
NEUTRAL GROUND

INSPIRED BY SAND AND SEA, A DESIGNER INFUSES A GALVESTON NEW BUILD WITH SOOTHING HUES AND COZY CHARM FOR A BUSY HOUSTON FAMILY





PLAY UP TEXTURE

Located on the fringes of the great room, the breakfast nook became designer Anne Grandinetti's prized study in mix-and-match materials. A vintage travertine table, wicker Pantone chair, and custom linen settee add interest without straying from the home's subdued colorway.

Picture an ocean vista and a potpourri of positive words might come to mind: happiness, fun, adventure. But for designer Anne Grandinetti, one in particular surfaces first. “When I think of the beach, I instantly think of calm,” says Grandinetti, senior designer and creative director at Mark Ashby Design in Austin, Texas. “Personally, I couldn’t imagine a beach home filled with

really bold, bright colors. I always go to a very neutral, earthy palette, because I think the feeling it invokes is very similar to the way you feel at the beach.”

Thankfully, her clients—a busy Houston family with three young boys—were wholeheartedly on board. When they scooped up the classic bungalow in a planned community in Galveston mid-build, their vision of beachside bliss included a heavy dose



of R&R. “They wanted a place that wasn’t too precious, where they could come to relax and not have to worry about a thing.” To that end, Grandinetti carefully tailored her soothing aesthetic to match materials and fabrics built to last in even the toughest circumstances. “Sandy feet, wet bottoms—this house can take it all,” she says. Here’s how the designer crafted a hard-wearing beach house that effortlessly exudes serenity and sophistication.



CHOOSE BEAUTY AND BRAWN

Coming into the project mid-build afforded Grandinetti the opportunity to replace most of the spec home’s preselected finishes with upgraded alternatives, such as the reclaimed white oak used for the flooring and the great room’s ceiling beams. “Wherever we could go beyond the spec home look, we did,” she says. But looks weren’t the only objectives on the designer’s mind. Nearly every surface in the home also had to pass the durability test. “Things like metals are hard to use in seaside communities because they patina very quickly,” says Grandinetti. “We went with a glass stair railing over metal for that very reason.”

BRING ON (HINTS OF) THE BEACH

With the Texas marshland right outside the windows and the Gulf just steps away, Grandinetti couldn’t help but take inspiration from her coastal landscape. Still, references to beachside style remain subtle. “We wanted it to pay reverence to the classic beach home but not be so obvious,” she says. Accessories, such as the dining room’s Lindsey Adelman knotted pendant, did the job, along with small doses of shiplap, which wraps the living room fireplace. “Shiplap is really fun, but it can read casual,” Grandinetti says. “So we wanted to just sprinkle it in and then balance it with more sophisticated textures.”

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AMP UP THE ELEGANCE

Hard-wearing materials might have been top of mind for the family, but Grandinetti used every opportunity to incorporate elevated “wow” moments. The kitchen, splashed in neutrals, features honed quartz countertops, white oak cabinets, and the room’s shining moment: a Zellige tile backsplash that “has a bit of an edge” thanks to its variation in color and texture. And, though there’s not a shade of blue in sight, “the sheen of it really does pick up on the water elements surrounding the home,” says Grandinetti.

BREAK WITH TRADITION

A palette of cream, beige, and gray may have been key to the designer’s playbook, but when it came time to design the boys’ playful bunk room, all bets were (mostly) off. In the home’s smallest bedroom, built-in bunks took on the most literal interpretation of beachy hues. “This is the place where the kids pile up and hang out most often, so we wanted it to be fun,” says Grandinetti. A custom formulation of Benjamin Moore’s Winter Lake had just enough gray undertone to connect back to the rest of the home; an accent wall of shiplap completed the job while keeping things casual.





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The family beach home understandably sees its fair share of visitors. So for the guest room, Grandinetti sought to make the space as welcoming and familiar as possible. “This is where friends and family come to stay, most likely from the city, so we wanted to give this room a bit of a hotel feel,” she says. “Matching the drapes with the pillows was in line with that thinking.” Tropical S. Harris fabric coupled with the solid wood Lawson-Fenning bed and the owners’ existing sculptural metal lamps created the nature-inspired escape the designer envisioned.



CREATE IRRESISTIBLE SPACES

“I always want the main bedroom to be a great escape—someplace where you can really tuck away and cozy up,” says Grandinetti. Lush, luxurious bedding, along with a spa bath—complete with a marble-wrapped shower and freestanding tub—make the transition to paradise a breeze. Lamps from Formations that “reminded me of something you’d find in the sea,” says the designer, connect the space to its waterfront locale. The palette, meanwhile, links the whole setup back to the rest of the home. “Every room, by design, flows into the other,” says Grandinetti. “You could take a piece of furniture from anywhere in this house and place it in another space, and it works.”



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