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JUNE 2007

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PAGE 62

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Lighten Up!

WATER COLOR

Nothing evokes the ocean like a house of powdery blues. You can live on the water no matter where you are.

FRANCES SCHULTZ: This diminutive—and extraordinary—late-18th-century house was restored several years ago by the previous owner, Steven Gambrel, who is an incredible interior designer and architect, a tough act to follow. You live in L.A., the house is on Long Island, and the budget was limited. Add all this up, and there must have been some design challenges for you. There must have. Was it difficult?

RUTHIE SOMMERS: Not really, just because the house itself is so fantastic, with those wide-planked floors, tongue-and-groove walls, the molding around the windows. We were lucky that Steven had done such a nice job preserving the integrity of the old house. It already had so much character you almost didn't want to decorate it. Some of his colors worked so well for us, we kept them. Why fix what isn't broken?

Which partly explains why there's such a light touch throughout the house. There's hardly even

a curtain. Must one always go about with their makeup on and stomachs held in?

RS: A lot of the windows do have shades. But half of being out here in Sag Harbor is the light. Also, this is a second home for a young couple, who wants to grow in the house, and who did not want a decorator-y look.

The owners are Margot Brunelle Foosee, who is head of marketing for the J. Crew clothing company, and her husband, right? And they're friends of yours?

RS: Friends who became clients, and they're such good friends that this is really more about that than about a decorator telling them what to do. It was very much a collaborative effort, and our goal was just to get their house to a point where they would be comfortable, and could entertain in a stylish and affordable way. Margot's husband was sort of in the passenger seat in the design process, but he made sure all along the way that

The astonishing swimming-pool-cool hall color in the foyer—Blue Seafoam by Benjamin Moore—
instantly won over Margot Brunelle Foosee and her husband when they first saw this Long Island house.
A chair in a harmonizing color was a gift from Margot's mother, from the family's summer house
in Nantucket. Preserved 18th-century floorboards were simply sanded and waxed.



