

The image is a still life photograph of a French-style interior. In the foreground, a light-colored, ornate console table with curved legs and a decorative apron holds a collection of objects. On the left, a tall, slender, light green ceramic vase contains a branch of white flowers. Next to it is a shorter, wider, light green ceramic vase. To the right of these vases are several plates: a large white plate, a dark green plate, and a smaller dark green plate. The background is a rustic, weathered wooden wall with vertical panels and decorative carvings. The overall color palette is muted, featuring greens, browns, and whites.

The Houses of VERANDA

LISA NEWSOM



LIKE THE HOUSE AROUND IT, THE SWEETGRASS BASKET ON THE LIVING ROOM WALL IS A WORK OF ART. NANCY BRAITHWAITE HAD IT CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR HER VACATION RETREAT ON SOUTH CAROLINA'S KIAWAH ISLAND. "I FELL IN LOVE

with the strength and craft of Mary's work," Braithwaite says of local master weaver Mary A. Jackson, a recent MacArthur "genius" award winner. "She spent over a year on that basket."

The same rigor and devotion to detail are also on stunning display in the design of Braithwaite's house itself, a radical style departure from her tradition-steeped Atlanta residence. "Designers need to experiment," says Braithwaite, who has earned a national reputation for thinking outside the box.

At Kiawah, she envisioned a unique twenty-first-century abode: heroic in scale, minimalist in decor, serene in spirit but spacious enough to comfortably accommodate her hus-

band, Jim, and visits by their two daughters, sons-in-law and grandchildren. She wanted a contemporary structure standing tall on the site to capture magnificent views of the Atlantic on one side and a low-country marsh on the other.

Together, the Braithwaites and architect Jim Choate devised an upside-down dwelling with three cedar-clad towers, or "pavilions." While the structure's stately modernism could have proved overwhelming, large expanses of windows and high vaulted ceilings make it feel open and light-filled. Most spaces are not oversized, adding an intimacy to the house.

Generous hallways lined with stone pavers connect the pa-

vilions. On the guest floor, two pairs of bedrooms are separated by a central pool. On the upper level, a sixty-foot-long living, dining and kitchen area is connected to the master bedroom and home office, with outdoor areas in between.

In Choate, Braithwaite found an architect who “amplified my vision and proved the perfect collaborator.” The respect is mutual. “Nancy’s work has great authenticity,” Choate says. “No compromise in the details” nor in her use of natural materials like bronze and stone. “Nothing fake or dishonest.”

Braithwaite displays strength in repetition. She used the same Indian flagstone for certain walls, floors and a fireplace. The same textiles reappear in different colorways. “Once I have my decorating mantra for one room, I use it for the whole house. Over the years, I’ve learned the power of simplicity.”

When she couldn’t find furniture that was “scaled properly,” she custom-designed pieces. From the slab-like dining table

to the modern beds, clean lines and sharp angles echo and enhance the architecture. The fabrics, with names like Bone and Driftwood Gray, suit the setting, too. “I’m always happy surrounded by a neutral palette. Subtle tones are calming.”

The decoration is balanced and utterly clutter-free. Even kitchen appliances are concealed behind sliding doors. The look is pulled together but relaxed enough for the beach.

Braithwaite’s secret? Long ago, she trained herself to begin with an empty room and add pieces one by one until “my eye is satisfied.” Then she layers in her trademark whimsy. When she saw Robert Kuo’s giant copper toads and marble hares, she had to have them. “They’re as sculptural as the house.”

The designer reflects, “In my work, I’m always editing myself and rethinking and asking: Has the goal been achieved? I wanted this house to make a statement about integrity. Every single element had to be simple and powerful.” □



Braithwaite keeps accessories to a minimum. **OPENING PAGES AND OPPOSITE:** Curtains and Flexform sofa and ottoman in Great Plains fabric. Pillows in de Le Cuona fabrics. Sweetgrass basket, Mary A. Jackson. Stools, chair and sconces, Holly Hunt. Ceramic vessels, Trent Burkett. Cashmere throw, Zoeppritz. Custom rug, Stark. **THIS PAGE:** Custom dining table. Custom chairs, Cameron Collection, in Great Plains fabric. Pillows in de Le Cuona fabric. Vase, Jerry Pair. Custom andirons, Andrew T. Crawford Ironworks. Flagstone fireplace and flooring, Paris Ceramics. Flowers and cecropia leaves, Susan Massar.



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Twin sinks allow for cooking
en famille. THIS PAGE: Granite
island by Braithwaite. Bronze
lamps, Holly Hunt. OPPOSITE,
FAR LEFT: Custom concealed
shelving. Custom chair, Holly
Hunt, in Great Plains fabric.
Pillow in de Le Cuona fabric.
NEAR LEFT: Faucets, Dornbracht.
Custom sinks. Range, Wolf.



Natural textures keep clean lines from feeling cold. **THIS PAGE:** Custom bed. Linens, Anichini and Matouk. Curtains and Holly Hunt daybed in de Le Cuona fabric. Throw, Matouk. Vase and spheres, Robert Kuo. Lamp, Holly Hunt. Rug, Stark. **OPPOSITE:** Tub, Wetstyle. Stool and toads, Robert Kuo. Curtains and custom J. Robert Scott chair in Rogers & Goffigon terry. Sink, Vitraform. Fittings, Dornbracht.



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THESE PAGES: Beds and bedside tables, all custom. All bedspreads and window treatments in Glant cotton. THIS PAGE, TOP: Linens, Dea. Pillowcases, Matouk. Chairs, Kenneth Cobonpue. Vase, doves and stool, Robert Kuo. Lamps, Holly Hunt. BOTTOM: Linens, Matouk. Custom chair and ottoman in Glant cotton. Lantern and vase, Judith Duff. OPPOSITE: Pillow and blankets in C&C Milano cotton. Sheep, Robert Kuo.







Flagstone flooring extends from inside to outside to connect the house to nature. **THIS PAGE:** Marble hares, Robert Kuo for Sutherland. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** Windows and pivoting door, all custom, Henselstone Window & Door Systems. Planters and spheres, Robert Kuo. **TOP RIGHT:** Lamp, Baker. Vases, Robert Kuo. Custom cabinet. Custom chair, Cameron Collection. Curtains in Travers fabric. **LEFT:** Snails, Robert Kuo. **RIGHT:** Three pavilions and stepped gardens.