

all white & blue delight

A SIMPLE PALETTE

COLORS A GETAWAY **ON CHESAPEAKE BAY**

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It's safe to assume that a young couple with three small children and two supercharged careers crave rest and relaxation. But for Erin and Gregory Pitts, who are used to maintaining swifly paced schedules, too much decompression often leads to a hunger for activity. That's when a "to do" list is rotated back into the family plan. The challenge: to create a mostly effortless agenda of spare-time activity that includes swimming, tennis, windsurfing, and playing games on a nearby croquet lawn. The plan generates a happy buzz during precious time at their vacation home.

When they retreat from Baltimore to their weekend getaway on Gibson Island off the western shore of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, Erin and Gregory's priority is taking their energized children—three under the age of 6—on outdoor adventures so they can experience the natural beauty their property offers. The Pittses also love throwing parties that let them share the serenity of their home with friends, family, and colleagues.

The newly built structure isn't the couple's first property on tranquil Gibson Island, a destination they have frequented for more than 10 years. The community has a rich and colorful history, including use of the land as the summer grounds for members of the Algonquin Indian nation in the 1600s.

The house the Pittses owned before starting their family occupied a smaller lot and offered less privacy than they eventually came to desire. So they purchased the land across the street, leveled a tiny beach cottage that was beyond repair, and started a new house from scratch.

"We entertain frequently, both personally and professionally," says Erin. "I designed the layout of the house with an open floor plan in mind for smooth movement between the spaces for our children and guests."

The making of the couple's new home was a cinch for this designing family. Erin, a seasoned interior designer who has



Above: To break up the all-white great room, accessories in cool, breezy tones punctuate the space. Blue pillows in two patterns add extra comfort to the seating pieces, a blue-and-ivory rug in an oversized plaid covers the floor, and clear lamps and flower vases provide quiet and restrained scale.

Left: Erin and Gregory Pitts with Hutton, 2, Scarlet, 6, and Jackson, 4.

Right: The New England shingle-style house features two stone chimneys, two open porches, and one screened porch.

Preceding pages: The open kitchen in the middle of the house, lets Erin and Gregory get face time with everyone, be it their children or their dinner guests.





Erin covered all seating pieces on the main level of the house with indoor/outdoor fabrics. Sturdy, easily maintained skirted slipcovers decorate the chairs around the table in the dining room. **Left:** The house offers plenty of opportunities for outdoor living, including a terrace with a pergola. “As much as we enjoy this house, we prefer to use the exterior spaces as much as possible,” says Erin.

served Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., clients for more than 15 years, revels in the start-to-finish details of the construction process. Gregory, along with his two brothers, owns, operates, and designs for David Edward, a high-end furniture manufacturing concern headquartered in Baltimore. The pair corralled their ideas and concepts. Gregory envisioned a “jewel box” loaded with details. Erin wanted a clean, restful palette, and she was also into the details—painstakingly designing every exterior and interior aspect, including pergolas, coffered ceilings, mantels, millwork, floors, and paneling.

“We wanted this house to reflect our own personal design philosophy: how to make a house beautiful but also functional and livable, utilizing every inch of space,” says Erin. “I did not want a place that had unused spaces that are off-limits.”

The charm of the family’s home lies in the harmonious blend of classic architecture, tasteful appointments, and a refined palette that allows the architectural elements to shine through. Wood floors throughout the main level are finished in a dark stain that anchors the all-white walls and lofty coffered ceilings. After the room perimeters were established, Erin developed the stylish, two-note scheme of white with blue accents to coordinate rooms and enhance the home’s island ambience.

An L-shaped floor plan that combines the great room, dining room, and kitchen is illuminated by French doors on two walls that grant easy access to outdoor living. The long series of doors becomes especially useful during gatherings where guests mingle outside to enjoy the water views. In the living room, a rug in an oversized plaid defines the seating area that



Right: The family often has meals on the screened porch at the back of the house. Breezes and views of the Magothy River add to the diners' enjoyment. **Left:** Behind the kitchen, a family room with a beach motif provides space that can be closed off by pocket doors when the Pittses entertain. "If we have an adult party, the sitter and kids can hang out here, watching a movie," Erin explains. The room also has the needed access to the kitchen.

Below: The kitchen island is ideal for quick snacks. **Bottom:** A kitchen niche offers a small desk for Erin, a gallery for the children's artwork, and a retreat for Willie, the family's Cavalier King Charles spaniel.



contains two armchairs and a sofa, all in white. Dark wood chairs in the dining area are given casual flair with the addition of flirty white skirts. Glass-faced cabinets keep the kitchen fresh and open, extending the airy appeal of the house's light-drenched interior.

The well-thought-out floor plan satisfies the Pitts family's main objective of spending time together. "The first floor is so interactive that no matter which space we're in, we are always together," says Erin. "The kitchen island is the epicenter of our house. It's where art projects are completed and meals are planned. It brings us all together. I design that way in general, but it works especially well for our family."

Architect: Allen Hutcheson

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