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Considered the front of the house by locals, the waterfront exterior shows off the weathered gray, cedar shake facade that belies the modern interior of the Babcock home. A standing-seam metal roof protects the porch from anything Mother Nature dispenses.

modern *compromise*

Without giving up style—or face—this New York family blended lifestyles for the ultimate waterside home.





Interior designer Allison Babcock admits that her own

waterfront home in Sag Harbor, New York, is based on compromise. “I would be living in a tent if it was up to him,” Allison says jokingly of her outdoors-loving husband, Luke. “This is our compromise. We’re able to have interior space that still feels like we’re living outside. He always wants to be outside, so that was super important.”

The challenge was to create an open, modern home complete with generous open spaces and forward-thinking materials without giving up cozy decor. Architect Blaze Makoid proved to be the ideal design partner.

With a wish list in hand and a vision of leaving the cramped spaces and choppy floor plan of their previous historical house behind, the Babcocks and Makoid designed a home that embraces its lush surroundings. “We wanted a house that could feel like we were on vacation year-round,” Allison says. “It’s a great entertaining space. You’re comfortable. Even in the winter you have beautiful views. And in the summer, you can open up.”

Throughout the house, white walls, warm white-oak floors, and charcoal accents minimize interior distractions without compromising style. A sectional in the living room invites guests to appreciate the wood-burning fireplace while embracing the views. The space also seamlessly

opens into the dining area and kitchen. “It’s super cozy,” Allison says. “There’s an informality about it too. It’s not that stark glossy look most people associate with modern—it doesn’t have to be that way.”

It does have to be thoughtful though. Minimal furnishings mean each piece carries extra style weight. A midcentury console in the entry, a shapely leather chair in the master suite, and a custom walnut table in the dining space are decorating heavyweights. Allison avoided any guesswork by creating the furniture layout alongside Makoid’s house design—long before the walls went up. “I couldn’t wait to start the furniture plans,” she says.

Much of Allison’s focus went to a space that isn’t inside the walls at all. While Luke is happy to never come inside, Allison prefers to limit her time in the sun. A grand covered porch running the length of the house handled both desires, ultimately becoming the family’s favorite living area. Protected from the elements, a custom, low-back, deep-seated sectional welcomes without blocking the water and sunset views from inside. A nearby table hosts dinner nearly every summer evening. “We live on the porch during the warmer months,” Allison says. Sometimes, compromise is the best plan of all.

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opposite: A fireplace anchors the living room from a space-saving bump-out. The Rumford fireplace design deflects heat into the room, minimizing loss up the chimney. Symmetrical niches filled with stacked logs complete the European aesthetic. *this photo:* A floor-to-ceiling glass door in the formal entry mimics the home's many glass walls.



As soon as the weather allows, the glass doors that run the length of the main living space are pushed aside, inviting in cool breezes. Protected from prying eyes by another wing of the U-shape home and thoughtful landscaping, the Babcocks don't trade privacy for fresh air. The pool tucked at the end of the home is small enough to keep warm all year, creating a calming water feature in the wintry landscape when temperatures don't allow for swimming.



Contemporary & Cozy

Interior designer and homeowner Allison Babcock offers her tips for a modern home that feels cozy, welcoming, and family-friendly.

WORKING WITH WHITE *Picking white paint can be daunting. With hundreds of hues to choose from, it's important to look for undertones that may alter the color in varying light. Whites with a yellow hue will look creamy; pink undertones will turn peachy. To be safe, select a white with little or no undertone, minimizing the overwhelming selection. Allison chose a white with a touch of gray—Calm by Benjamin Moore. No matter what you decide, test the color on the wall before committing.*

HEAT THAT'S COOL *"Carpet" is a bad word when it comes to modern design. But a lack of the soft surface can lead to cold spaces—literally and figuratively. Radiant heat creates a cozy environment under tile and engineered-wood flooring. Warm water, air, or electricity flows under the floor, making the surface warm to the touch and filling the room with heat. The Babcocks used radiant floor heating systems throughout their house.*

"I wanted a quiet interior.
And I wanted it to be all
about the view." — homeowner
and designer Allison Babcock



farm made
modern

*lesson
number*

3

Floor-to-ceiling windows offer expansive views and confer a contemporary vibe on any style of home. Some words to the wise: Walls of glass do not offer space for hanging an art collection.

opposite: The dining table, situated between the living area and kitchen, features a custom black-walnut top that seems to float thanks to its modern acrylic legs. *this photo:* A portion of the island is raised to hide the kitchen sink and work area from the view in the dining and living areas. Open shelving—matching the bleached white-oak cabinets—takes the place of bulky upper cabinets and keeps clutter to a minimum. “It’s easier to put things away,” homeowner Allison Babcock says. “You only have out what you need, and things don’t get lost behind closed doors.”





clockwise, from above left: Contemporary light fixtures shine in the simple interiors. Allison doesn't like wasted space, so the master bedroom is only as big as necessary, with a sliding barn-style door separating the suite's bedroom and bath. Chosen for its sculptural shape, a leather chair in the corner of the master bedroom complements the room's neutral hues. Allison searched high and low for a just-right bathtub for the master; she settled on a custom, poured-concrete tub. Protected by a generous overhang and metal roof, the porch is Allison, Luke, Stallard, and Lily's favorite spot. Luke took advantage of an original-to-the-property shed by adding an outdoor shower made private by repurposing surfboards as walls.



this photo: The master vanity has the same channeled and bleached cabinets found throughout the house. Ample storage keeps the concrete countertops uncluttered. Concrete sinks set into the counters complement the natural look.

