

## MANSION

## Beach Homes That Are Loaded With Kid Magnets

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they're adding high-tech media rooms, bunk rooms, indoor playgrounds and outdoor water-park features.

While many homeowners seek open-floor plans and a spacious great room, they also want private areas to give children and adults their space. To that end, some are ditching the traditional Cape Cod-style home and constructing family compounds with multiple buildings that flank a common area.

"Movie theaters are standard now in higher-end houses," says Joe Farrell, a luxury residential developer in New York's Hamptons. Now, Mr. Farrell gets requests for over-the-top amenities like ice-cream parlors, skate ramps, outdoor ice-skating rinks and subterranean basements with 20-foot ceilings for indoor basketball.

He built a roughly 30,000-square-foot house for himself and his family in Bridgehampton, N.Y., with a bowling alley, indoor playground, skateboard half-pipe, tree house and a zip line. "It was totally kid-oriented," Mr. Farrell says. He estimates that the construction of the home cost roughly \$1,000 per square foot. The home, known as "The Sandcastle," is on the market for \$43.5 million.

Interior designer Paige Schnell recently worked on a house on Mustang Island in Texas. The décor, which cost about \$150,000, includes a large bunk room that has hardwood walls and sleeps eight to 10 kids—each bed outfitted with its own TV. The room is attached to a camp-style bathroom with three sinks lined up in a row. Every other room in that house was designed to be kid-friendly. Even the white living-room sofa was covered in indoor/outdoor fabric.

"There is no off-limit space in that house," says Ms. Schnell, principal at Tracery Interiors, which has offices in Rosemary Beach, Fla., and Mountain Brook, Ala.

Jonathan Kukk, a luxury residential architect based in Naples, Fla., is designing a waterfront home in Port Royal for grandparents who want to make the house appeal to their grandkids. The house will feature a roughly 500-foot "kids' wing," with three sets of bunk beds, a lofted play area and a camp-style bathroom with four sinks and sectioned-off toilets and showers. The wing is located in an attic space above the garage, so it's acoustically separated from the rest of the home, Mr. Kukk says. Construction and finishes will likely cost between \$3 million and \$5 million.

Marion Fischer, who lives in Bedford Corners, N.Y., also created distinct play areas for her three sons when she renovated her 3,900-square-foot Cape Cod beach home in Chatham, Mass., about eight years ago. The 800-square-foot basement is designed to look like a ship, complete with curved walls and portholes. The boys' bedroom has four beds in a nautical theme, leading to a ship deck loft with four more beds.

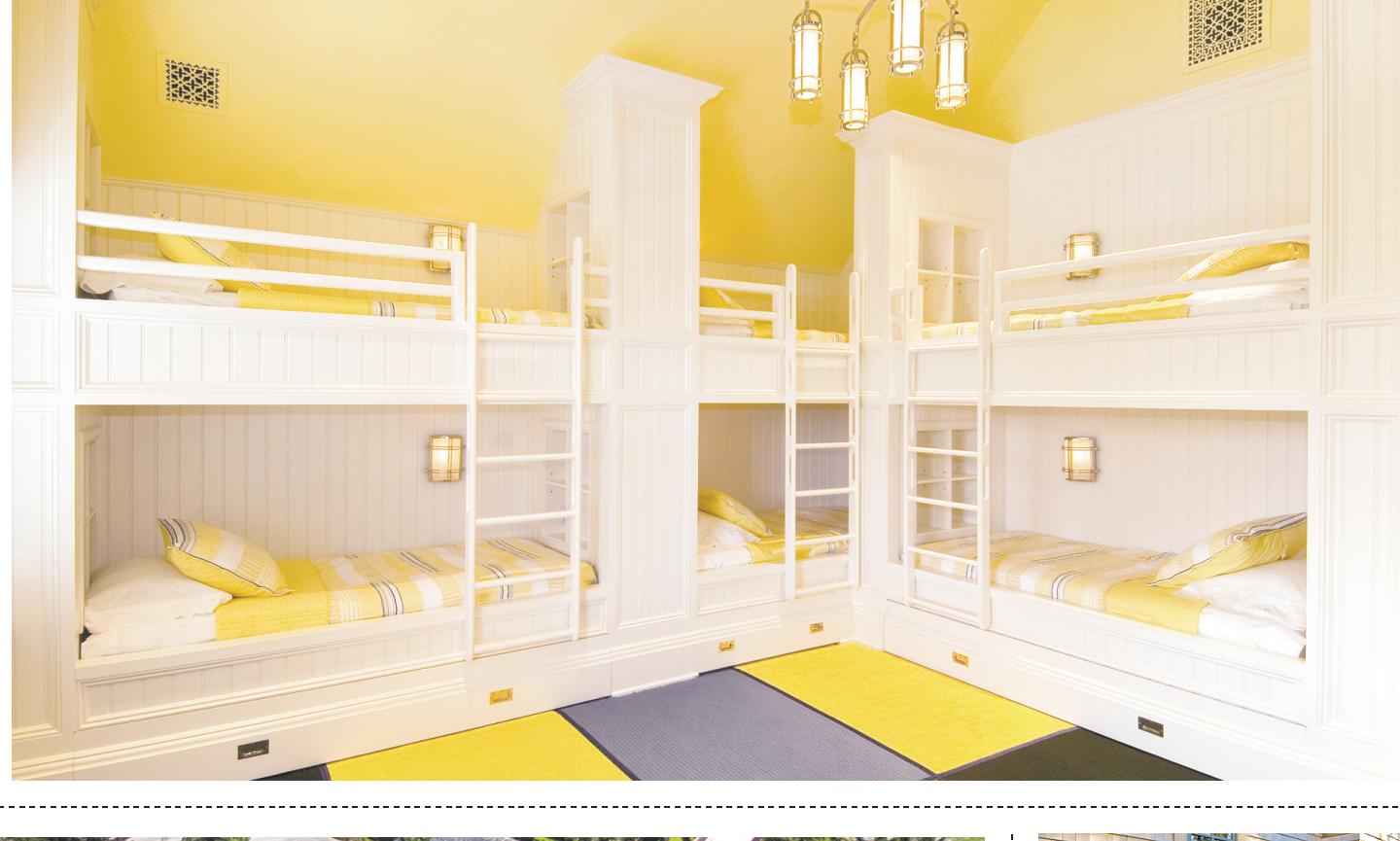
Even though her boys are older, now ages 12, 14 and 15, Ms. Fischer, owner of Gallery Galloone, an art gallery in Vieques, Puerto Rico, has no plans to make her home more adult. "I always felt that it would be a house that would be in our family for 100 years," says Ms. Fischer. "I hope my kids will want to come even as adults and bring their own kids."

John DaSilva, design principal at Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders, designed the Fischer home and others to withstand rough play by kids and pets. He also likes to add playful architectural elements, such as wavy beams and columns, in his projects.

Before, homes on the beach had to be built as sturdy, compact boxes to withstand the elements. Now, improved glass better resists storms and helps keep heat out of the



**BUNKING IN THE HAMPTONS** Developer Joe Farrell built a house for his family in Bridgehampton, N.Y., with kid-friendly features like bunk beds, right, a bowling alley, indoor playground, tree house and zip line.



**FAMILY COMPOUND** Steve Games spent about \$15 million to build this 40,000-square-foot beach home in La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico. Amenities include an entertainment room with games and pinball and separate kids' pools.

home, allowing for more indoor/outdoor living and floor-to-ceiling glass walls, says Scott Lee, president of SB Architects with offices in San Francisco, Miami and Shenzhen, China. Builders are choosing more durable materials—tough hardwood flooring like teak or ipe, ceramic tile that looks like limestone, even rubber flooring—so children can feel free to run around.

Some traditional adult amenities, like bars, dining rooms, luxurious master suites and spa-style bathrooms, are falling out of favor. "The idea of a wine room is a little bit passé," he adds.

Keeping kids—and grandkids—

happy is a common theme. Mr. Games vacations at his beach home in La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico, about eight to 10 times a year.

"There is no question that we felt that this would be a place that would attract Sarah's friends, and by attracting Sarah's friends, it ended up giving us more time with her," Mr. Games says.

The beach-home market is much improved from the height of the downturn in 2008 and 2009, but it has not completely recovered from the housing crash, says Susan Wachter, professor of real estate and finance at the

University of Pennsylvania.

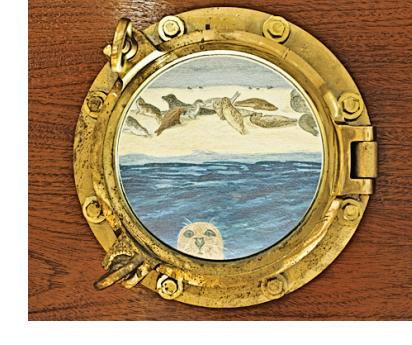
Still, beach properties are highly coveted, Prof. Wachter says, and new money from young tech moguls, international buyers and all-cash

buyers who aren't relying on

bank financing is sparking a

resurgence,

Having a beach house clearly marked for play could hurt its resale value and serve as a deterrent to potential buyers, says West Chin, a New York City-based architect and interior designer. "Most of our clients want their home to be sensitive to kids without being fully customized," he says. Rather than spending



**LAND HO** In Chatham, Mass., a Cape Cod-style home, left, has lots of amenities for kids, such as a painted porthole view, right.



PSDAB (Chatham); Bob O'Connor for The Wall Street Journal (porthole); Ron Papageorge (bunk); PSDAB (Wenauer); Mark D. Azoff (aerial); Illustrations by Lauren Tamaki



**LAKE HOUSE** Whimsical details such as monogrammed shower stalls, above, are built into this home on Lake Wequasset in Massachusetts, below, it was built by Polhemus Savery DaSilva.



\$100,000 on a play room, he recommends building beach homes in a universal floor plan and decorating with neutral colors. "You can add childlike touches through furnishings and décor—things that are easy to change," he says.

But for the most part, homeowners see their beach house as a long-term investment and aren't as concerned about eventually reselling, says Ron Radziner, design principal at Los Angeles-based Marmol Radziner. "It's really about their quality of life at the moment," he says. "Not that they're not concerned about resale value, but they're more concerned about their lives right now."

## Surf and Turf for Sale



**\$3.999 million**

Ocean City, N.J.

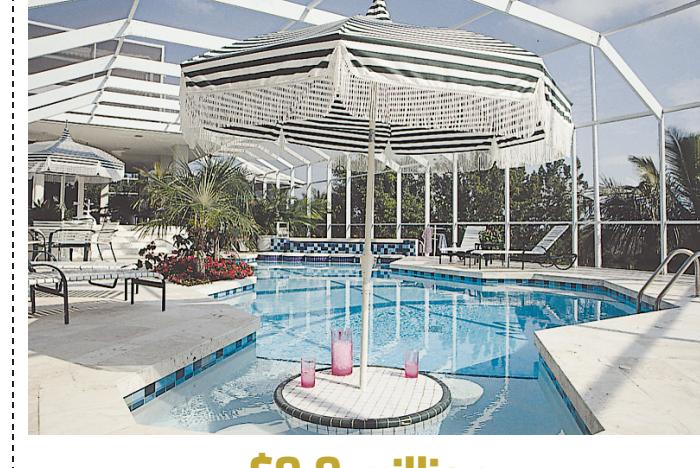
Five bedrooms, 3½ bathrooms



**\$3.4 million**

Shelter Island, N.Y.

Six bedrooms, 5½ bathrooms



**\$9.9 million**

Key Largo, Fla.

Six bedrooms, seven bathrooms

This 3,500-square-foot, two-level home sits on a 67-by-180-foot lot, one of the largest beachfront lots in Ocean City. Inside are three nautical-style bunk beds complete with portholes and a ship's ladder. A covered porch area with floor-to-ceiling glass windows seats 15.

**Listing agents:** Dale Collins and Matt Bader of Bader-Collins Associates of Berger Realty

This modern-style beach house is loaded with entertainment, including an indoor racquetball court, a media room that seats 20 and a game room with hockey, ping-pong and pinball. The back of the 6,824-square-foot home also has an old-fashioned soda bar and an indoor pool. The main living area has an open-floor plan.

**Listing agent:** Seth Madore of Corcoran

This three-level, contemporary-style beach retreat features a main-level rec room with pool, ping-pong and TV, as well as a 3,000-square-foot kids' room with ping-pong, foosball and a screened-in putting green. Outside, a life-size checkers board has 2-foot-high playing pieces.

**Listing agent:** Russell Post of Russell Post Sotheby's International Realty