

🇬🇧 HOMES • TRAVEL • FOOD • PROPERTY • GARDENS • HEALTH & BEAUTY

coast

AUGUST 2009 £3.99

Living by the sea



YOUR BEST SUMMER EVER

- * Book a brilliant British holiday
- * Unwind on a secret, sandy beach
- * Chill out at an ice-cream parlour

LITTLE PALACES OF FUN
Where to buy a beach hut

SEAWEED QUICHE, ANYONE?
Foraging made tasty

* BUDGET BREAKS

WALK the beautiful
Fife coastal path

EXPLORE the haunting
Essex coastline

SAIL up a Devon
estuary on a day trip

Beach houses

THE COOLEST, DREAMIEST PLACES TO LIVE

PLUS: BEACH VOLLEYBALL • CHAS & DAVE • BEACH TOWELS • SUNCREAM GUIDE • CRAB SPOTTING

MAD

HUTTERS' PARTY

If you think you know beach huts, think again. An art project on the Lincolnshire coast has re-imagined our FAVOURITE BUILDING and will display some innovative new designs this summer WORDS *Ruth Chandler*

A two-storey gin and tonic, a bar to watch clouds from and a stripy, pot-bellied shed; no, these aren't the surreal imaginings of fantasy fiction, but the inspired results of a beach hut design competition. The contest is part of Bathing Beauties, a project conceived by artist Michael Trainor to revive the sandy Lincolnshire coast between Mablethorpe and Anderby Creek. 'It's a forgotten piece of Britain's coastline in the shadow of its neighbours, Grimsby and Skegness,' he says. 'When I first visited, I was amazed by the sheer number of beach huts, many of which had seen better days. It struck me that they're basically sheds and they don't quite live up to their spectacular coastal locations.'

This realisation led him to launch Bathing Beauties, an international scheme that blends art and architecture in a bid to, as Michael says, 'reinvent the beach hut for the 21st century'. As well as a showcase for creative talent, the annual Festival of Bathing Beauties, held next month and which forms part of the concept, attracts up to 15,000 new visitors and £100,000-£200,000 to the area. 'We organise firework displays, music and theatre performances inside the traditional beach huts,' continues Michael, 'erect oversized deckchairs and parasols, and have food markets on the prom - anything that gets people involved.' The competition's winning designs are permanently installed along this stretch of coast and several new commissions will add to what Michael calls a ten-mile linear gallery along the Lincolnshire coast. To give you a flavour of the event, we talked to the creators behind five Bathing Beauties.



COME UP AND SEE ME

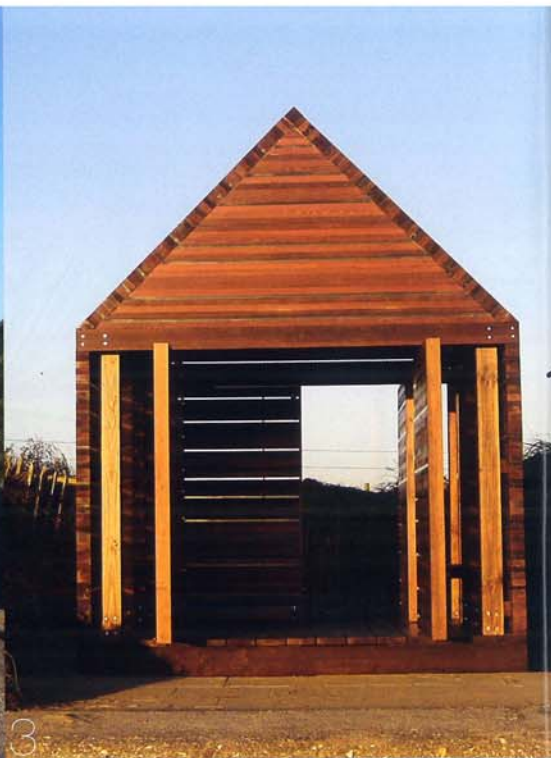
FIND IT AT: South Promenade, Mablethorpe
DESIGNER: Michael Trainor, Manchester

1 'The idea for this design is as simple as it seems. I think that sunsets are a really special time on the coast, so I started by asking myself, if I could do anything by the sea at that time of day, what would it be? I've always loved the idea of sipping a cocktail on the beach in the late afternoon, so I decided to make a giant two-storey gin and tonic [right], complete with a straw and slice of lemon! It also has a viewing platform, accessed by internal stairs.'

'Of course, just because the concept was simple, it doesn't mean that the construction was straightforward. The basic structure is made of galvanised steel and laminated plywood, but its cylindrical design was quite tricky to create and also to make weathertight. We used vitrified glass tiles and I really love the effect - it resembles the kind of tide-worn glass that you pick up on the beach. Sections of mirror in between these tiles reflect life on the seafloor.'

'Basically, I feel that the "hut" represents the fun of being by the sea - after all, coastal resorts are all about amusement and entertainment.'





JABBA

FIND IT AT: *the sand dunes by Seaview car park, North Mablethorpe*
DESIGNER: *Jolyon Nott, i-am Associates, London*

2 'The North Sea can be ferocious at times so, as our site was in the sand dunes, we wanted to design a cave that could offer warmth and seclusion. Its colour scheme, which resembles layers of sand and sediment, goes brilliantly with the green of the grass on the dunes and bright blue of the skies. The name isn't just a gratuitous reference to *Star Wars*, but an allusion to the character's fat shape and full name: Jabba "the hut".

'The major difficulty was sticking to the budget of £25,000, because that had to include design time as well as construction and materials. It took six of us two days to complete the jigsaw puzzle of marine ply and acrylic pieces, which we'd numbered one to five hundred. The form of the hut is staggered with steps cut away in the sides leading to a viewing platform, which made it trickier to build, and we had to put posts very low into the dunes to make it stable.

'We're pleased with how well it interacts with the environment, and its location means that visitors stumble across it—like so many of the treasures you find at the beach.'



HALCYON HUT

FIND IT AT: *68 Sutton South Promenade, Sutton on Sea*
DESIGNERS: *Quinlan Osborne and Anik Mandalian, Atelier NU, Montreal, Canada*

3 'We found the repetitive rows of beach huts in this area really beautiful and decided to make them our starting point – paying homage to the vernacular structure rather than creating a contrast. While we love the other innovative Bathing Beauties, we felt there was room for a more reserved project, which still captures the contemporary look that the brief called for.

'So we kept our materials simple, using Plexiglass and western red cedarwood, giving texture to the wood by staining it with different colours. The glass lets in light, and when the sun is low, the hut becomes fully illuminated.

'It was hard to manage the project from overseas, but we moved our practice from Canada to Ireland, so we were able to visit Lincolnshire several times to work with the London-based joiner. He treated it more like a piece of furniture – building it in a butchers' block fashion – and indulged our desire for detail. Working on the east coast of Britain was a tremendous experience. We hope visitors agree that our hut complements what is already there.'



ANDERBY CREEK CLOUD BAR

FIND IT AT: *the beach, Anderby Creek, near Skegness*
DESIGNER: *Michael Trainor, Manchester*

4 'This is the most recent structure to be installed. I was inspired to create this cloud-viewing venue under Lincolnshire's famously expansive skies. It's a simple-looking building, clad in locally sourced larch, which tones well with the beach, but on top is a "bar" for drinking in the views. On the platform, there are cloud-shaped 'recliners' made of moulded concrete that encourage visitors to lean back and look at the skyscape.

'Mirrors also reflect the formations overhead and magic them down to earth, and viewers are able to tell their cirrus from their cumulus using the 30 descriptions and images provided by international meteorologists, which are shown on the glass panel 'menus'. The bar has been officially endorsed by the Cloud Appreciation Society and is the only permanent cloud-viewing platform in the UK. The hut's location is an essential part of its identity – the seaside is one of the few places we can take time out just to stand and stare.'



THE MABLETHORPE CAMERA OBSCURA

FIND IT AT: *South Promenade, Mablethorpe*
DESIGNER: *Tony Willett, Willett & Patteson, East Sussex*

5 'I've been fascinated by lenses since I was a boy and now I build camera obscuras to commission for a living. The designs were popularised for seafronts in the 19th century, but had previously been used by artists for inspiration and as amusements for the rich. I made my first one as a safe way to view the 1999 eclipse in Cornwall and although the cloud on that occasion made it impossible to see the event, I was amazed by the public's interest in it.

'As part of the Bathing Beauties programme, Michael Trainor commissioned me to produce a camera obscura. My team and I are builders by trade, so constructing the octagonal booth, made out of timber and based on a Victorian booth, was simple. We painted it in the customary red and white, and, even though it's a traditional attraction, it never fails to intrigue people, young and old, and has a fresh, contemporary feel about it. Plus, of course, it screens live images of life at the seaside, so it's very much about the here and now.'

PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL TRAINOR FOR MORE PLACES TO VISIT AROUND THE UK COAST, SEE ALLABOUTYOU.COM/COUNTRY

* **NEED TO KNOW** The third Festival of Bathing Beauties takes place on 18-20 September 2009. For info and more details about the five forthcoming designs, see bathingbeauties.org.uk. The exhibition showing the original 1:15-scale models of the hut submissions is currently on tour (thehubcentre.info). To hire one of the Bathing Beauties featured, from £20 per day, contact East Lindsey District Council (01507 473641, e-lindsey.gov.uk).