

# PAPER CITY

A woman with her hair pulled back, wearing a white trench coat, stands in the center. The background is a vibrant, abstract collage of colors including blue, green, yellow, and purple, with faint, overlapping images of faces. The overall style is artistic and modern.

DALLAS  
SEPTEMBER  
2023

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# PARADISE FOUND

A lush island escape where the interiors take inspiration from turquoise waters, pink-sand beaches and deep cerulean skies beyond.

By Rebecca Sherman.  
Photography Douglas Friedman.

Interior design  
Emily Summers Design Associates.  
Architecture  
Colin Campbell, OBMI.  
Landscape architect  
Jennifer Davidson, OBMI.

Designed by OBMI architect Colin Campbell, the island house's pink plaster exterior turns almost white in the intense sunlight. A chimney is used for ventilation. The staircase leads to an upper-deck pavilion.





Daylight hours are no less impressive, with panoramic views that encompass pink-sand beaches and coral reefs teeming with colorful parrotfish.

The house's architecture is very much of the island's long design tradition of white, stepped rooftops and pastel-painted exterior walls. Like most houses on the island, this one features a buttery, an often freestanding room with a tall, elegantly peaked roof whose design and function dates to the early 17th century when butteries were used to store wine, rum, and other provisions delivered by merchant trade ships.



Early houses were built of stone and cedar — materials in limited supply on the island — but Campbell, who grew up on the island and studied architecture at California Polytechnic State University, designs modern-day houses to withstand hurricanes, with concrete blocks clad in layers of weathered plaster. Steeply pitched lapped rooftops, once made from the island's more fragile limestone, are now fabricated from securely fastened synthetic material that is just as breathtaking against the deep cerulean sky. Completed in 2020, this house looks as if it's been on the island forever. "The clients wanted a contextual home that would sit quietly in the landscape without a big fuss," Campbell says. "Our design approach was to be subtle, gracious, and to look for the right scale." As architecture director for the Bermuda office at the 87-year-old firm OBMI, he specializes in designing discreet private residences and hospitality projects throughout the Caribbean, North Atlantic, and waters beyond.

For this house, Campbell teamed with Dallas interior designers Emily Summers and Jeffrey McKnight, who was project manager. OBMI landscape architect Jennifer

Davidson, an islander who trained in South Africa at the University of Cape Town, transformed the property's craggy topography into a lush and welcoming environment with native, endemic, and exotic plants and trees. The six-bedroom compound was designed as a series of connected pavilions, each with private verandas and rooms that frame the views. An existing carriage house on the property was converted into a private guest cottage. This flexible composition accommodates two or 20 people comfortably and allows for both privacy and communal family gatherings, inside and out. Campbell's modus operandi is to ask a lot of questions, then listen. "I feel rather more like a tailor," he says. "We take your measure and your cut, then out you go looking beautiful. The house is comfortable because it fits them."

This is a highly personal house where even the scenery is arranged to the homeowners' preferences. Davidson says, "The client wanted sweeping views, so one of my jobs was to eliminate railings but still make the site safe. We worked hard to sculpt the landscape, using vegetation as barriers." The property's existing flora was saved and strategically replanted closer to the house, including oleanders, palmettos, bay grapes, banana trees, and cedars.

She planted milkweed to attract Monarch butterflies and added "igloo" nests to the cliff face for the island's native longtail birds; orchids are tucked among the palmettos to protect them from the salt wind. Fragrant lilies, oleanders, and Champney's pink cluster roses flourish in the courtyards and verandas; a salmon-color hibiscus, a favorite of the client's

Opposite page, from top:  
The living room's tray ceiling is ash. Holly Hunt table, Lawson-Fenning sofa, Beauvais rug.

Handmade Zellige tiles in the powder bath reference the ocean's distinctive turquoise color.

This page:  
The upper-deck pavilion is ideal for daytime dreaming and stargazing at night. Dedon table and chairs.



“

This is a house for dreaming," says architect Colin Campbell of the island retreat he designed for clients, a family compound set among the coconut palms and oleander shrubs of a steep and rocky promontory. In the evening, his clients head to the upper-deck pavilion as the sun melts into a turquoise ocean, the moon later seeming to rise from the water in its place. With no city lights to interfere, the night sky unfolds a dazzling blanket of stars overhead, and in summer, shooting stars blaze across the darkness during the annual Perseid meteor shower.





Opposite page, from top:  
In the carriage house, a Ligne Roset swivel chair, pool table by Game Rooms by Design. Scott Kelley artwork.

A natural cave formation was uncovered in a wooded area on the property. Faux-bois chairs in heavy concrete resist strong island winds. The ancient, gnarled pittosporum tree is native to the island.

This page:  
The hand-sculpted plaster fireplace was specially designed to display a Pablo Picasso ceramic fish plate. Christian Liaigre sofa at left. Philippe Hurel stools from George Cameron Nash.

“The clients wanted a contextual home that would sit quietly in the landscape without a big fuss.”

— Colin Campbell

mother, was specially propagated on the island and replanted on the grounds. “The intimacy of this landscape gets down to something as simple as a kitchen garden,” she says. Along with herbs and seasonal vegetables, the garden includes fruit trees such as lime, grapefruit, pawpaw, loquat, and pomegranate. At the start of the pandemic, Campbell and his wife collected seeds from Freesia alba plants growing wild on the island, then Davidson broadcast them across the clients’ property. “They are a sweet-smelling surprise every February,” she says.

### Ship Shape

For Emily Summers and Jeff McKnight, designing the interiors of this island home was a bit like doing a yacht. “The difficulty of any ocean project is how the elements affect everything,” Summers says. Hardware corrodes over time in the salt air, and fabrics fade quickly in the harsh sunlight. Wet swimsuits and

sandy shoes are a given. As project manager, McKnight frequently made the day-long trip to the island and saw first-hand how materials can rapidly degrade when exposed to intense UV light and corrosive ocean spray. “The client would talk about it, but until we saw it ourselves, we didn’t really understand,” McKnight says. “There was a lot of care given to the kinds of fibers we used for rugs and fabrics.” The performance fabric market has come a long way since 2017 when the project began, but back then, there weren’t many choices. “We were diving to the depths to find what we needed,” he says. For hardware, they turned to Nanz, a 130-year-old maker of custom hardware for the yachting world, which developed special marine-grade, polished stainless-steel finishes for the interior and exterior door hardware.

The homeowners were specific and knew exactly how they wanted the house to feel, Summers says. Clean, uncluttered, and comfortable, each room frames a different vista, so the



interiors were designed to enhance, not compete with, the natural beauty outside. The focus is on understated details, such as hand-sculpted plaster fireplaces, artisan-made Moroccan Zellige tiles, and tray ceilings planked in ash. Rooms are furnished with custom-designed sofas and breezy vintage rattan chairs by India Mahdavi and a collection of wicker mirrors from JF Chen in Los Angeles. Unique artisan-made carpets and furniture were also commissioned for the house, such as the buttry's hand-knotted Beauvais carpet, woven from aloe and nettle fibers, which took more than a year to make. A pair of reclaimed wood dining tables by Dutch artist Piet Hein Eck has been given a gleaming coat of marine lacquer for durability and can be pushed together for large groups. Overhead, artist Lindsey Adelman's Knotty Bubbles chandelier strikes just the right nautical tone. "The bubbles resemble fishing floats in the dock, but very refined versions of that," Summers says.

Other subtle maritime references include a Holly Hunt rope nightstand by Christian Astugueville for one of the bedrooms and several exquisite old colored-glass bottles covered in barnacles, which Summers discovered in Los Angeles at Rose Tarlow Melrose House. A fantastic ceramic fish plate by Pablo Picasso is embedded into the plaster fireplace in the great room, which has panoramic views. For one bedroom, Summers had draperies made in a palm pattern by Santa Barbara-based Raoul Textiles. Artisans at Combray, a New York textile studio founded by Parisian sisters Laure and Aurelie Hug, embroidered raffia palm fronds

Opposite page, from top: Located on a rocky promontory overlooking the ocean, the house's architecture features the island's signature peaked, stepped rooftops, as well as a centrally located buttry, a room designed to house provisions brought by trade ships.

The seating area has views of pink-sand beaches, turquoise waters, and deep blue skies.

onto linen draperies for the buttry. Austin-based artisan Joan Cecil embroidered palm trees and other island flora onto throw pillows for many of the bedrooms; Summers was Cecil's first client, and they've worked on projects together for more than two decades.

The interior palette of greens and blues was a no-brainer. "We had a cheat sheet right outside," Summers says of the lush landscape and ocean views. References to the island's turquoise waters can be seen throughout the house, including a striking turquoise leather desk custom made by BDDW for a bedroom. Green and blue Zellige tiles in the powder bathrooms shimmer like sunlight on palms and rippling waves. While the interior colors were a breeze to select, the exterior paint color selection proved challenging. "We labored over the color of the exterior to get it just right," Summers recalls. "We looked at paint samples at dusk and dawn and midday, because the color changes wildly with the light." In the end, the clients chose a nuanced blush tone — perhaps a nod to the pink-sand beaches that surround their island escape.

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From top:  
In a guest bedroom, a custom floating bed by Emily Summers Design Associates and Hamburg House linens. The collection of vintage rattan mirrors is from JF Chen, Los Angeles.

The carriage house's wallcovering is custom by Meghan Rath. Ligne Roset sofa bed, Giorgetti side tables, Palecek lights.

Opposite page, from top:  
An infinity pool was tailored to the clients' specifications. Umbrella and lounge chairs from Island Trading Limited.

A pair of ancient palmetto trees, endemic to the island, frames a view of the carriage house.

