

CLASSIC ISLAND STYLE

In an open-air villa in **Round Hill, Jamaica**, designer Meg Braff shares her 10 essentials for loosening up a tailored look with island flair



THESE WOOD BENCHES ARE UPHOLSTERED IN FAUX-CROCODILE VINYL—SLEEK, CHIC, AND ANIMAL-FRIENDLY!

essential #1

CABANA DETAILS

This pool umbrella is so retro-chic it looks like it came straight from a *Mad Men* set. Not only is the pink color a beach club trademark, but its squared-off scalloped edge is a classic cabana detail. The treatment isn't limited to outdoor furniture. Try the same edging on a drapery valance or bed skirt.

■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** Umbrella, Santa Barbara Designs

WE LOVE ... these white loungers! Their faux-bamboo design stays true to an island setting. Wheels make them easy to move.

■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** Loungers, Terra Furniture





Designer Meg Braff (right) and project manager Lauren Phillips Blair



Fashion icon Babe Paley at Round Hill in the early '60s



The Round Hill Hotel entrance, circa 1960

Before beachy-bright colors, dressmaker details, and embroidered embellishments became synonymous with preppy fashion, they stood for the crisp, polished decor preferred by America's most famous style icons. Round Hill Hotel and Villas in Montego Bay, Jamaica, has played host to many of these jet-setters over the years—John and Jackie Kennedy, Grace Kelly, Paul Newman, Ralph Lauren, and famed socialite and fashion editor Babe Paley. When designer Meg Braff was asked to refurbish one of the resort's villas, she didn't stray far from the style its visitors have embraced for generations.

Inspired by old photographs of Round Hill from the 1950s and '60s and the house's island architecture and setting, Meg set out to create a glamorous but understated retreat with a youthful, resort feel. "I wanted the house to have that classic, tailored look reminiscent of 1950s beach clubs, but I also couldn't ignore the exotic lushness of the Jamaican landscape," she says.

Consider incorporating these 10 essentials for enlivening your home with a look Meg describes as "Palm Beach meets island bohemian."

essential #2 SUGAR WHITE WALLS

Because no island retreat would be complete without brightly patterned fabrics in greens, blues, pinks, and yellows, white walls are a must for unifying spaces and creating that airy island feel. "They have the same appeal as the classic white blouse—it's versatile and always flattering, and allows killer accessories to really shine," says Meg. White Dove (OC-17) by Benjamin Moore is her favorite island white paint.

WE LOVE ... bamboo furniture—a classic look from Palm Beach to Santa Monica. This vintage set got a face-lift with fresh white paint.

essential #3 A PREPPY PALETTE

Taking cues from the Jamaican landscape, Meg chose tile, fabric, and accessories in tropical hues like palm green, coral pink, banana yellow, and aqua blue. "Muted decor is just not an option in Jamaica," she says. Just because the color choices are bold, however, doesn't mean every surface has to be drenched or that each room must feature the entire palette. Meg stuck to a simple formula: one color, in a range of tones, plus white in each room.

WE LOVE ... that sea-green lantern sconce with a Bali-hut shape. Filled with candles, it's like a tiki torch for the wall. ■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** For similar fixtures, try Shades of Light.



ANIMAL PRINTS, LIKE THESE CHEETAH LINENS, LOOK GREAT IN CHEERY, BRIGHT COLORS

SLIM AARONS/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF ROUND HILL



THESE LATTICE ARCHES ARE AN ISLAND THROWBACK

essential #4 RATTAN FURNITURE

Synonymous with casual island living, rattan gives this house a modernized midcentury feel that's just as attractive now as it was in the '60s. It's also an organic material that, when treated with a sealant, can withstand Jamaica's high temperatures, winds, and occasional rainstorms.

WE LOVE ... true outdoor living rooms with all the comforts of indoor spaces.

■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** Rattan furniture, Bielecky Brothers



ON THE HOUSE

STYLE: open-air villa with stone floors, planked vaulted ceilings, and louvered shutters

SPACE: approximately 3,000 square feet with two bedrooms and baths, and a third bed and bath tucked inside a guest bungalow. The loggia adds comfortable, breezy living space.

SETTING: Jamaica's Round Hill on Montego Bay was once a 100-acre oceanfront sugar plantation.

CHECK IT OUT: Book a trip to Round Hill Hotel and Villas and stay in one of 27 villas (including this one!) available for rent. The 36-room hotel on the property was designed by Ralph Lauren, who owns one of the villas.

For reservations and more info, call 800/972-2159 or visit roundhilljamaica.com.

See 15 casual-chic outdoor living rooms at coastalliving.com



AN ISLAND HOUSE BEGS FOR HINTS OF BAMBOO, LIKE THESE SCONCES AND THE CABINETS HARDWARE



essential #5
A LITTLE PATINA

The house wouldn't have true island character without anything indigenous and handcrafted. Because mosaic tiles are a staple of traditional Jamaican design, Meg spiced up the kitchen with a mosaic backsplash in ocean blue and palm green. "Traditional tiling might have made this kitchen fall short. These tiles give the kitchen a bohemian feel in tune with the island's tried-and-true design." ■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** Tiles, Mosaic House

WE LOVE ... those framed fronds! Meg floated the leaves in glass for a streamlined—and inexpensive—work of art over the sink.

essential #6
STRIPED RUGS

"A casual island house can never have too many stripes," says Meg. "They just bring a sense of order to every space." In the kitchen, she balanced the intricate mosaic tile with a simple striped rug in the same color palette. Her favorite sources for affordable but chic striped rugs are Dash & Albert and Calypso St. Barth.

essential #7
SHUTTERS, SANS DRAPERY

For their easy tropical style and low-maintenance appeal, Meg dressed the windows with shutters instead of drapery panels. "Curtains are tough to maintain in an island home, and we wanted to allow as much light and breezes into the house as possible," she says. The clean lines of the plantation-style versions that she chose add to the villa's airy, island feel.

WE LOVE ... vaulted ceilings—their lofty heights not only add architectural interest but also facilitate cooling in open-air island pavilions.

TILE DETAIL: DAVID HILLEGAS

"Vacation places like this should be more of a pleasure than a chore"

—designer Meg Braff



CHECK OUT THE PIPING DETAIL ON THE DINING CHAIR CUSHIONS. GET THE LOOK BY ADDING A WELT IN A CONTRASTING COLOR ON ANY CUSHION OR PILLOW



THIS EXTRA-THICK JUTE RUG WAS MADE BY A LOCAL ARTISAN IN JAMAICA. FOR A SIMILAR RUG, TRY WESTELM.COM

essential #9 BATIK- STYLE PRINTS

Typically block-printed on natural linen, these patterns range from simple to elaborate—but they always have a touch of exotic flair, making them just right for island retreats. “The graphic floral patterns have a way of making upholstered headboards and pleated bed skirts look a little less buttoned-up,” says Meg. She repeats a single fabric on several surfaces in each room for streamlined decor.

■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** From top: Custom fabric, Bob Collins & Sons. Veneto in Terracotta, Quadrille. Kashmir in Delft, Raoul Textiles



essential #8 WELL- MANNERED PAIRS

Meg opted for symmetrical furniture arrangements throughout the house, but most notably in the guest bedrooms, which she outfitted with matching twin beds, tables, lamps, and occasional pieces at the foot of the beds. The doubling effect gives the guest rooms flexibility for accommodating singles or couples.

■ **WE LOVE ...** ceramic garden stools (above)—for a bit of shine inside or out. ■ **SHOP THE LOOK:** Stools, Mecox Gardens. “X” benches (right), Two’s Company



MEG CHOSE THESE CHOCOLATE BROWN CANE AND RATTAN HEADBOARDS (FROM RED EGG) TO ADD A GRAPHIC, TROPICAL TOUCH TO THE FEMININE SPACE

FABRIC DETAILS: DAVID HILLEGAS

essential #10 EMBROIDERED BEDDING

It’s the monogrammed dress shirt or overnight bag for the home. In each of the bedrooms, Meg embellished simple white coverlets, shams, and bolster pillows with embroidered trim that lends a little graphic weight to the pieces by outlining their shapes. To re-create this effect, look for a local shop that specializes in embroidery.

■ **WE LOVE ...** this canopy! The box-pleated valance and contrasting piping on the draperies ties brings the cabana mood inside to the master bedroom. ■ **Sources:** page 106

“The landscape’s color intensity inspired my palette. Muted decor is just not an option in Jamaica” —designer Meg Braff



THE VALANCE AND DRAPERIES HANG FROM AN UPHOLSTERED SHELF THAT RUNS THE WIDTH OF THE BED AND IS SUPPORTED BY BRACKETS HIDDEN BY THE FABRIC

THIS TEAK BENCH, WITH ITS DARK FINISH AND ROLLED ARMS, IS CLASSIC CARIBBEAN. FIND A SIMILAR ONE AT BRITISH KHAKI