

Designer
Andrew Howard
creates one
family's ultimate
tropical escape
on Elbow Cay in
the Bahamas

ON ISLAND TIME

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The stylish pool house is perfect for overnight guests.

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When the view is pure art, as Andrew Howard puts it, everything else needs to take a back seat. That wholesale surrender to the view—in this case, the high-wattage, opulent seascape of the Bahamas—became the Jacksonville designer's *cri de coeur* and the mission for an English family of six seeking to update their beloved tropical escape on Elbow Cay in the nation's Abaco Islands.

It also informed the palette. Howard confesses to usually using more color, but here employed quieter, organic hues—in particular, soft turquoises and corals—and natural textures. “There are big beautiful ocean views from every single room,” he says. “I didn’t want to do anything that distracted from that.”

A second challenge was to ensure that the design didn’t stifle the need of a big family to, well, *move*. “We like the seating and the groupings to be respectful of the view,” Howard says, “but I also think it’s rare that someone would sit in a chair and just stare out the window. I think that people are moving around a lot. Organizing furniture in a way that works for the room while still respecting the view is very important.”

In the home’s outdoor spaces, hammocks near the water embrace the ocean breeze, while poolside chaises provide more protected lounging. “In the Bahamas there are always two zones,” Howard says. “One by the ocean, and a less windy one, usually nearer the house.” Here, Howard shares his design tips for maximizing the inherent beauty of the Bahamas, both outdoors and in.

Editors’ note: In September 2019, Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas with historic impact. The Abaco Islands were among those most damaged, but this home survived. To read more and learn how to help the islands recover, see page 31.



MAXIMIZE A SMALL KITCHEN

With big views and terrific light, the kitchen had one potential drawback: its small size. Howard applied a creative solution by attaching a banquette to the island, creating a workstation and dining table. Teak wood and rope chairs add texture. The banquette features C&C Milano outdoor fabric that stands up to damp swimsuits.

ALLOW THE LIVING ROOM TO LIVE

A Caribbean lounge feel pervades the airy, gracious living room, thanks to the inviting indoor/outdoor sofa and club chairs (along with a tropical-fabulous armchair from Hollywood at Home). Sheer, gauzy curtains add movement to the space when evening breezes blow, and the plastic chandelier emphasizes the relaxed chicness of island life. The pieces are upholstered in outdoor fabrics, which are becoming “the new normal for people who have kids,” Howard says. “I try to always use outdoor fabrics in rooms that have high traffic.”

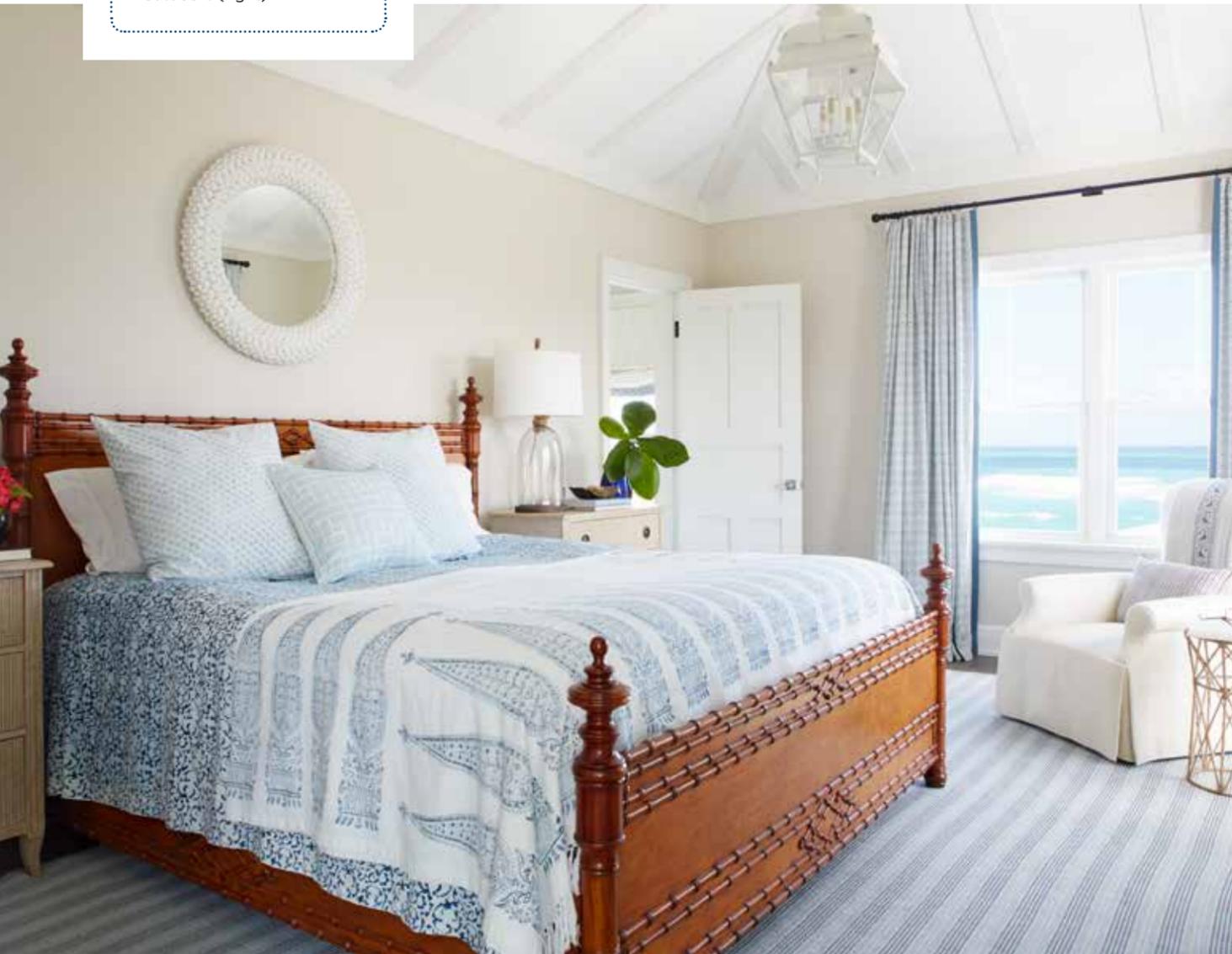


HELPING AFTER DORIAN

With unprecedented ferocity, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in the Abaco Islands—including Elbow Cay and then Grand Bahama Island—in September 2019. It stalled perilously over the Bahamas, resulting in one of the worst natural disasters in the nation’s modern history and tragic loss of life. Relief now turns slowly to recovery, as it did in the Caribbean in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria and on the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Michael. It’s vital to support efforts to rebuild and serve the needs of locals, and return to the Bahamas as travelers to support the local economy as much as possible. For inspiration about how to help and where to vacation in the Bahamas this winter, go to coastalliving.com/bahamasnow.

LAYER WITH QUIET COLORS

In the master bedroom, a pale palette of blue and white supports the starring role of the stunning bamboo bed from Bunny Williams Home. Bedding from Les Indiennes, Elizabeth Eakins curtains, and a custom striped rug layer the hues, while painted end tables add balance, says Howard. That play of quiet color extends outdoors (right).



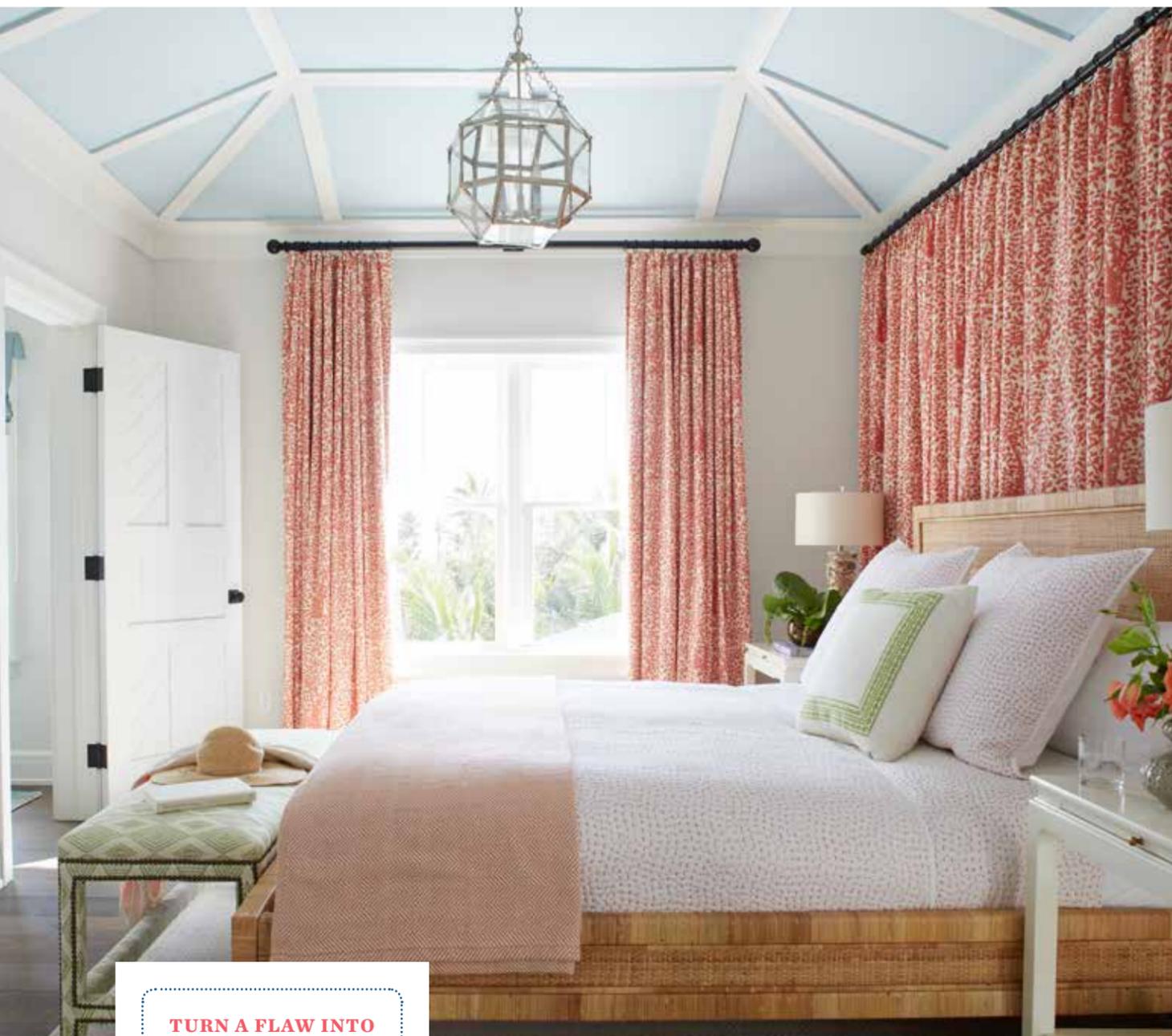
ELEVATE THE BUNK ROOM

"This is the decorated version of a college dorm room," says Howard. "We did our best to make it feel like it's part of a home." Designed for the owners' sons and their friends, the shiplap-lined room is a fuss-free place to crash. Deep drawers tucked underneath the bottom bunks provide extra storage for vacation essentials, and bean bag chairs add more seating options. Adjustable sconces in each bunk allow the boys to enjoy their own lighting without bothering anyone else.



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**BLUE AND WHITE IS NEVER
GOING OUT OF STYLE**
—ANDREW HOWARD

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TURN A FLAW INTO AN OPPORTUNITY

Most homes have at least one quirk; in this case, an off-center window in a guest bedroom. Solution? A curtain wall. Here, coral curtains in Quadrille fabric open when more light is desired and make a design moment when closed. A pale blue ceiling complements the palette, and the Balboa bed from Serena & Lily adds natural texture.



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