

The cottage's exterior frame was left intact.







Jayma Cardoso



Hamptons hideout

A renovated beach bungalow redesigned to take in the beauty of Montauk is a dream sanctuary for businesswoman and mother Jayma Cardoso. *By Cushla Chauhan.*

The Hamptons beach cottage of Jayma Cardoso makes you want exhale slowly, abandon your shoes and flop on a deckchair with a spritzer.

As co-founder of hip Montauk hangout the Surf Lodge – a boutique hotel with a bohemian, surfy feel – Cardoso, who is originally from Brazil, has a flair for creating warm, welcoming spaces that sing of sun, sea and summer. But while the Surf Lodge is designed "to encourage exploration", her home, she says, was created as a sanctuary. "I wanted a retreat: a place where I spend time with my baby and really feel the beauty of nature around me."

The open-plan dwelling, which she shares with her partner and their son, John Alexander, aged two, has expansive windows and a wraparound deck that fulfils the brief perfectly, but it took some tenacity to find to find the property.

When it came to location, Cardoso had her heart set on Ditch Plains, a neighbourhood she'd come to love during the 15 years she's explored Montauk and a place, she says, that personifies a beach town. "You'll see kids on their skateboards or bikes with a surfboard under their arm. Everyone knows everyone and most importantly, everyone in Ditch Plains lives for the beach!"

But the area's desirability also meant properties rarely came up, so when the beach shack did hit the market, Cardoso was quick to respond. "My first impression was probably 'what a dump', as it had small windows, the lawn was a mess and it had crammed spaces to accommodate more rooms," she says of her initial appraisal. "It was in need of a lot of work, but I could hear the sound of the waves in the distance and my imagination took over. Even though I didn't fall instantly in love with it, I fell in love with what I knew it could be."

Transforming the property took nine months of renovation, with Cardoso working with an architecture firm to preserve the exterior frame of the home while overhauling its interior. "It was important to me that when even inside, you could interact with and feel the beauty of being outdoors," she explains, "watching the sun, feeling the wind, sitting under the stars and basically being with nature."

With the original building gutted – walls knocked down, the ceiling torn open to reveal exposed beams and small windows ripped out – the new structure was drenched in light and had a closer connection with the outdoors. ▸

GREG KESSLER COSTAS PICADAS



Fresh, white and simple defines the bedroom.



With doors thrown open, the home merges inside and out.



Vintage pieces contrast with modern.

It was then that Cardoso and her designer brought the fresh white canvas to life. "Texture and colour are very important to me," she says. "I wanted a space that felt layered and rich but it also had to be relaxed. It's a beach house, after all."

Her love of travel is also reflected in the found and vintage objects that decorate the home; pieces, she says, that tell a story. "I need to be surrounded by things that inspire me and need to unwind and breathe it all in." Hans Wegner chairs in the living room, the Moroccan-inspired Madeline Weinrib carpets and the light above the dining table are among her favourite elements. "The mix of rustic and modern sits exactly where I feel most at home."

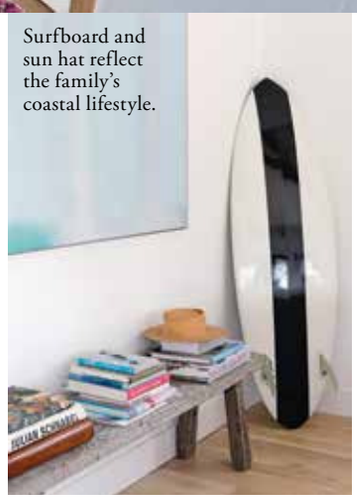
Art, too, enlivens the rooms. "Somehow I believe the art selects you. Almost like a friend, it just knows something of who you are and then speaks directly to it," she says.

Mornings are a favourite time of the day in this household, a time to savour the stillness and birdsong from the deck. The living room, though, is the heart of the home. "I love to entertain," enthuses Cardoso. "My dining room and kitchen are interconnected with the deck. I feel as though my living room pulls all the elements together of good food, being connected with the outdoors and a place for family and friends to gather."

Just a short stroll away, the beach is another essential part of the family's Montauk lifestyle. "Brazilians live on the beach, so for me it just feels natural to spend time there," says Cardoso.

The fact that the Hamptons vibe shares a natural affinity with Australia hasn't gone unnoticed by the entrepreneur, who works closely with a number of expats at the Surf Lodge. "Australians have such a positive and joyful approach to life; they understand the enjoyment part be it through work or play," she says.

A Sydney Surf Lodge pop-up late last year gave locals a taste of the stylish entrepreneur's gift for creating vibrant venues. "We really wanted to bring Montauk to Sydney, let it incubate in Australia and see how it would evolve," explains Cardoso. "Hopefully, a permanent Sydney Surf Lodge is in the not too distant future." ■



Surfboard and sun hat reflect the family's coastal lifestyle.



A calm and creative office space.



"My kitchen and dining area opens up to the deck, so this is where I typically host friends," says Cardoso.

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