



On Island Time

A family takes their cherished beach house down to the pilings to achieve a fresh headquarters for memory-making and relaxation.

Southern
home

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For more than 50 years, a beloved family retreat in Amelia Island, Florida, served as the site of many treasured memories for three generations. The house offered beautiful views and unparalleled access to a private beach. Eventually, the family outgrew the quaint, understated cottage, but they didn't want to part with the treasured scene of so many memorable gatherings. Rather than look for a more accommodating house in a new location, the owners opted to undertake a major overhaul with the help of architect John Dodd and interior designer Kristen Biagini.

"The original house was demolished right down to the pilings," says Biagini. "We rebuilt according to the new building code and incorporated all the luxuries of a house designed for entertaining." The owners favor traditional style, so the vacation home includes classical details more commonly found in primary residences. Ceilings are paneled in white oak, the cabinetry in the kitchen and baths features handsome moldings, and the artwork is more elevated than the usual beach-house trope. Biagini gave the home polish with refined touches in the form of fine light fixtures, marble accents, and a silk rug in the living room. Pragmatism did win out in fabric choices, however, which are mostly

Previous pages: Sandy beach tones and contrasting textures create a neutral living room that's anything but boring. Belgian linen curtains filter strong morning rays. The painting over the mantel is by Southern artist Andrea Castro. These pages, opposite: Paneled walls and a sky blue tongue-and-groove ceiling add distinction to the entry. This page: The exterior features a solid masonry facade on the first level that gives way to warm wood siding above. The side gate allows access to outdoor seating and the beach.



The kitchen aims for minimal visual impact with Shaker-style cabinet doors that add discreet elegance. Two types of barstools accommodate just perching or settling in for the evening. Glass pendant lights nearly disappear over the island. The dining table can seat up to eight comfortably. Waxed floors of European oak provide a tough yet elegant surface for high-action family fun.

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This page, above: The kitchen overlooks the ocean, allowing clear views of the surf for the cook. Above right: A butler's pantry along the back wall offers self-serving of beverages and keeps traffic out of the cook's domain. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: A painting by Andrea Castro hangs over an acrylic console. A small sitting room offers a cozy vibe in contrast to the bright, open living room. Shaded by the upper porch, a row of outdoor seating options faces the beach. The bunk room with curtained sleeping nooks is a kid's dream retreat.

indoor-outdoor to endure the wear and tear of the active family with four boys. "The house is designed to withstand everything from late-night parties to outbursts of Nerf gun battles," says the designer.

On the second floor, the large airy living room offers expansive ocean views. "The space is an exercise in textures," Biagini says. Upholstered furniture in classic silhouettes gives the family a comfortable place to spread out and relax. Just off the living room, a smaller sitting area offers a contrast in mood with fabrics in deeper hues and a colorful Oushak rug. "With its darker palette, this smaller, more intimate den is a counterbalance to the large, bright living room," says Biagini.

Entertaining options include a 9-foot-long island with bar, a kitchen table that can seat eight, and an outdoor dining table on the second floor. Beneath the balcony, a spa-like arrangement of furniture offers space for lounging in the shade or informal cocktails at sunset.

In another departure from the usual beach-house treatment, the bathrooms emit a luxe vibe with marble showers and vanities and custom cabinetry. Plush bedrooms include tufted upholstered headboards, silky rugs, and beds piled high with pillows. "The family wants guests to be reminded that they are on island time while visiting this home," says Biagini. It's the same mindset that drew family and friends to the original cottage for decades and is sure to beckon visitors for years to come.





Opposite page: A silk-and-bamboo rug and a plush, upholstered headboard create luxurious comfort in the guest bedroom. Above: The master bedroom's seating area offers a meditative respite. Left and below: Marble counters and refined cabinetry emit elegance in the master bath. The tub offers 180-degree ocean views.

