

At This Amagansett Home, It's All About The Bay

By Joan Baum

A long dirt road curves past pines, native shrubs and beach grass on the approach to a contemporary house in Lazy Point on Gardiner's Bay. A modest exterior gives way inside to an elegant, understated flow of white rooms that from every perspective welcome views of the bay.

The owner, Damelys Marin, had lived in the original dwelling on the site, which she bought in 2008, before she had the house reconstructed and redesigned three years ago. In selecting the firm of Manhattan-based Thierry Pfister, AIA, she found an architect and designer who loved the Hamptons but whose previous work on the East End was quite different from what they put together for Lazy Point. Mr. Pfister had done Sagaponac House #43 in 2005, the first of 30 modern residences in the woods that constitute the Houses at Sagaponac development near the East Hampton Airport. What he and Ms. Marin designed for Lazy Point, however, could be seen as a "counterpoint," as he puts it, to what people might expect of a Hamptons house. Of course, Ms. Marin said with a twinkle in her eye, she and Mr. Pfister, who hails from Lausanne, Switzerland, on Lake Geneva, bonded also because "we both have accents."

Indeed, for Ms. Marin, the house in a way reminds her of home, which for her formative years was on the east coast of Venezuela. When she came to America she was immediately attracted to the water, and though she lived on and off for a while in Texas, her "heart was always on the East Coast." She came to know the East End by way of a friend who had also worked in the fashion industry and had a house in the Amagansett area, but it was at Lazy Point that she particularly sensed a place that would give her "privacy," a place to have a home that would invite yoga-like introspection—a small Buddha sits on the sand out back—as well as peace and quiet.

The Lazy Point house is clearly "not out to make a statement" about luxury living, the architect said. The bay is statement enough, and the theme of the overall design was to honor the view by blowing open walls, putting in oversized glass sliding doors that look out toward Gardiner's Island, and creating an upstairs floor that enhances the view. "New multiple roof overhangs, while protecting the façade from harsh weather, further blur the boundaries between home and nature," Mr. Pfister added. "We wanted to get the landscape into the house, to connect outside and inside in a seamless way."

The result is a "young, casual, informal house" that the architect describes as sexy because of its reliance on subdued light, inviting neutral hues and a strategically subtle use of natural materials. Outside the house, don't look for a manicured green lawn or lush floral. Here, sand and prairie grass rule and on the beach almost invisible fencing and a gate made of tree branches. Surprisingly, the area has seen relatively little erosion, Ms. Marin pointed out, noting that there are even more trees since Hurricane Sandy.

This property on Napeague in Amagansett was one of five houses on last month's East Hampton Historical Society house tour, though not exemplary of what the society's director, Richard Barons, describes as a tour staple—a "keystone" house, "almost always a summer cottage of a certain age," that is, dating to the years from 1880 to 1930.

Interestingly, on the tour—despite the fact that the Napeague home includes a master bedroom with two king-size beds—the room that attracted the most attention was the kitchen, a large airy expanse of space with a glass backsplash and cabinets with no handles that opens into a dining area overlooking the deck. Hardware is concealed, a fact that prompted visitors to keep asking, "Where's the fridge?"

Mr. Pfister also pointed out that "the raked limestone powder room and fireplace mantel echo the sand ripples of the surrounding dunes and beaches." Touches do nod to contemporary living, however, including a swimming pool and extended deck, likely to see more use in warmer months, especially at sunset.

As Mr. Pfister said, "The view shows different colors every day, every season."

In earlier days the area was known as "Promised Land," a name of uncertain origin, though it's been suggested that the designation is ironic, considering the odor that used to emanate from the nearby fish factory. In any case, to Ms. Marin, the house at Lazy Point would seem to promise nothing but the scents—and sight—of nature.

