



OPPOSITE: A vintage chandelier illuminates a love poem writ large. THIS PAGE: A sense of memory pervades in decorative touches like porcelain sea urchins on the wall by Lilich Lotan and samplings from antique books.



# The Beach House

A derelict Craftsman home in Vancouver gets a summery treatment thanks to a cool, white, airy design.

BY MICHAEL HARRIS // PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY CALHOUN



**DINING ROOM:** The space is fresh yet nostalgic. Wishbone chairs by Hans Wegner, while willowy, are rooted in mid-century modernism; the smartly edged tabletop is actually a reclaimed door from an RCMP horse barn; and the chandelier is only ironically formal, being composed of miniature tulips and birds.

**MASTER BEDROOM:** The custom sofa fits perfectly in its nook but had to be cut in half for the journey upstairs. **BELOW:** Arper's sleek Babar barstools are a mod invitation to perch counterside.



**KELLY DECK IS A PROFESSIONAL DREAMER.** Which is why the organizers of the Millionaire Designer Home Lottery consistently ask her and her team to prep homes around Vancouver that need to inspire high-life fantasies in others. (Over 100,000 tickets are sold—and one buyer walks away with a multimillion-dollar estate.) This time around, Deck delivered a beach-fresh dwelling for romantics—characterized by crisp linens and raw blond woods.

**Western Living:** So this was the lottery home. Did you have imaginary clients in mind when designing it? And did those imaginary people have an imaginary budget, too?

**Kelly Deck:** Well, my imaginary client loves books, loves objects. You know, the sort of people who bring things home from the beach in their pockets. I went in thinking these would be young, urban people starting a family. But to be honest, I pretty much designed it as though I would live there myself. And no, the budget was not imaginary!

**WL:** Come on. You've got \$5,000 worth of Hans Wegner's Wishbone chairs in the dining room.

**KD:** Right, but some items, things I got at the flea market, cost \$2. And the chandelier in the bedroom is a salvaged 1930s piece, with gorgeous crystal, that was all dusty and about to be chucked after another reno we did.

**WL:** The house is 1920s vintage. What did you see when you arrived?

**KD:** I imagined someone had fallen in love with this place. Still, there wasn't much we could keep. Eighty years ago, when you heated a house with wood, compartmentalized living was a necessity. Today we want open spaces, so I took out every interior wall. (They were all nicotine yellow, anyway.) All the windows were replaced, too. And we raised the





roof a few feet so the attic could be transformed into two bedrooms.

**WL:** *When you renovate such an old home, how reverent do you try to be? What do you save?*

**KD:** What I'm concerned with is interpreting the home now—not being over-reverent to the past and to rules. You actually lose authenticity that way. Still, in the living room, we brought back ceiling beam details to reference the age of the home, even if we couldn't keep the original features.

**WL:** *Speaking of rules, whatever happened to that modernist manifesto: "Ornament is crime?"* You

TOP: Colours in each room are subtle but decided; shades of sea green recall the shore. LEFT: The new fireplace was framed by mosaic tiles of French blue. BOTTOM: Before images reveal a space clogged by unnecessary interior walls and a kitchen unable to digest its own colour scheme.



## Reno 911

### A Light Touch Kelly Deck's rules for decoration.

**Be Purposeful** I papered a flock of birds on the walls of the stairway to call up the idea of ascent for people who are climbing the stairs.

**Paper Over** Wallpaper has come so far in five years. I went to Rollout.ca for this house, which produces customized murals more than wallpaper.

**Trust Your Gut** There's an impulse in your chest when you hit the clutter point. Your eyes travel too much. That's when you have to start editing.

**Let It Resonate** A home is a collection of objects having a conversation, a collection that ought to reflect the people living there.

**Stay Open** People always ask me for rules. But the rules I abide by change for each project.

*have little birds in the stairway, and a P.K. Page love poem painted on the master bedroom wall.*

**KD:** Oh, get over it. Humans have a real affection for objects and for story. I don't think we should deny that kind of sentiment.

**WL:** *Fair enough. And what sentimental attachments of yours worked their way into the design here?*

**KD:** I went to Sweden and Denmark while working on this. You can see that influence in the Wishbone chairs. And there's this old photo I have at home: just a simple body at a sink, standing on a stone floor. The cleanness of that image was inspiring. I went with a West Coast beach palette here, thinking of coral, bone, linen, silk and wood. You can see it in the dining room: the floorboards are based on driftwood; the drapes are simple white linen; and the chandelier is made of tiny porcelain tulips and birds.

**WL:** *You did create a very specific mood. Crisp, but relaxed.*

**KD:** It takes a lot of time to make a place look imperfect, you know. I'm constantly going around and making books uneven on their shelves. *wl* See SOURCES



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