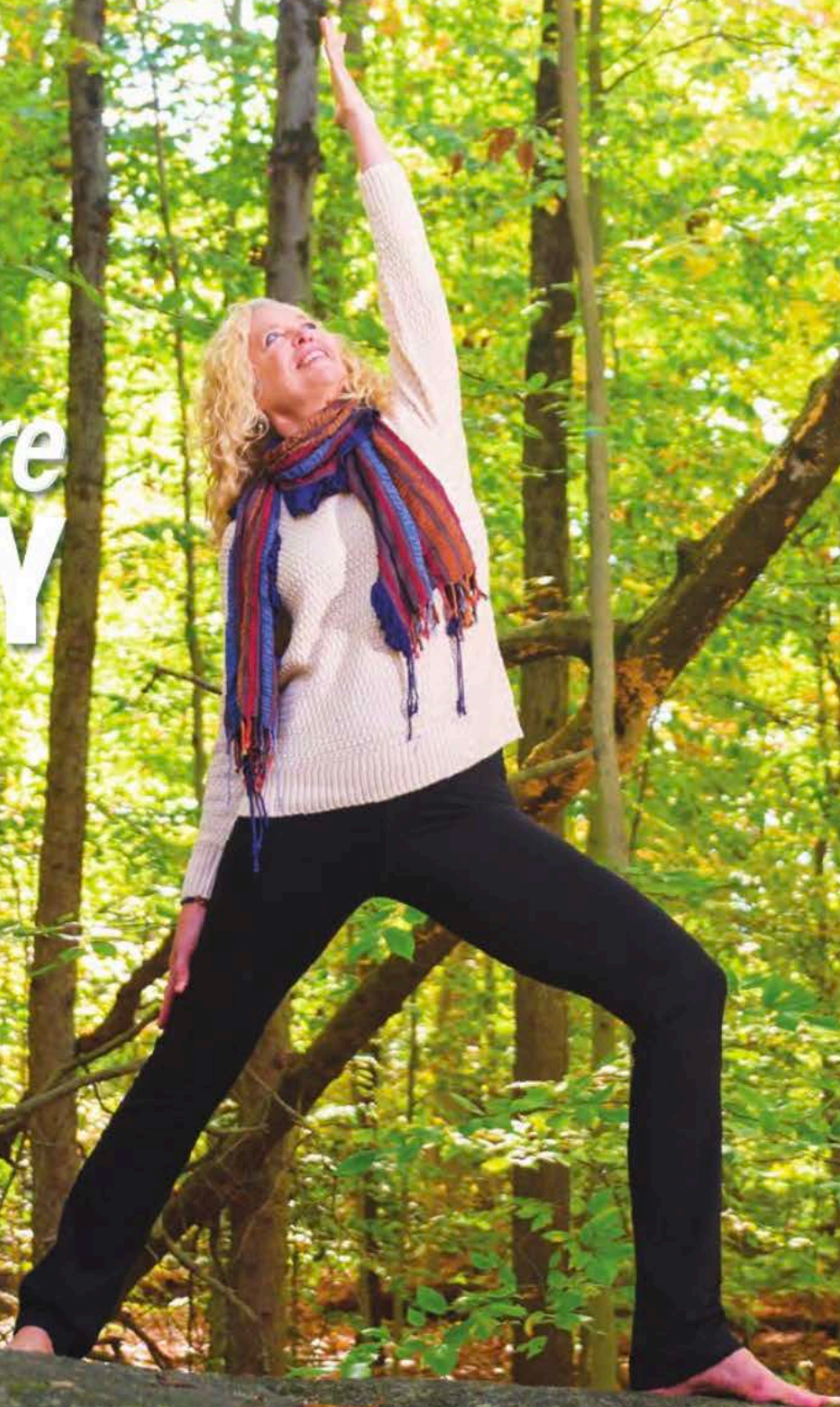
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SPOTLIGHT

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

IN THIS CUSTOM **TEARDOWN** PROJECT,
THE CLIENTS WISHED FOR AN **OCEAN VIEW**
FROM ALMOST **EVERY ROOM**.

WORDS BY DREW LIMSKY | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA HOFF

This page: Because it's situated on the top floor, the premiere suite in this five-bedroom North Bethany home features cozy architectural details that follow the roofline. The 6,800-square-foot house, set on the clients' beachfront teardown site, was designed and built by Marnie Custom Homes. The dominant colors are sand, white and bottle glass shades. In the premiere, the bed wall is reclaimed wood; the 54-inch Java 3-Blade outdoor ceiling fan with remote was sourced from Wayfair. Opposite page: The office employs touches both rustic (reclaimed wood) and refined (Phillip Jeffries wall paper, Shades of Light art deco pendant, Carrara marble countertop).



This page: A charming nook is tucked under a steeply pitched dormer window; white oak flooring runs throughout the home. Opposite page: The owners' previous home on the same lot failed to take advantage of the views, so this time, both client and designer made sure that the bedrooms boasted ocean vistas. This guest bedroom eschews color on the bed walls, instead keeping the look neutral and architectural—so as not to compete with the sea view.



Marnie Oursler, principal of Marnie Custom Homes, tends to give her projects expressive names, but *Star of the Sea* in North Bethany is also the star of its oceanfront block. While its aesthetic is understated and contemporary coastal much like its neighbors, at the same time it's something extra. With four floors and five bedrooms contained within 6,800 square feet, it's certainly more sizable than the homes on the adjacent lots.

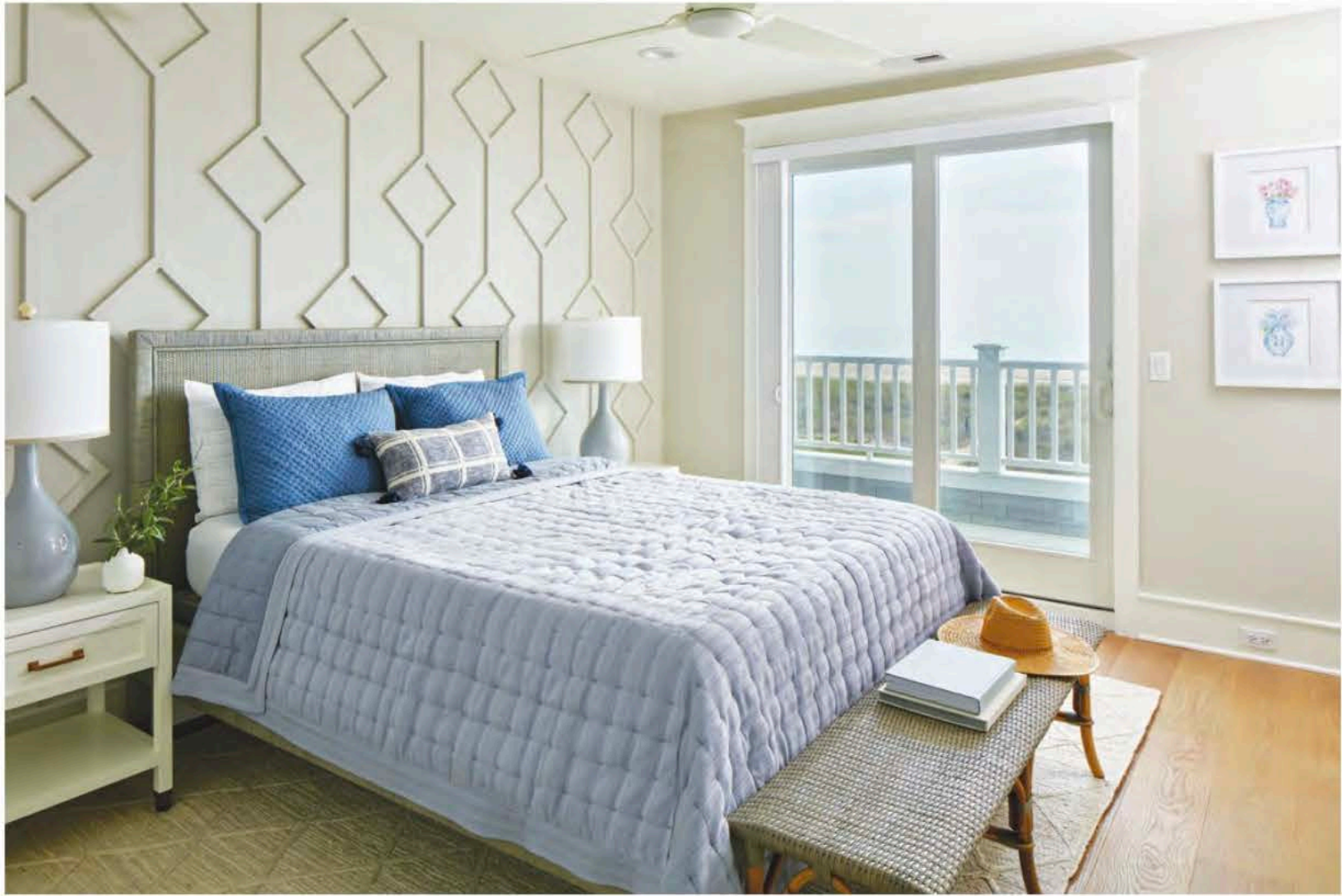
The home that Oursler built resulted from a teardown—for several years, the clients had lived in the home that previously filled the lot, “and they knew what they wanted,” she says. The owners wanted to use as much available space as feasible, take advantage of as much of the water view as physically possible and reduce the number of steps for their multigenerational family.

In sum, in these pandemic times, what the clients wanted was everything they could possibly want or need under one roof, all of it accessible. The house, with its gray-shingle exterior courtesy of

New Cedar, features a discrete office space on the top floor, something that Oursler is getting more requests for as remote work is showing staying power. There is an exercise room downstairs, too, for much the same reasons.

“This house is definitely set up for working at home and year-round living if desired,” says Oursler, adding that the demand for this type of full-time beach house is high in Delaware—and general interest in beach living has been high for years. Oursler has hosted *Big Beach Builds*, which aired for two seasons in 2017 and 2018 on the DIY Network; she was also the host of HGTV’s *Dream Home 2018*.

Star of the Sea also offers a serene color scheme during tumultuous times. Like many local beach houses, the living space is a study in white, sand, bleached-blue and other sea-glass colors, but Oursler’s subtle use of texture is unexpected. The fireplace is clad in a glossy, richly veined porcelain slab from Gramaco for a marbled look, while the ceiling goes in the opposite, organic direction: a double-framed wood concept inlaid with a woven





Above: The premiere bath is one of the home's most detailed spaces, featuring Pearl White Ribbon wet jet mosaic floor tiles, Arabescato Carrara honed marble shower tiles, a vanity from Decor Cabinets, mirrors from Williams Sonoma and Sherwin-Williams Gossamer Veil paint.

grasscloth wallcovering (from Phillip Jeffries). "The double-frame gives it a little bit of character," Oursler points out. The white oak flooring throughout the home keeps things neutral and calm. The living area's open floor plan not only flows easily to the bar, the coffee bar and the kitchen but also maximizes the views from multiple vantage points. The Andersen sliders on either side of the room (leading to the screened-in porch and the oceanfront deck) fill the space with sunlight. Light was also key to the positioning of the bedrooms. The clients' previous home, though set on the same land, managed not to feature ocean views from the bedrooms. This home boasts ocean views from four bedrooms, including the premiere, which is tucked cozily under the fourth-floor eaves with interior architecture detailing that emphasizes the roofline of the home. The bed's tufted headboard, backed by a bedwall of reclaimed wood, signals the home's values of comfort and unpretentiousness. In the premiere bath, even the glassed-in shower enjoys stunning ocean views. That's because Oursler understood the assignment. **DT**



The ground-floor rec room leads right to the beach. The pace is enlivened by a mural from Magic Murals and a jute-globe pendant light from Shades of Light. The wall color is Origami White from Sherwin-Williams, while the flooring is Coretec Luxury vinyl plank, in a hue called Angels Landing.