

Coastal Cottage Style

A Chesapeake Bay weekend abode becomes
a beloved home away from home.



When Virginia-based couple Jennifer and Andy Aument purchased a three-bedroom cottage on the picturesque Miles River in St. Michaels, Maryland, they brought their repeat interior designer, Liz Mearns, on board to help make the coastal cottage a home.

“We wanted the house to become our Eastern Shore sanctuary—that special place where we spent time together away from our busy lives, and where we hosted and entertained our friends and family for weekends and holidays,” Jennifer says.

Before they could begin furnishing the home, the Auments undertook some minor renovations, including dividing the elongated dining room into two separate, more intimate zones: a cozier dining space defined by a circular table, a pair of wall sconces, and a dramatic overscale oyster shell chandelier (oysters have long been sourced in the Chesapeake Bay) and an adjacent sitting area beside the fireplace. The kitchen lost a large space-consuming island in favor of a smaller, distressed-wood one with more character, and it gained layers of deep blue paint, echoing the river’s hue late at night.

“The home does strike the perfect balance now between entertaining and relaxing,” Jennifer shares. “We might have drinks at the island, spend time with friends in the sunroom—which has lots of seating options—or curl up with a book by the fireplace.”

“Even though we did a lot of white and cream upholstery, all the fabrics we selected are high-performance ones that will weather well,” Liz says. “We didn’t want anything fussy in textiles, nor have anyone worry about spills, wet bathing suits, or the general wear of heavy entertaining.”



An oyster shell chandelier hangs above a round table surrounded by woven dining chairs from Serena & Lily. (Opposite) The sitting area is furnished with a white linen sofa and a tan leather ottoman. The sunroom lies beyond.



The view and how it informed the overall design, of course, was paramount. The palette pulled whites and blues from the water and sky, and there was a tendency to select neutral, textural furnishings for visual interest without detracting from the waterfront scenery. Accent pillows and throws incorporate some of the location's gray blues and pale sand tones. There are also small touches of coral and fuchsia in certain spaces, evoking spectacular sunsets.

"We were very careful to make the coastal and nautical influences sophisticated, not too kitschy. I think when you're on the water in St. Michaels, you run the risk of pulling out all your seashore props," Liz says.

A rope chandelier above the dining room table and oversize sepia boat prints in the living room became subtle coastal and nautical nods, while most of the furniture has that airy, timeless California feel, with

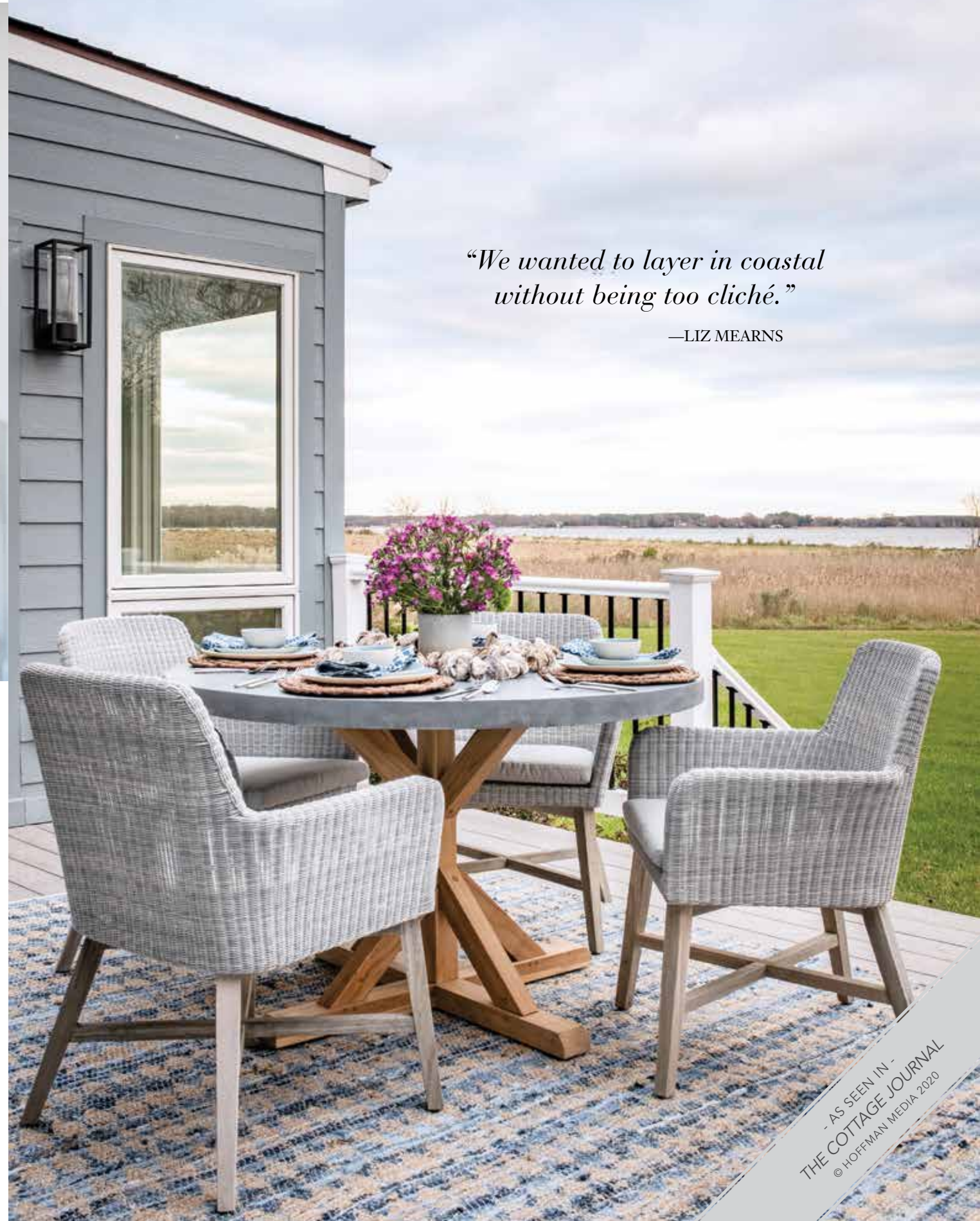


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Symmetry is introduced to the upstairs bedroom via matching bedside lamps and painted chests for nightstands, which contain storage space. A rustic bench with iron detailing contrasts with the tailored, tufted linen headboard.

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*“We wanted to layer in coastal
without being too cliché.”*

—LIZ MEARNS



white sofas, leather ottomans, lighter woods, and natural fibers.

“St. Michaels is where Andy and I let everything go and relax. You’ll find us here almost every weekend, sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, biking in St. Michaels, picking crabs, or drinking wine with friends,” Jennifer says of how the cottage ultimately became the couple’s haven. “To us, the finished space is as beautiful and calming as the landscape on the Eastern Shore.”

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