

# design NJ

NEW JERSEY'S HOME & DESIGN MAGAZINE

June/July 2023

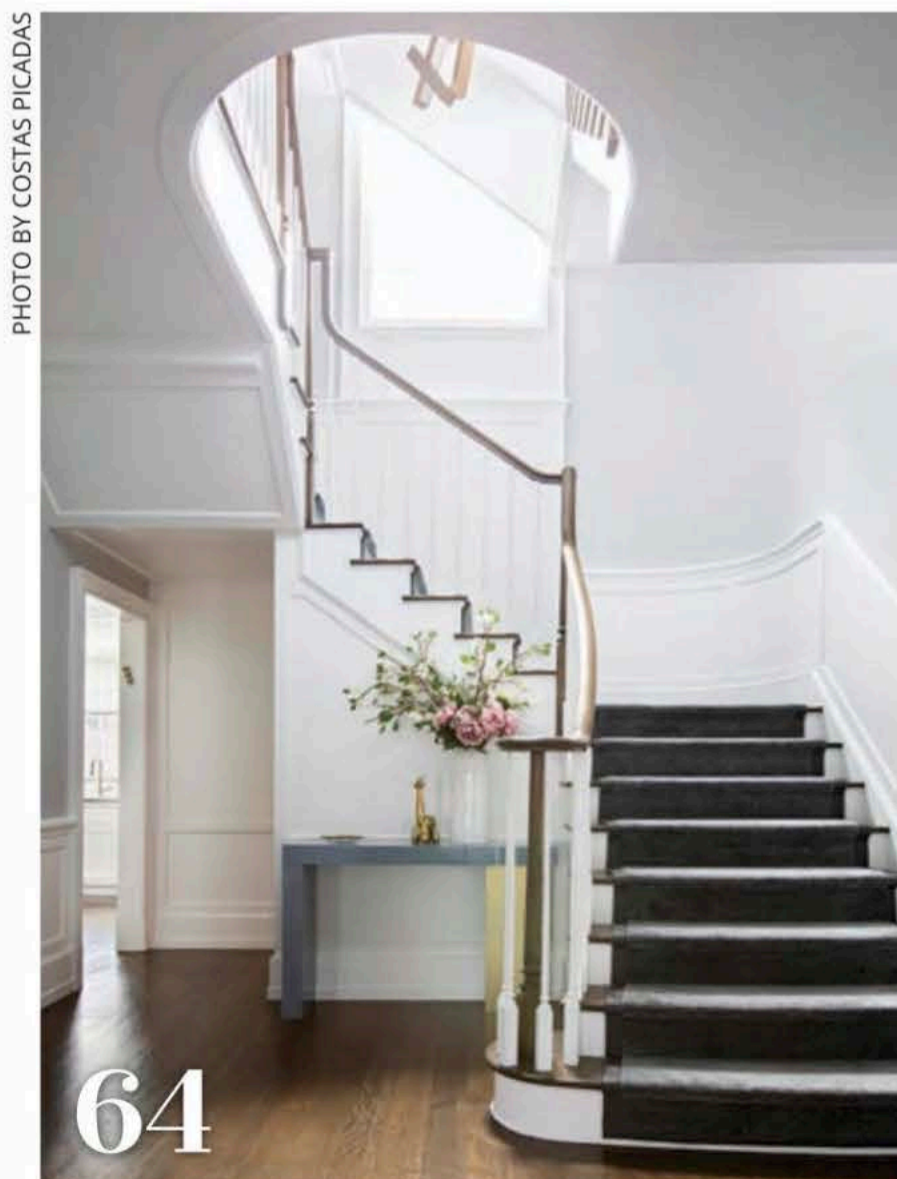


**RIVER REVERIE IN AVON-BY-THE-SEA**  
**A SOPHISTICATED SKILLMAN FARM**  
**A FRESH START IN BERGEN COUNTY**  
**HARDING VICTORIAN GETS NEW LIFE**  
**SHADES OF GRAY IN ESSEX COUNTY**



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#### ARCHITECTURE/BUILD: A FARMHOUSE WITH MODERN FLAIR

Builder Richard Wonsala creates a home and working farm on the former Gallup property in Skillman. The project includes building a residence and a barn, installing boundary fencing, grading and sculpting pastures, and engineering a water system.

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#### RIVERSIDE REVERIE

Barbara Batesko of Bee Hive Interiors designs an idyllic outdoor environment at her home just steps from the Shark River in Avon-by-the-Sea. It features inviting places to linger, have a quiet conversation, savor a meal, catch some rays or spend a chilly evening by the fire in an outdoor sitting area.

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#### OLD HOUSE, NEW STORY

Designer Jennifer Muirhead and her husband, Christian, choose a historic home in Harding Township's horse country, knowing it would be a good place to raise their daughter when they returned from Los Angeles. But they also wanted to tailor it to their needs.

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#### BRIGHTER GRAYS

Interior designer Sandra Cosimano of Sandra Marie Interior Designs modernizes, expands and brightens a 1930s Essex County residence by removing several walls for a more open feel and bringing in shades of gray to establish a serene vibe.

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#### FRESH START

A Bergen County couple seize the opportunity to rebuild after a devastating fire. Architect James Paragano and interior designer Robyn Karp envision a home that includes spaces for quiet reflection as well as for entertaining family and friends.

## style new jersey

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## on the cover

A pier leads from the home to a gazebo on the Shark River, just one of the entertainment options at the Avon-by-the-Sea home of designer Barbara Batesko. See "Riverside Reverie," page 42. Photo by Tori Sikkema.

## Fresh-Air Fun

Embrace the season of outdoor living and lounging with some of the newest all-weather finds

BY MEG FOX

1 | Janus et Cie's new Matisse Teak collection is crafted of sustainably sourced premium teak in a striking clean-lined silhouette. Items in the 10-piece collection range from \$1,110 (cocktail table) to \$5,950 (chaise lounge). Janus et Cie in New York City or [JanusEtCie.com](http://JanusEtCie.com).



1

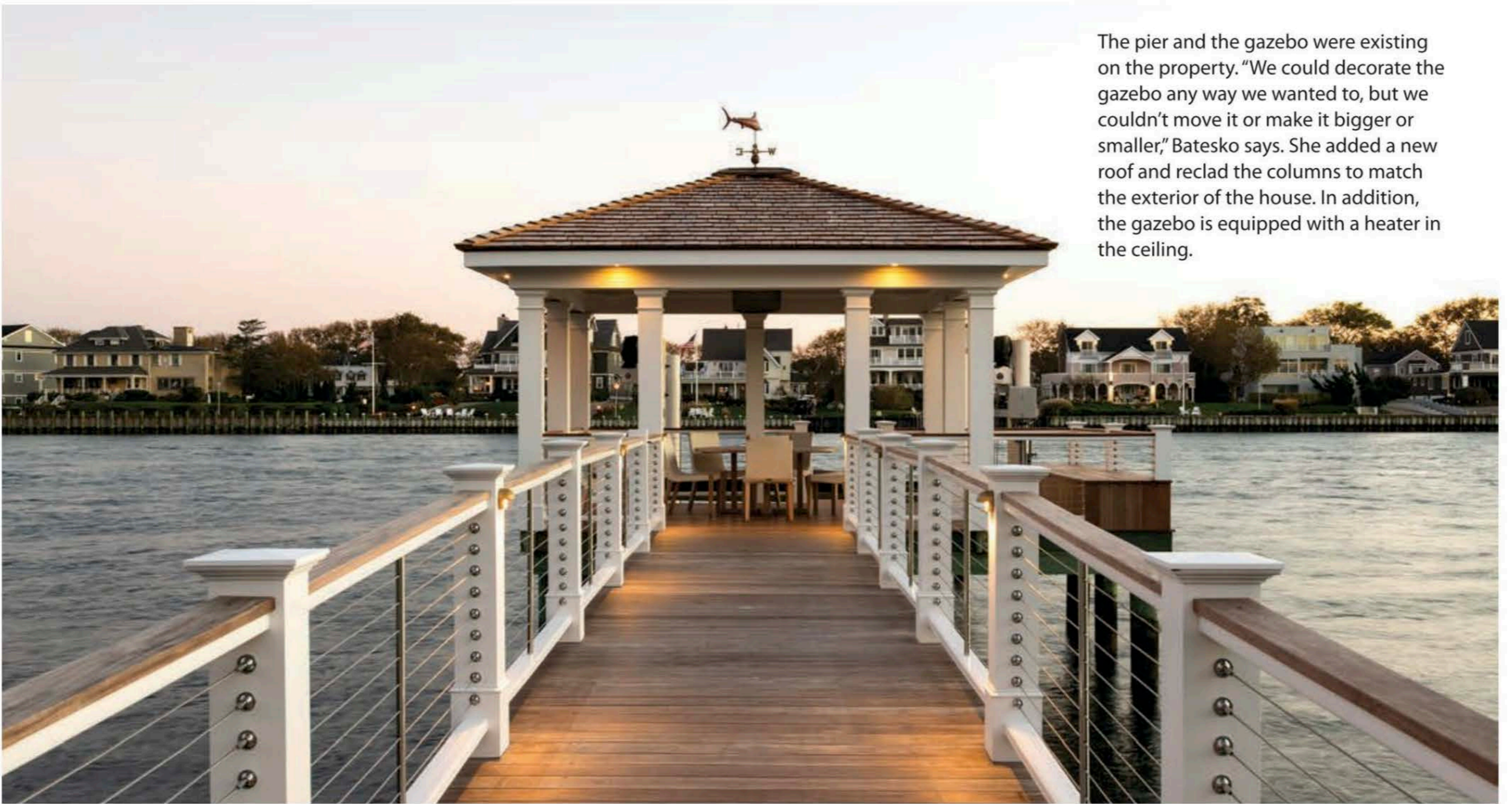
Designer Barbara Batesko's home, located just a few yards from the Shark River in Avon-by-the-Sea, features plantings suitable for a waterside environment. "The landscaper and I worked together previously," she notes. "He knows what I like — a lot of grasses in addition to hydrangeas — a Nantucket look."



WRITTEN BY MARIROSE KRALL  
PHOTOS AND STYLING BY TORI SIKKEMA  
DESIGN BY BARBARA BATESKO

# Riverside Reverie

IN AVON-BY-THE-SEA, A DESIGNER CREATES AN IDYLIC OASIS  
FOR OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING



The pier and the gazebo were existing on the property. “We could decorate the gazebo any way we wanted to, but we couldn’t move it or make it bigger or smaller,” Batesko says. She added a new roof and re clad the columns to match the exterior of the house. In addition, the gazebo is equipped with a heater in the ceiling.

**T**he Jersey Shore holds a special place in Barbara Batesko’s heart. The designer, owner of Bee Hive Interiors in Avon-by-the-Sea, grew up spending summers on the coast. Today, she lives in this beach town year-round. She frequently entertains family and friends at her home on the Shark River, where she has created an ideal outdoor environment to host waterside get-togethers.

It’s easy to see why Batesko’s home is a popular gathering spot. In every corner of the well-appointed property, there’s an inviting place to pause and linger; have a quiet conversation in a comfy, cushioned armchair on the covered porch; savor a meal in the outdoor kitchen; catch some rays in

a poolside chaise; enjoy a bay breeze in the gazebo at the end of the private pier; or spend a chilly evening by the fire in the open-air sitting room.

The various spaces have a common decorative thread — a subtle palette largely made up of white, blue and gray tones. The look is cohesive, with understated appeal that lets nature be the star. Though the colors are carried from area to area, Batesko created distinctions between the spaces by incorporating two types of flooring. “I didn’t want it all to be the same material,” she says. “I used ipe wood around the pool, in the outdoor kitchen and on the pier, and bluestone tile on the covered porch and the outdoor sitting room.”

The covered porch overlooks the gazebo and is bordered by a bed of hydrangeas and New Guinea impatiens. It features a cozy conversation area with commercial-grade seating that can withstand coastal weather.



The proximity of the water makes for a dreamy backyard, but it also requires that furnishings and fixtures be durable in the face of the elements. “That’s always a big concern,” the designer notes. To ensure the furniture could withstand the rigors of a coastal climate, Batesko selected many commercial-grade pieces from Janus et Cie. “They sell to hotels, so I was pretty confident that these pieces were going to be sturdy. The

wind here gets pretty strong. These stand up to weather. The table I chose for the kitchen area is extremely heavy, weighing over 300 pounds. It’s not going anywhere.” Likewise, the lounge chairs next to the pool are constructed with substantial teak frames. “They’re also very heavy. They’re not going to blow away.”

Very often, weather isn’t the only challenge on a New Jersey



waterfront property. In this case, Batesko had to work around land-use restrictions. “When I bought the property, I didn’t know that we couldn’t have a pool in the back of the house,” she says. “I had to design the house in an L-shaped manner if I wanted to have a pool. At first I was upset about it, but it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The layout gives us privacy.”

Indeed, the long, narrow pool — perfect for doing laps or taking a quick dip — is tucked into the side yard and bordered on one side by a stone wall backed by the neighbor’s existing evergreens. “The pool and landscaping were designed for maximum privacy,” Batesko says.

To add color to the poolside area, Batesko accessorized with flowers. “There are planters on the outside of the stone wall. In the summer, the



hydrangeas come up over the wall and soften the stone.” Hydrangeas, a coastal mainstay in the Garden State, also appear in several other places on the property. “There are certain plants that do better in certain areas and, around here, hydrangeas grow beautifully.

Though there may have been a few issues involved in the seaside design, Batesko took them in stride, thanks to her love for the Shore. “With any build there are challenges. In the end it all worked out. I was so happy with everything. I think it came out beautifully.”

*Editor’s Note: For a look at the interiors of this home, see “Family Style,” Design NJ, April/May 2023, page 56.*

**SOURCES Exterior:** design, Bee Hive Interiors in Avon-by-the-Sea; landscaping, Down to Earth Landscaping Inc. in Jackson; stone wall builder, Carlos Pavers in Howell; pier, railing and deck construction, Fitzgerald & Kriso Exterior Contracting in Spring Lake; windows, Marvin; table and chairs in pavilion on pier, RH; seating

“The pool is not very large, but it serves the purpose,” Batesko says. The neighbor’s existing evergreens provide privacy for swimmers and sunbathers.

“We’re on the river. If the weather is really bad, water can seep in under the hurricane screen so I used an indoor/outdoor carpet,” Batesko says of the outdoor sitting room (opposite, top). The room is outfitted with two screens: a hurricane screen and a bug screen. “When the weather is cold or rainy, we can put both screens down, light the fireplace, and use the ceiling and floor heaters. It’s very cozy. We can use that room almost all year.”

and coffee table on porch, Janus et Cie; ceiling light on porch, Carolina Lanterns & Lighting; chaises lounges near pool, Century; grill, Wolf. **Sitting Room Area:** sofa and coffee tables, Century; carpet, Annie Selke; armchair, Janus et Cie; built-in cabinetry, East Pequea Lane Cabinet Shop; fireplace, Carlos Pavers; ceiling light fixture, Dunes and Duchess; art above sofa, Gray Malin; table lamp, Visual Comfort & Co.; hurricane screen, Fenetex.

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