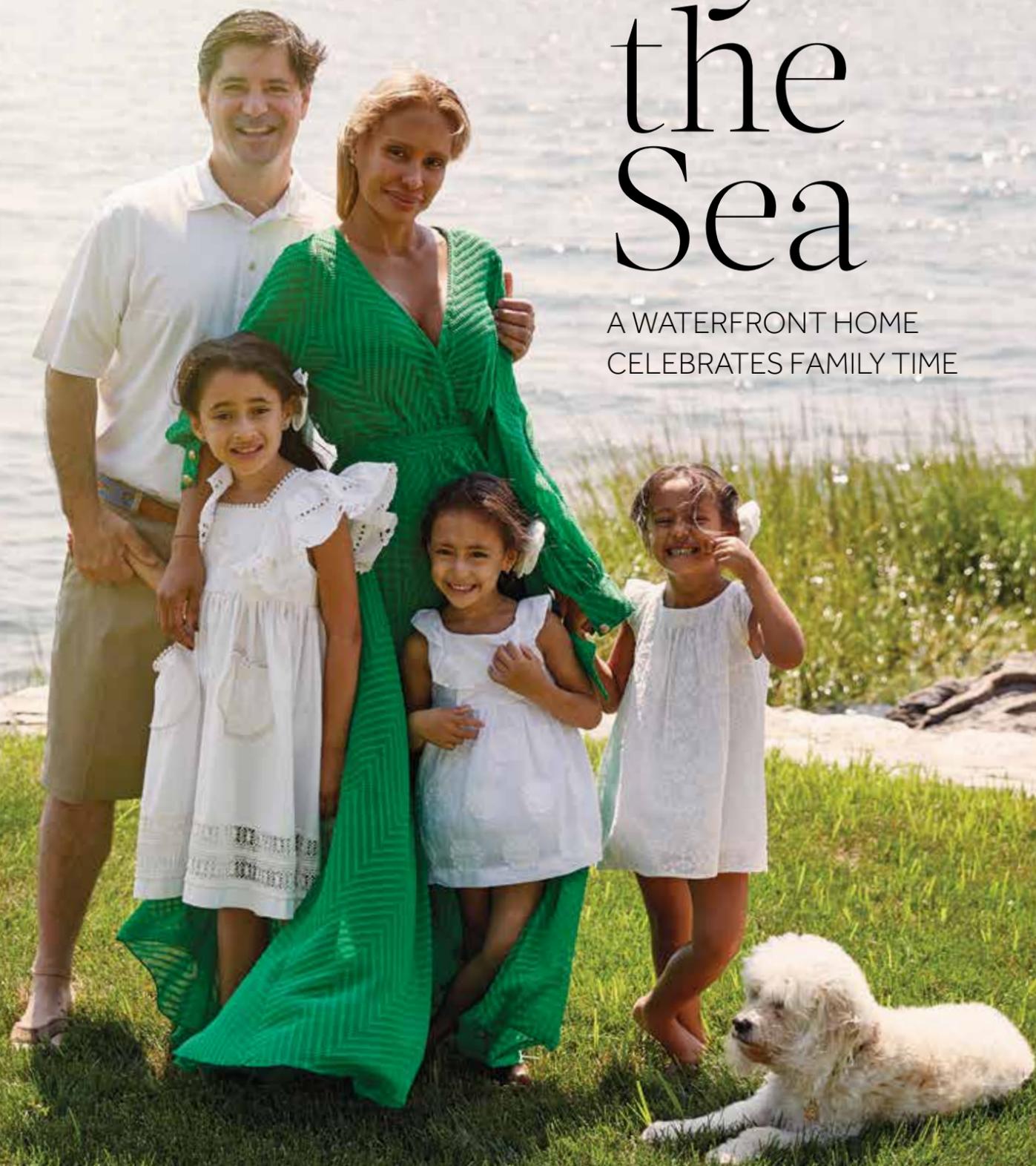


By the Sea

A WATERFRONT HOME
CELEBRATES FAMILY TIME





A QUIET PLACE The sisters share a happy moment on the beach; a gorgeous renovated patio in slate and brick and pool area offers stunning views of the Long Island Sound. Dining alfresco is one of the family's favorite activities. An elegant entryway leads visitors into a bright, airy kitchen and butler's pantry. Tones of aqua and robin's egg blue are carried inside and outside the home.



Some houses

function as simply a space to exist, while others provide a backdrop for the narrative of a young, growing family. Such is the case with this circa 1900 stately colonial located on the beach in Fairfield that in 2015 caught the eye of a couple with three young daughters. "The house had been through a major renovation around 20 years ago and was in good shape fundamentally," explains the husband. "We loved the location, the 120-degree water views, and how easy it is to get to and from New York," he explains. The family purchased the home four years ago, live in New York City during the week and now spend winter weekends and summers at their seaside sanctuary. "Having a home here allows us to live the best of both worlds," notes the husband. "With busy lives, this is a peaceful home base to come back to," he explains.

After buying the property, the couple enlisted Mark Finlay Architects and Tina Anastasia of Mark Finlay Interiors to help renovate and redecorate. "We refinished and stained the floors ebony, installed a new hood and countertops in the kitchen, moved the range and changed out the fridge," explains Anastasia. Since the husband loves to entertain and cook, the pool, patio, and outdoor kitchen area were renovated so he could grill while overlooking the water.

For the interiors, Anastasia was responsible for blending the couple's two aesthetics. "My client has a classic, traditional taste, and she wanted exactly what she has in her city home: a mix of luxe furnishings and opulent layers of fabrics, including window treatments with big swags and tiebacks, and tassels and fringe on some of the furnishings," she says. In the living and family rooms, Anastasia used a palette of soft denim blues, creams, golds, and seafoam green to brighten the space and make it feel comfortable and inviting. Attention to detail, such as adding glass beading to some accessories and using durable outdoor fabrics to withstand the wear and tear of a young family all come together to give the home a casual, relaxed vibe. "Layers of texture and luxurious fabrics in each room add an element of comfort and provide warmth," notes Anastasia. The result is a practical, well-appointed home with beachy undertones that doesn't take itself too seriously.



In the master bedroom, they chose a color scheme of soft creams and golds and added a chinoiserie wallpaper by Thibaut. "The view outside their bedroom window is beautiful and it's their little retreat," says Anastasia. In the older daughter's room, a striking fuchsia and gold damask wallpaper adds interest to an accent wall. On the ceiling, local artist Marzena Niklewicz painted an angelic scene of dainty cherubs around the crystal chandelier. Tulle, taffeta, and silk surround the bed, and bedding is from Lulla Smith. "It's a stunning, opulent space and the varieties of plush fabrics create the feeling of a princess room," says Anastasia. The client wanted the same romantic feeling for her twins' room, so Traditional Draperies in Bridgeport created custom canopies with contrasting fabric on each side for the twins' cribs, which are caned and gilded with intricate carvings.

In addition to selecting beautiful fabrics and décor, the couple wanted to feature some of their sentimental keepsakes throughout the home. Anastasia creatively displayed a set of newborn diapers and the twins' christening gowns in shadowboxed frames by Rockwell Art and Framing in Fairfield, who also made custom plaques with the girls' names, times and dates of birth.

While the wife's taste is more conservative, the husband's style is more modern, and he chose to make his mark on the home with the artwork. He and Anastasia worked with Amy Simon Fine Art in Westport to curate a variety of unique pieces. In the dining room, she helped source a pair of architectural photographs of interior church domes by David Stephenson. On the mantel, two works of acrylic and paper on masonite by Amy Genser are reminiscent of topography. Mesh-like vertical sculptures in the living room from Browngrotta Arts in Wilton are another interesting

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
A neutral palette punctuated with tones of blues echoes the color of the water outside and give this home its elegant yet beachy vibe. The more formal family, dining, and living rooms feature stylish, durable fabrics and much of the home's artwork. Floral motifs are echoed in the fabrics and panelling.





ROOMS WITH A VIEW A sophisticated master bedroom (above and right) acts as a peaceful sanctuary where the couple can rest and recharge; The girls' rooms are decorated with varying tones of lavender and purple in opulent fabrics and furnishings fit for princesses.



visual. "The unusual choice of contemporary artwork in a traditional setting really stands out, and it's a nice contrast," notes Anastasia.

Although their design styles may differ, the husband and wife agree that they love to entertain. They host major holidays at home, as well as big birthday parties during the summer for their girls. The couple also enjoys hosting events to help others. Last summer, the wife founded The Marela Children's Foundation (marelchildrensfoundation.org) to improve healthcare and health education in her birthplace of the Dominican Republic. The Foundation offers a free walk-in clinic, which serves around 50,000 parents and children in a rural area, supplying them with medicine, antibiotics, and other necessary supplies. "We have held gatherings at the house to share work we are doing with friends. We are grateful to be able to show our girls what other people live through and how to give back," explains the wife.

Having a place in which to spend time with family and friends is one of the couple's favorite things about their seaside abode. "We want our home to be a place where people want to come and stay," says the husband. But family time is so special, too. When asked about a typical summer day, he sets the scene: the double doors off the patio are open, there's a nice breeze, a gorgeous view, and every boat that's exiting the harbor goes by their front lawn. He says, "The girls can ride their scooters down the quiet street or play on the beach and watch me grill or fish off the front of the lawn. I've got all I need right here." ■

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