



WHEN KELLI FORD

enters a room—no matter how grandiose—the atmosphere palpably shifts. Her serene presence and down-to-earth persona instantly put one at ease. “I am calm in a deliberate way,” she says. Deliberate, because as a partner in the Kirsten Kelli design firm she co-owns with her sister, Kirsten Fitzgibbons, Ford is deftly balancing large design projects with charitable endeavors and raising two children. In fact, her phone rings nonstop. Ford is busy.

So it makes sense that deliberate calm is what the New York native sought for her own Southampton summer escape, an airy six-bedroom charmer built right on the dunes. With panoramic views—lush gardens and placid Shinnecock Bay in front, and the vast, salty Atlantic in back—the property alone evokes a sense of nostalgia and ease. “I put the windows down in the car as we’re driving up, because you can smell the ocean, and the privet, and the freshly mowed grass,” says Ford. “It transports me, and everyone in my family, to a state of relaxation, happiness, and peace.”

Architect Peter Pennoyer worked with Ford’s husband, Gerald, in 1996 to rebuild the original house (on one memorable visit, Gerald discovered Pennoyer had removed all but one wall). The result is a beautifully classic cottage with two distinct features: a tower that holds a room with floor-to-ceiling windows where Ford loves to “watch storms coming in, read a book, or relax and have drinks with friends,” and a spacious wraparound porch. “We live on that porch,” she says. “It’s an extension of the living room.”

Ford wanted that tranquil lure to carry through to the interiors. Though elegant, the pastel walls and traditional decor were far more muted than the lively, punchy style characteristic of the sister design duo. “It looked a little classical and dated,” Ford recalls. “I wanted the interiors to be younger, fresher, sharper. I wanted to make the place sleeker and more contemporary, without alienating us as a family, and bring it to the current day in a gentle way.”

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The siblings aspired to strike an easygoing yet dressy note for the living room. There was one limitation: integrating a priceless antique pink-and-gold rug Ford’s husband had previously purchased for the room. The game-changer was an Alexandra Von Furstenberg coffee table in Duy-Glo pink acrylic. “We love to throw in splashes of color in unexpected ways,” Fitzgibbons says.

From there, the two merged a smart mix of bright, cheery hues, contemporary art, and bold patterns in fabrics and wallpapers. They have never shied away from a vibrant check, ikat, or stripe.

Much like Ford herself, her home is at once refined and laid-back, luxurious without a hint of pretension. Mellow, in the very best of ways. □



*Much like Kelli Ford herself, her home is at once **REFINED AND LAID-BACK**, luxurious without a hint of pretension.*



Shades of blue in the master bedroom and bath are meant to mirror the surrounding ocean views. *Above:* Canopy in Clarence House fabric. Dust ruffle in Brunschwig & Fils fabric. Bed linens, D. Porthault. *Top right:* Tub fittings, Waterworks. *Borrow below:* Custom sofa in Osborne & Little fabric. Slipper chairs and curtains in Brunschwig & Fils fabrics. *Wallpaper:* Phillip Jeffries.





The pool area and wraparound porch get ample use all summer long. Chaise longues, Barlow Tyrie; Umbrella, Williams-Sonoma; Towels, Tory Burch; accessories, Anticose slate chairs in Bougainvillea fabric, Pitcher, William Yeoward