

# HOME



## WALKING ON SUNSHINE

From beach huts and revamped resorts to a £375,000 Scottish island estate: our guide to the best of British coastal living



### PUT IT ON THE BUCKET LIST

The dreamiest seaside homes from  
around the globe | p30

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taking over interiors this summer | p38

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## Coast

The traditional British beach house meets innovative architects. If you want one



**F**rom majestic Regency townhouses to rows of miserably squat bungalows, Britain's coastal architecture has been something of a mixed bag. Happily, the 21st century has brought a renewed interest in creating outstanding one-off beach houses that not only use the latest technology to shrug off exposed conditions, but also complement the landscape, placing the view of sea and shore at centre stage.

The price of building one of these beauties sits at about £2,000 to £2,500 per sq metre — not a budget housing option. But they do stand as prototypes of the kind of homes that should be decorating our coastline. Here are 10 of the best architects to look up if you want to create a grown-up sandcastle of your own.

### 1 Simon Conder

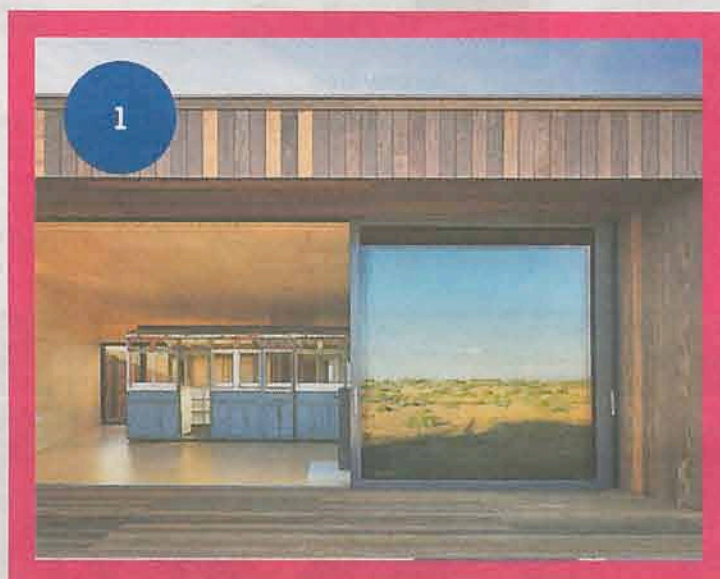
**Signature project** With its part-curved facade clad in wood, El Ray is one of the contemporary houses that are turning the shingle desert of Dungeness beach, Kent, into an outdoor museum of modern architecture. A 19th-century railway carriage that originally sat on the site now holds the property's kitchen and adds a touch of history. "When the railways were being closed around Dungeness in the 1930s, a lot of people bought them for next to nothing and dumped them on the beach as the start of a holiday home," says Conder, director of Simon Conder Associates, based in London and Suffolk and known for its award-winning low-budget projects. This design, built in 2008, takes advantage of the site's Channel views with a glass extension and roof deck, while slot windows around the rest of the property frame vistas of the Dungeness lighthouses.

**Guide price** £2,000 per sq metre.

**Top tip** If you get lemons, make lemonade. Dungeness is notoriously windy, so El Ray has a wind turbine — and two sheltered courtyards. [simonconder.co.uk](http://simonconder.co.uk)

### 2 Dualchas Architects

**Signature project** Faire Chaolais, a cantilevered house cut into sloping



I hate it when clients put pictures up — I call it wall acne. If they must, I tell them to put all the pictures together on the staircase



ground above the white-sand beach at Morar, in the Scottish Highlands, is typical of the work of this award-winning practice, based in the Isle of Skye and Glasgow. The living space is on the upper floor, with huge windows framing the astonishing vista, while three bedrooms on the lower floor overlook a sheltered garden. It was completed last year as a second home for a private client. **Guide price** Between £1,800 and £2,000 per sq metre. **Top tip** "When building in a beautiful landscape, the building itself does not have to be complicated," says Neil Stephen, a partner at Dualchas. [dualchas.com](http://dualchas.com)

### 3 Guy Hollaway

**Signature project** The Beach Houses are a rarity — a seafront scheme designed by a leading contemporary architect at a time when most developers opt for bland pastiche. The 11 two-bedroom homes, commissioned by Harriss Property, have a prime "front row" location overlooking the sea wall at Margate. Hollaway, who works across the southeast, drew on memories of his childhood in the area when creating the subtly nostalgic terrace of glass-gabled houses with the roof line of a row of traditional beach huts. "We wanted to create the ultimate beach hut for 21st-century living," he says. "Our open-plan design allows for flexible spaces that are ideal for the modern family." The houses



# st lines

is getting a fresh look, thanks to a new wave of  
of your own, **Ruth Bloomfield** tells you who to call

24.05.2015 / 27



Art Stephenson; Jack Hobhouse; Morley von Sternberg; Nigel Rigdon; Edmund Sumner; James Morris; Andrew Lee



will be completed next spring.  
**Guide price** From £395,000 (01227-451123, struttandparker.com).  
**Top tip** Using larch for the cladding means it will require little maintenance and will weather well. [guyhollaway.co.uk](http://guyhollaway.co.uk)

## 4 Living Architecture

**Signature project** A cross between a gingerbread house and a gold-domed temple, A House for Essex, near Wrabness on the north Essex coast, is the work of the artist Grayson Perry and the experimental architectural studio FAT. This captivating little bolthole, with its rooftop spires and facade clad in white and green ceramic tiles by Perry, is the latest creation for Alain de Botton's Living Architecture charity, known for commissioning houses that push boundaries. The interior has tapestries, mosaic floors and ornamental pots, also by Perry. A ballot to book it for holiday lets, from £850 to £1,800, is now open. (See Homes Are Where the Art Is, Culture, page 12.)

**Guide price** Build cost confidential.  
**Top tip** The seaside is all about having fun. Sometimes — the Brighton Pavilion, built by John Nash for the Prince Regent, is a case in point — more can be more. [living-architecture.co.uk](http://living-architecture.co.uk)

## 5 Jonathan Manser

**Signature project** Sea Glass House, on the Isle of Wight, is hidden behind a sinuous wall clad in iridescent black mosaic tiles. The wall shimmers in the sunlight and picks up the colours of the trees and sky, giving a mysterious, but not forbidding, first impression of the property. "Matt black would have been too stark. As it is, it is just on the verge of bling," says Manser, director of the London-based Manser Practice, known for creating one-off modern houses since the 1960s. The heart of this holiday house, built in 2010, is a glass pavilion living area with views of the Solent. The five bedrooms, in contrast, are timber-clad.  
**Guide price** £2,200 to £2,700 per sq metre.

**Top tip** Don't be afraid to rip it up and start again. Sea Glass replaced a 1960s bungalow, but the original plan was to remodel it, says Manser. "We were going to add a glass pavilion, but it became apparent that it was going to make the bungalow look even more unprepossessing." [manser.co.uk](http://manser.co.uk)

## 6 Annie Martin

**Signature project** Seacombe, an airy part-timber-framed house, replaced an ugly bungalow on a coastal site in East Portleymouth, Devon. Martin, an award-winning sole architect based near Exeter, built the property for her parents in 2009 and sunk the ground floor into the sloping site because of height restrictions in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The three bedrooms are on the upper floor, while the living space downstairs leads to a terrace, with a cinema at the back of the property where there is the least natural light.  
**Guide price** £2,000 to £2,500 per sq metre.  
**Top tip** Consider the weather, good and bad. Martin used durable materials, such as zinc on the roof, as protection from salt water and lashing rain, and the oversailing roof offers summer shade. [anniemartin.co.uk](http://anniemartin.co.uk)

## 7 Charles Meloy

**Signature project** The Beach House replaced a rudimentary holiday

chalet on Hayling Island, Hampshire, with a small but perfectly formed single-storey retreat in 2013. Meloy collaborated with his client John Young, a retired architect who had worked with Lord Rogers. Planning rules prevented the two-bedroom house from exceeding 750 sq ft and it has neighbours close by on either side, so the rooms to the side of the property are lit by high window strips to let in light without compromising privacy. Meloy, who works along the south coast, was inspired by the compact design of yachts. A deck-like wraparound terrace is protected by a cantilevered roof, while lockers fitted to the back of the house store sailing gear.  
**Guide price** £1,500 to £2,500 per sq metre.

**Top tip** Understanding how the light falls and which are the most important views should drive a design. [meloy.co.uk](http://meloy.co.uk)

## 8 John Pardey

**Signature project** The owners of Trewarren House, perched on the northern edge of the Newport estuary in Pembrokeshire, Wales, originally asked for a New England-style holiday home, and there are faint echoes of this in the property's angular veranda. But Pardey, director of the Hampshire-based John Pardey Architects, persuaded them into something much more contemporary. From the road, this five-bedroom house shows a heavy slate wall, but overlooking the water it opens out into airy rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows framing phenomenal views. "It is the best site I have ever worked on," says Pardey, whose practice has won 36 awards since it began in 1988.  
**Guide price** £2,500 per sq metre.  
**Top tip** Don't let decor detract from an outstanding view. "I hate clients putting pictures up — I call it wall acne," Pardey says. "If they must, I tell them to put them all together on the staircase." [johnpardeyarchitects.com](http://johnpardeyarchitects.com)

## 9 Stuart Piercy

**Signature project** The conversion of the 200-year-old Martello Tower Y, near Bawdsey, Suffolk — designed to shoot cannonballs at Napoleon's navy — was a tricky project for Piercy, director of the London studio

Piercy & Co. Not only was the squat brick tower a scheduled monument, but it was semi derelict. Piercy's solution was to shore up the tower, add a new central staircase within the 30ft-tall building and build a new curved roof, covered in a rubber membrane, that shelters a bright kitchen/living room with panoramic sea views and a terrace. Inside the tower are a circular living room and four bedrooms, lit by the original slot windows and some cleverly concealed light pipes. The project, commissioned by Duncan Jackson, an industrial designer, was completed in 2010 and won plaudits from English Heritage.  
**Guide price** From £2,150 to £3,230 per sq metre.

**Top tip** Homes by the coast may be at flood risk; you must mitigate against this. The tower's original makers did this by placing the entrance on the first floor, 16ft above ground level, and building with stone and water-resistant lime mortar. [piercyandco.com](http://piercyandco.com)

## 10 Studio West Architects

**Signature project** Dor Lewern, a modular, sustainable house overlooking Sennen Cove, in Cornwall, replaced an uninspiring postwar bungalow in 2013. Neil Wall, a director of a Cornwall practice that specialises in ecofriendly design, was asked to build a four-bedroom family home on the site and went for a timber-framed eco-house (it has solar PV panels, a heat-recovery system and high levels of insulation). "We had to have a flat roof because of sight lines locally, and that dictated its cubic form," he says. Every room has a large picture window, but for practical reasons some of these do not open. The heat-recovery system keeps the house ventilated and comfortable, but embedded in the timber cladding is a series of "secret windows" — hatches that open to allow occupants to feel the breeze and hear the sea.  
**Guide price** £1,800 to £2,000 per sq metre.  
**Top tip** Think cleverly about materials. Dor Lewern is clad in western red cedar that, untreated, becomes stronger in damp, salty conditions, while the clear-glass balustrades to the balcony ensure there is nothing to spoil the view. [studiowestarchitects.co.uk](http://studiowestarchitects.co.uk)