



# Beach Houses: From Malibu to Laguna

*Elizabeth Mcmillian*

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"Beach Houses" are the first survey of the glamorous beachfront lifestyle and distinctive architecture and design for which Southern California is so famous. The houses featured in this book are located on the coast between Malibu and Laguna and range from common generic types-- New England, Mediterranean and ranch designs-- to high-style homes by well-known architects such as John Lautner, Richard Meier, Frank Gehry, and others. Beaches and beach houses have played an important part in the historical and cultural development of Southern California, beginning in the 1880s when land speculators wanted to attract home-buyers, and especially during the 1920s when the motion picture community and other nouveau riche built lavish houses and clubs on the shore. Architectural writer Elizabeth McMillian has selected a stunning array of Southern California beach residences that receive high marks for appearance, comfort, and sensitivity to the environment. Every beach house designer faces similar constraints and challenges: small lots, low-key street facades, enclosed sidewalls, narrow paths to the ocean, and glass-walled and terraced oceanfronts. If a beach house is designed with sensitivity, living on the beach can be an experience that is close to perfection. Photographer Melba Levick has dramatically captured the California beach house in its enviable seaside context and has focused on interiors that bring the sights and sounds of the ocean into the home by way of glass walls, open courtyards, terraces, and towers. Interviews with the architects, interior designers, and owners of these fabulous California houses reveal the inspirational dimension embodied in this special architecture. "A beach house is often the fulfillment of a dream, as well as a quest for the sensual varieties of site, sound, and touch-- the opportunity to feel gentle sea breezes, warm to the reassuring rays of the sun, and hear the lulling, rhythmic sound of wind and waves," explains McMillian.

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