



An American In The  
**BAHAMAS**

FLORIDA MEETS  
CARIBBEAN MODERN  
MEETS PREPPY MEETS  
HEMINGWAY IN CUBA

Interior design by AMANDA LINDROTH Interview by DYLAN LANDIS Photographs by JAMES MERRELL



Florida-born designer Amanda Lindroth and her husband, Orjan, a developer, salvaged the North Carolina angler's boat docked outside their Bahamas house for one purpose: lunch. "We don't go far, we go slow, and we eat well," she says. **OPPOSITE:** Back steps, kept pristine white as if a canvas for bougainvillea, lead to the kitchen garden.



**LISTEN!**  
SCAN THIS  
PHOTO TO HEAR  
WHY AMANDA  
LINDROTH LOVES  
THE BAHAMAS



**DYLAN LANDIS:** You didn't really almost tear it down!

**AMANDA LINDROTH:** I did. I grew up in a Bauhaus modernist house in Florida, and it taught me about proportion—but I never wanted to live in a modern house again. Treehouse—this house—had two incredibly beautiful lots on the highest ridge of Lyford Cay, but I wasn't sure we should keep the structure.

**What exactly irked you about it?**

It's a 'Caribbean modern' house—the Bahamian version of a 1950s international house, all one level and full of glass. If you didn't like it you'd call it a ranch house, but it's better than that. My good friend Tom Scheerer, the designer who redecorated the Lyford Cay Club, laid his body in front of it. He said, 'You can't replace this charm.' I was like, 'You mean sliding glass doors again?'

**Sliding glass doors again—and they're everywhere!**

But now I think they're fantastic. They offer a completely clean view. I hung floor-to-ceiling curtains at the sides, and dummy rattan blinds to hide the space between the ceiling and the top of the sliding-door assembly. Think of all the homeowners in Florida who put in French doors because they didn't know they could do that.

**You embraced your past, architecturally.**

I really embraced it. I went to every junk shop in Florida and snapped up rattan swivel chairs and rattan peacock chairs and everything amusing about the midcentury resort moment that was also elegant. Tom finally said, 'Enough with the peacock chairs, Amanda.'

**What island clichés did you have to resist?**

You always have to resist clichés in the Bahamas! The orange coral. Overshelling your house—the trick is to keep them segregated. And too much color. People move to the island and think they should use a riot of color, and their house looks like a kindergarten classroom.

**And mosquito netting. In your bedroom I found about 5,000 yards of gorgeous white bed drapery—tailored and pleated—but no netting.**

To give the room some architecture, I raised the canopy to the ceiling. It's just white 1960s eyelet. I found two bolts of it downtown—\$6 or \$7 a yard, different patterns, with remnants of a third. My upholsterer patched it together, but you'd never know, the quality is so beautiful.

**White eyelet feels so American. So do the nautical and cottagey blues in your house. Where are the glittering teals and turquoises one ogles from the plane?**

Teals and aquas can be misused, and turquoise is quicksand for the beginner. I'm more royal

and French and navy blues. I'm inclined to throw them all together and not to sweat it too much, not to tremble. Mostly, blues all fall together and do pretty well, especially navy and French.

**Is that why you weren't afraid to mix ikat with boating stripes?**

I just happen to love ikat. And something about the way the house was all one level, which is a very American plan, made me feel that some continuity of pattern would give it one identity, like a big resort-hotel villa.

**Did you have to talk yourself into that gutsy stripe on the armchairs?**

Not at all. The house had been lived in by one woman for a very long time, and I wanted to make it new. Out with the French chateau chandeliers and the fanciness. In with the sporty Sunbrella stripe. You have seagrass everywhere.

It was such a midcentury house, it had a terrazzo floor. And I didn't have the oomph to jackhammer it out. Seagrass seemed like a cozy remedy. I do it a lot. When you need to clean it, you replace it. Did you know seagrass is a dollar a square foot? It goes down, and if there's a problem, it comes up. Or we just hurl down one of those Dash & Albert striped cotton rugs, if a guest has spilled a glass of red wine on the seagrass, or if a dog or child has done worse. We have a stock of them on hand.

**Do you live outdoors on that little boat out back?**

I'm a failure at boating. Everyone has these boats that go a gazillion miles an hour and you're bashed around and your hair is all tangled, and then you're supposed to wash them. I'm resolutely against it. There's a joke here—when you're dating, you're all for boating. When there's a ring on your finger, you're like, 'I'll meet you there. I'll fly.'

**What island influence sang to you most powerfully?**

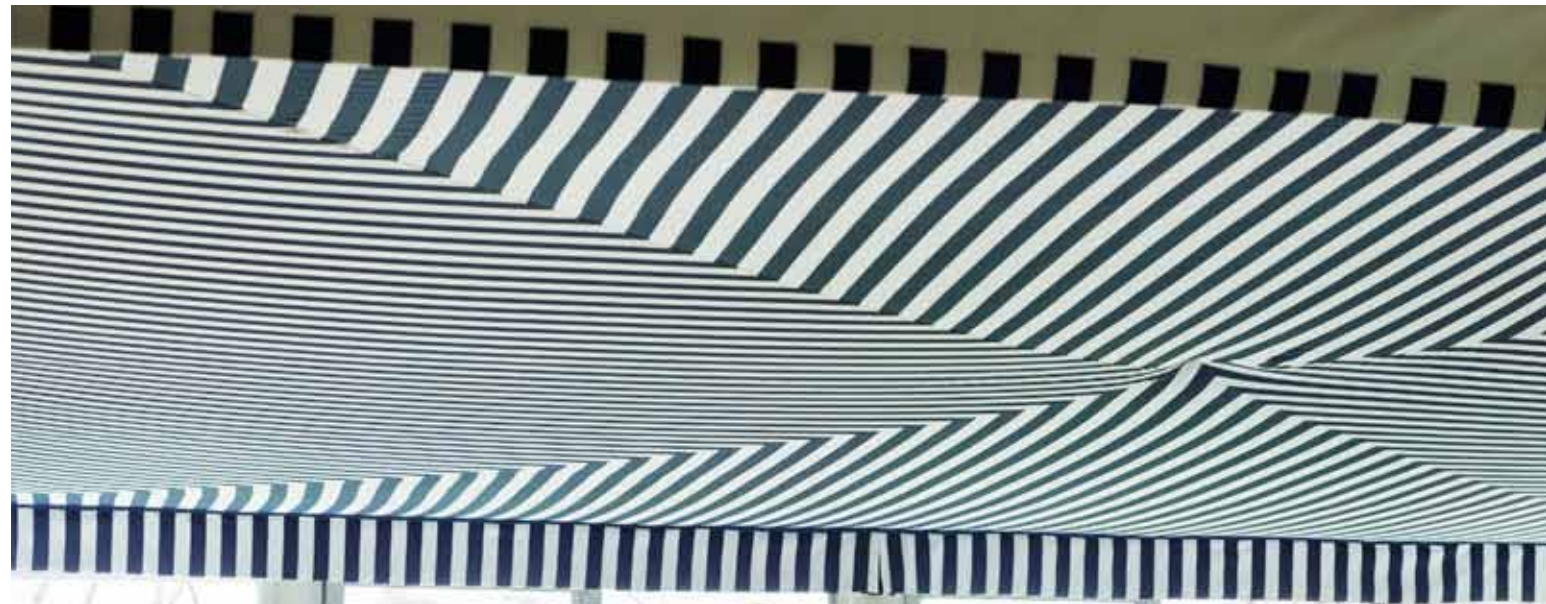
The fact that you see water from three sides—the garden, too, and the sky—was the biggest influence on the interior design. So the house is all white, in order not to compete. In the islands, white is like a uniform. But it's also a very American trait to use a lot of white paint.

**What's the art behind that seeming artlessness in the living-room picture grouping?**

Ultimately, it's: You have shelves, and you lean the pictures. You just make it work. It has an insouciance, as if you might change or add things. You can't live in a purely resort house, with four shell prints in the living room. You need paintings and books, that layer of life. An island house should look like home.

PRODUCED BY REBECCA DE RAVENEL

**LEFT:** In the living room, Lindroth's "very American and open and casual attitude" emanates partly from the leaning and overlapping pictures: "We collect paintings of the Bahamas from the late 19th to the early 20th century by notable American artists who passed through here in the winters—but if our daughter, Eliza, draws something, it might land there, too." Adding to the ease is the Sunbrella stripe with which she dressed four 1960s armchairs that came with the house.



1. A Coventry bench from Ballard Designs and vintage Brown Jordan chairs are nestled around a painted teak table in the dining area. 2. A blue-and-white palette keeps the library feeling cool and breezy. 3. Crowning the library hearth are 19th-century watercolors of the Bahamas by Gaspard Le Marchant Tupper. Willow Group rattan chairs are pulled up to a backgammon table. 4. Daughter Eliza's room is decorated to gracefully transition from little girl to young lady. 5. For a blank wall in the living room, Lindroth summoned 1960s Billy Baldwin and found a vintage rattan screen to fill the space—"super sporty." A console table is jazzed up with navy Island Ikat by China Seas. 6. A painting by the prominent Bahamian outsider artist Amos Ferguson hangs above the sunroom's well-stocked bar. "Every island house needs a fantastic, spilling-over bar!" Lindroth says. Poufs and rope clock from Two's Company. **OPPOSITE:** The sunroom is tented like a pleasure boat—"a fun way to make it feel full of happiness." The convocation of blue-and-white stripes is distinctively American; it includes the mitered Sunbrella canopy and a Dash & Albert rug. Lindroth found the 1960s swivel chairs, hooded wicker chair, and whimsical metal palm tree in south Florida.



“I love how the bold ikat on the two screens frames the dreamy eyelet bed and gives this low, 1950s room some architecture.”

AMANDA LINDROTH

**RIGHT:** To visually heighten the master bedroom, Lindroth sheathed two ceiling-high screens in a Duralee overscale ikat print and brought the eyelet canopy as high as it could go. The 1950s Baker console table, reglazed in a dark “Caribbean-y” finish, holds a 19th-century English grotto mirror and shelters vintage stools covered in cool seersucker. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES

