

**Commit to the Theme, Indoors and Out**

(Left to right) Reflecting a Bahamian-cottage style on the exterior, the 2,400-square-foot house is "just big enough," says homeowner Catherine Gibbs. The powder room features tropically inspired botanical wallpaper and an antique mirror given to Gibbs by her great-grandmother when she turned 17.



**Stick To the Straight and Narrow**

Gibbs grew up spending lots of time on sailboats, so a galley kitchen felt both nostalgic and functional to her. "I can walk from one appliance to another in two steps without having to circumnavigate a great big island," says the homeowner. "My builder fought me on this decision, but I've lived long enough to know what I like. Plus, I don't want my dinner guests to see me splattering grease when I'm cooking." She chose slick lacquered cabinets but gave them a vintage-meets-modern vibe with recessed campaign-style pulls.

# Cool & Collected

A SMART MIX OF CHERISHED ANTIQUES AND AIRY COLORS TRANSFORMS THIS INLET BEACH, FLORIDA, HOME INTO A HANDSOME ESCAPE

BY PAIGE PORTER FISCHER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREY W. GLENN STYLING BY BUFFY HARGETT MILLER

## Seek Out a Statement Piece

"This breakfast table was always in my grandmother's house, and I wanted it to have a special place in mine," says Gibbs. The glass-top pedestal table has a nautical, ropelike base. Designers Bo Massey and Susan Bohlert Smith energized it by pairing it with rattan chairs by Sika-Design and a skirted bench upholstered in a pale aqua stripe from Perennials. A large oil-rubbed bronze lantern illuminates the space, while a distressed mirror doubles the glow by reflecting light. "When we saw that French frame in green, we knew it would be the star of the breakfast room," recalls Massey.



CATHERINE GIBBS loves a good story—especially one that's attached to family heirlooms. Her fondness for conversation pieces is so strong that she had just a single requirement for designers Bo Massey and Susan Bohlert Smith when she hired this mother-daughter team to bring her Florida home to life: The antiques are here to stay.

"Many people come to the 30A area and build their second homes, and everything is white and new and minimalist," says Gibbs, who worked for years in New York in the fashion industry. "But this is my permanent home, and I was bringing in family pieces that weren't bought for a beach house. I wanted this place to feel appropriate for its coastal setting but didn't want to part with my antiques—or even

worse, be told I needed to paint my brown furniture white."

When Bohlert Smith and Massey first walked through Gibbs' house in Inlet Beach, they asked for her story and learned about her upbringing in Jacksonville, where her father owned a shipyard and passed on his love of boats to her. "Catherine grew up sailing with her dad and was exposed to the architecture and design of The Bahamas and Caribbean throughout her life," says Massey. "With that aesthetic in mind, we embraced the historic pieces and incorporated tropical, island-inspired elements to make all the antiques feel a bit more current."

The designers gave the plain walls an immediate sense of history and texture when they added marmorino Venetian

plaster throughout. They chose a color palette of various greens, shades of coral, and Caribbean blues. Gibbs' dark wooden furniture was revitalized when juxtaposed with lively upholstered pieces, bold wallpaper, and a hand-painted mural in the primary bedroom. Jute rugs and rattan furnishings relaxed the more formal, polished pieces in the house.

"In the end, I believe we created a look that's fresh and unpredictable, especially in this region," says Massey. "But at the same time, it's reminiscent of a timeless aesthetic that's relevant to coastal areas around the world. It was great for us to work with someone who knew what she liked and trusted her instincts to keep the things she loved but was willing to take some risks to reinvent them."



### Pile on the Personality

The designers opted for modern versions of classic chesterfield sofas—sans tufting—for the living room. "We wanted something that worked with traditional pieces but also felt clean-lined, so we kept the arms and backs smooth for a more contemporary look," says Massey. The coffee table is a Chinese antique. They layered an old Turkish rug on top of a jute one and installed celadon grass cloth on the wall for texture. "We tried to add as much character as we could fit into every inch of the house," says Bohlert Smith.



### Find a Happy Medium

The designers wanted Gibbs' bedroom "to be a fresh take on tropical," says Massey. They had the walls finished with a pink Venetian plaster and hired artist Marion Barnes to produce a vibrant mural that incorporated botanicals. The simple four-poster bed looks like stylized bamboo—a modern version of a traditional frame. "We used formal pieces in here—like Catherine's beautiful heirloom mirror over the bed—but we tempered the polished elements with pieces like the natural-fiber floor covering and raffia headboard," she says. Bohlert Smith agrees: "The room feels worldly and elegant but comfortable. Her bedroom is a great example of that balancing act. It is possible to have a Fortuny silk pillow placed 3 feet away from an inexpensive jute rug."



### Embrace the Fringe Benefits

The green velvet divan is by Hickory Chair, but the designers tacked on jute trim to relax it for the beach setting. "We love the Art Deco detailing on the chair," says Massey. "We picked the fabric because it's a small stylized-palm block print that forms a stripe." Woven shades add texture while sheer drapery panels allow for plenty of natural light in the space. "This look might be a bit unexpected for the 30A area, but it borrows from the classic island aesthetic with Old Florida mixed in," she says.

## Take the Organic Route

The designers extended the interior color palette—pale blue, pink, and green—outside, creating a seamless transition between the living spaces. The swing has modern lines and a thin frame, while the painted bamboo Chippendale chairs deliver an easy Old Florida vibe. The wicker side table is one of Gibbs' family pieces. "We like to weave in as many natural textures as possible when designing a space like this," says Massey. "The chairs, jute rug, cord coffee table, and raffia throw pillows make the porch feel like a place to truly relax."

