

WATER COLOR

WITH THE GLITTERING GULF AS THEIR GUIDE, DESIGNERS ANNE SCOTT SHELLEY AND ALLISON SMITH INFUSE A FAMILY HOUSE ON THE FLORIDA COAST WITH PUNCHY COLOR AND PATTERN

BY MARISA SPYKER PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUREY W. GLENN STYLING BY FRANCES BAILEY



REINVENT THE SEA

With a single charge from the homeowner to find a backsplash that mirrored the Gulf of Mexico views, Anne Scott Shelley and Allison Smith set out to determine just how literal a match to make it. "We needed to find something that looked like the water but wasn't an actual seascape on the back wall," says Smith. With shades that vary from square to square, the Clé terra-cotta tiles fill the bill. "It was perfect because each individual tile has that ombré effect that you see when you look out at the Gulf." The designers balanced the lively tiles with kitchen cabinets painted a deep blue (Rainstorm by Sherwin-Williams).

GUTTER CREDIT

GUTTER CREDIT



As designers who grew up spending time along the storied stretch of Florida's Panhandle coastline—famous for its piercing aquamarine Gulf waters—it's no surprise to hear that Anne Scott Shelley and Allison Smith have a soft spot for vibrant coastal colors. Designing for clients, however, doesn't always afford the duo, who helm Inlet Beach's Maison Studios, free range of the color wheel. "We tend to do a lot more muted palettes in our projects," says Shelley.

But when they were approached to design this Blue Mountain Beach getaway, that wasn't the case. Their longtime client, who'd shared a similar tone-it-down philosophy on previous homes, was ready to take a risk. And for Shelley and Smith, that's where the fun began. "He told us he wanted a lot more color and he wanted his kitchen backsplash to look just like the Gulf," says Shelley. "And that was about it. It was kind of a dream scenario."

Luckily, the contemporary new-build on a quiet street in the laid-back Blue Mountain Beach community delivered the perfect canvas: three levels of Gulf-front beauty with uninterrupted views from nearly every room in the house. Using the location's natural assets as their guide, Shelley and Smith dreamt up a plan for a casual yet sophisticated escape filled with whimsical patterns, punchy colors, and playful artwork. Working almost completely from scratch, the designers were able to build a vision from the ground up, with the caveat that the finished product be a fun-filled and fuss-free getaway for the client and his large multigenerational family. "He jokes that the house often feels like a hotel since his family is always there visiting," says Smith. Here, the designers share how they weaved together a statement-making palette with personality while creating a family-friendly pad made for entertaining.



MAKE A GRAND ENTRANCE

The first-floor living space, where guests enter the home, delivered two major "wow" moments early on in the design process: the striking backsplash and the killer Gulf views. Outfitting the rest of the open-plan space, therefore, became a study in balance. To complement the kitchen's beachy palette, Smith and Shelley (left) translated the deeper blue hues onto upholstery and pillows in the living room. Paler shades of aqua clad the sofa console, side tables, and sculptural piece by artist Jeremy Holmes that hangs over the fireplace. Two shell-pink slipcovered armchairs bring a dose of contrast. "We really try to mix in warm tones when we're doing a lot of cool tones in a room," says Shelley.



TAKE IT OUTSIDE

From an architectural standpoint, the first-floor patio and pool area were designed as extensions of the great room, with outdoor-friendly Dominican shell stone flooring running throughout and Nanawall doors that allow the interiors to open up completely to the elements. Keeping that cohesion in the design was important for Shelley and Smith too. For a set of teak lounge seating from Restoration Hardware, the duo repeated the statement blues from the kitchen's backsplash in the form of cabana striped upholstery from Perennials. Under the sun, they dialed up the electricity with vibrant teal garden stools that mimic the water colors from the pool and Gulf just steps away. "Since he wanted more color, we thought it would be good to translate the interior shades outdoors," says Shelley. "Plus, they tie into the pool tile."

MIRROR YOUR MUSE

With floor-to-ceiling windows wrapping its alcove (opposite) with a kaleidoscope of blue shades, there was no question where the master bedroom would glean its color inspiration. And, according to Shelley, it all started with the eye-catching Tritter Feefer bed: "I knew I wanted something that wasn't your typical stained wood or white, so when I found this finish, it became a jumping-off point," she says. Shelley and Smith complemented the gray-blue frame with coordinating patterns, including an Elizabeth Eakins textile. A minimalist fireplace, seagrass rug, and neutral bedding keep the boldness in check, while the statement light fixture above adds a touch of elegance. "I liked it because it kind of reminded me of sea life," says Smith.





FUSE STYLE WITH FUNCTION

Throughout the home—and in this cozy third-floor living room—Shelley and Smith strove to find a sweet spot between a home with panache and one that encourages play. Sophisticated architectural finishes like coffered ceilings and Venetian plaster walls helped achieve the former, so the designers largely opted to fill the spaces with furniture that would satisfy the latter objective. “Everything inside is either stain-treated or slip-covered,” says Shelley. Here, a seagrass rug and white slipcovered seating provide the durability needed for a flurry of rowdy grandkids. A teal leather ottoman by Vanguard and disco ball-like light fixture from Serena & Lily bring hints of shine that circle back to the room’s formality.

HONOR THE ARCHITECTURE

Shelley and Smith saw the house’s existing architectural plans as a subtle guide for their design process. “The house is fairly modern in style, so we tried to incorporate some modern lines without going overboard,” says Shelley. They filled the entryway with Moravian Star Lanterns from Circa Lighting (top), while on the second-floor porch (left), angular furniture like a Southern Komfort porch swing match the contemporary lean of the all-glass balcony railings. Natural materials and cozy, colorful throw pillows soften things up.

HAVE A BALL

In many ways, the home’s third-floor game room is a departure from the design M.O. employed throughout the home. “This room was all about fun, so instead of white walls, we decided to paint them contrasting blues,” says Shelley. Benjamin Moore’s Jamestown Blue and Woodlawn Blue brought the perfect high-low balance of shades while providing a moodier backdrop that matched the room’s intended pool hall vibe. A table reminiscent of driftwood was the owner’s pick; the designers complemented this with sleek white bar-height pedestal tables from Woodbridge and a rectangular Ralph Lauren light fixture that jibed with the billiards theme.





MAKE EVERY BEDROOM ITS OWN WORK OF ART

Shelley and Smith bestowed every bedroom with vibrant gifts of pattern and color. A children's bunkroom takes a charming sail print used in a guest bath shower curtain and wraps it around lumbar pillows, while a Sister Parish star print livens Roman shades. In guest bedrooms, the designers deploy lively combinations on pillows and headboards (including vintage Suzani fabric, right), as well as in a custom-framed silk scarf by artist Laura Serventi from her Etsy shop artandpeople (top).

NEARLY EVERY ROOM HERE HAS DIRECT WATER VIEWS. IT WAS A DREAM SCENARIO.

— ANNE SCOTT SHELLEY AND ALLISON SMITH



Pops of Gulf-inspired color complement beachy naturals on the first-floor patio.