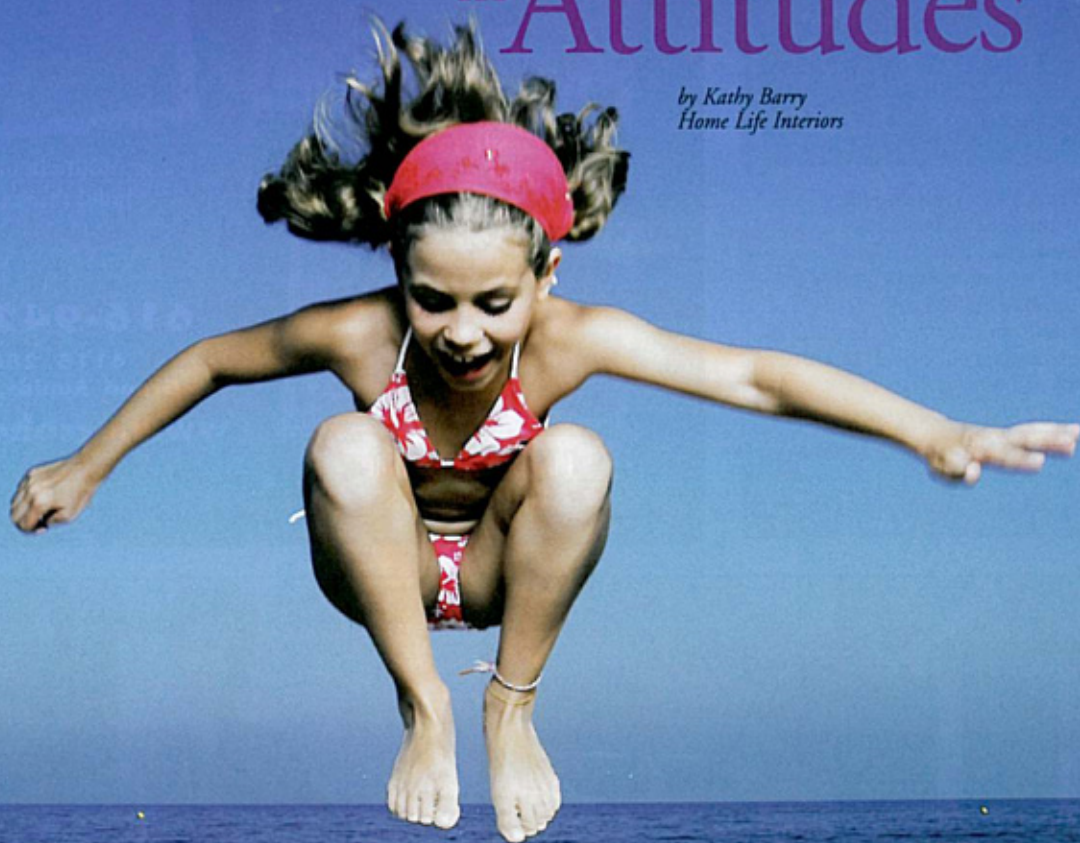


# Changes <sup>in</sup> Latitudes, Changes <sup>in</sup> Attitudes

by Kathy Barry  
Home Life Interiors



**W**arm sand underfoot, the quiet murmur of waves on the shore, a glowing sun overhead, the cry of gulls, and a gentle breeze. What Michigan resident hasn't dreamed of a place on the shore? An escape from the workweek pressures and constraints ... a place of refreshment and rest ... not to mention fun!

*continued on next page*



For some of us, it may be a year round home, for the rest of us, maybe just a summer place. Either way, how can we make sure that our lake abode is truly a place of rest and not a maintenance nightmare? Careful selections from exterior cladding and windows to interior flooring, upholstery and case pieces are the key. Appropriate selections can insure a carefree life at the beach. From the surface materials to the overall color scheme, we can create a beach retreat that is low maintenance as well as beautiful; there is no need to choose one over the other.

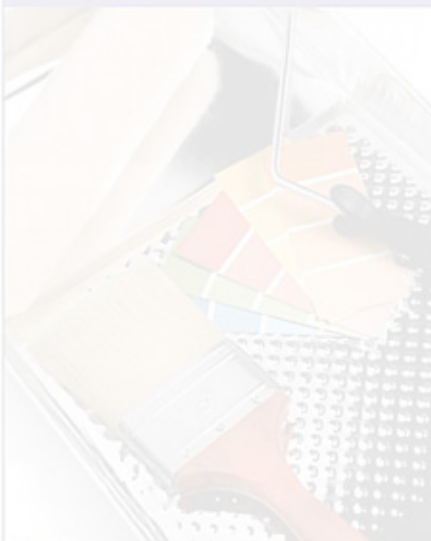
We respond emotionally to color, so personal preferences are key to setting the overall color scheme. Often I'll ask my clients to spend some time looking at rooms in decorating magazines to get a "feel" for the colors that speak to them. When you see a room with chocolate brown walls, for example, does it make you want to run in – or out? What some may think is cozy, another may find claustrophobic. Keeping a file of rooms you like and those you don't is very helpful to a designer working on your project. It may be color or some other element that pushes a button for you, but it gives designers a place to start.

Another factor influencing the design direction is whether this is a year round home that will need some warmth in its colors to balance our long, gray winters, or a summer home where we might look at a light and breezy scheme of aqua and coral. Just as the rust and copper hued family has been so strong a color trend in the last couple of years, we are beginning to see the lighter, related hues of coral and peach return. Aqua and turquoise are also in the mix, once again.

In the summer heat, we often find the lighter colors more appealing but I would suggest brighter colors as another option. The trend in decorating today is strong color. Often, for an inland home, that means darker colors. But for the sun and fun, it can be bright and playful. I've recently received my Benjamin Moore Color Pulse 2008 with their color trends for next year. Very bright Seaport Blue with Tequila Lime Green and Carrot Stick Orange would be great fun at the beach.

*continued on page 12*

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Choosing materials that will withstand the wear and tear of the beach are all part of creating a home that you'll enjoy. Stone or tile on the floor can be wonderful but make sure it is installed with narrow grout joints for less maintenance. Some of the material we think of for countertops such as Silestone quartz can also be cut into tile and used on the floor for a virtually indestructible surface. Mannington also has a new product for the floor called Adura that looks very promising for a low maintenance floor. It comes in ceramic and stone look tiles, as well as wood look planking. With no grout joints to maintain, installation has sealed, butt edges. Made of a combination of vinyl and linoleum, it can be installed above or below grade, in one color or a combination of islands of stone surrounded by wood planking, for example.

The breathtaking views inherent with life on the make large windows a fundamental necessity, however, they can create sun-fading problems for typical fabrics. Indoor/outdoor fabrics are a must for an area that will have to withstand the one-two punch of damp bathing suits and the damaging rays of the sun. These fabrics are often 100% acrylic, mildew and fade resistant, and can even be cleaned with bleach if necessary. Go ahead and let your kids sit down with their wet suits – it won't hurt this fabric. And what used to consist of a few



options in limited colors now has a wonderfully large selection with many related fabrics to choose from. We even have trims available in the indoor/outdoor line so we can add the detail that often makes an area really shine. Crypton fabrics, developed right here in Michigan, are another good choice. Often used in commercial applications such as restaurants, these fabrics have an inherent stain repellent surface that can be cleaned of even your worst spills.

As is always the case, your home is just that – your home, whether you wake up to waves on the shore or the shout of traffic horns. Creating a beach theme in the city with Plantation shutters, sisal rugs on wood floors, tropical plants and Caribbean colors may be just what you need until you can make your dreams of a place at the shore a reality. As Jimmy Buffet sings, being at the beach is a mindset as much as a location, right?



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