

Triangle

APRIL/MAY 2021

HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®



Chic Havens

PLUS:
YEAR-ROUND
RETREATS

COLOR CRUSH:
FRESH FERN

The vintage wishbone dining chairs received a quick makeover with a coat of pink lacquer. "Custom lacquer is a great way to tailor a vintage item to fit the design," Allen says. She coupled the vintage dining table with a rattan banquette and a chandelier, both by Selamat.



EMERALD BEAUTY

WITH THE HELP OF DESIGNER MA ALLEN, TWO
SISTERS REVAMP THEIR CHILDHOOD BEACH HOUSE
WITH BOLD DOSES OF COLOR AND PATTERN.

TEXT BY **BLAKE MILLER** | INTERIOR DESIGN BY **MA ALLEN** AND **MARGARET RICHARDS**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ERIN COMERFORD MILLER**



IN THE FALL OF 2018, HURRICANE FLORENCE RIPPED UP AND DOWN THE CAROLINA coast, dropping rain and wind for days onto the ravaged beaches and dunes. “The roof of our beach house was literally ripped off, and it just rained into the home,” Emily Hodges says. “The only thing that wasn’t struck by Florence was the kitchen.”

And so Hodges and her sister, Allison Westmoreland, were faced with a decision: Do they tear down their family beach home that their late parents had left to them, or do they renovate the existing structure and give it a complete overhaul? The sisters opted for the latter, and enlisted designer MA Allen and her associate, Margaret Richards, to help rebuild their beloved family home on Emerald Isle, North Carolina.

Having previously worked on both sisters’ Raleigh homes, Allen and Richards knew their clients’ styles and personalities well. “With MA’s history with each of us, she knew where our flex points are, the things we like and don’t like,” Hodges explains. “Both Emily and Allison are fashion-forward and stylish and open-minded when it comes to bold choices in interior design,” Allen says. “A love of color is definitely a consistency between the two, as well as a love of patterns and layers of details.”

Beyond those details, Allen also knew that the sisters wanted the home to feel coastal but not kitschy. “The original home that our parents had decorated was most definitely over-the-top coastal,” laughs Westmoreland of the classic nautical decor, pale-blue walls, rattan furniture, and all-white cabinetry. In tune with her clients’ personal styles, Allen also intuitively knew the sisters “wanted a mix of high and low, and balanced color and patterns throughout each space.”

ABOVE: To infuse color and pattern into the outdoor living space, Allen added painted turquoise metal chairs, a striped multicolor throw, and a teak dining table. The colors pull in the array of pastel-colored beach homes that are so plentiful on Emerald Isle.

OPPOSITE: The sisters’ family boasts a handful of artists, including their late father and great-grandmother. The artwork above the raspberry chair is by their great-grandmother and depicts their family’s Nags Head beach cottage.



Emily's love of pattern inspired Allen to choose the dramatic Matthew Williamson for Osborne & Little wallpaper for the master suite. Artwork above the bed is by Windy O'Connor. Lamps are by Robert Abbey and the ready-made coverlet is by Peacock Alley with custom shams featuring a John Robshaw print.

OPPOSITE: Allen scooped up this chest by Noir to give the feel of natural driftwood and to double as a bar in the living room space. The adjacent daybed serves as a great place to curl up after a casual beach day.





Color was a driving force in Allen's design scheme. She began with using a strong marine teal to repaint the kitchen cabinetry as well as the trim detail and crown molding throughout the living area. That design thread laid the foundation for the downstairs living space, which is layered with bold doses of color and pattern. Allen added a fresh coat of pink lacquer to the vintage wishbone dining chairs, and included custom throw pillows by China Seas and Martyn Lawrence Bullard for Kravet, Clarence House, and Designers Guild with Osborne & Little trim detail.

Upstairs, Allen created stunning escapes for each sister, using their personal style as the compass for her design choices. "MA knew I liked color and she knew my sister loved mixing patterns," Allison says. "She worked with both of us to create a look that we both like. So our rooms are different, but they completely flow together." Emily's love of pattern led Allen to choose the dramatic Matthew Williamson for Osborne & Little wallpaper as the foundation for her master suite. "Emily is so fashion-forward and on-trend that having a wallcovering by fashion designer Matthew Williamson in the room was just too perfect," Allen says. Original artwork is by Windy O'Connor, lamps are by Robert Abbey, and the





ready-made coverlet by Peacock Alley with custom shams features a John Robshaw print.

Across the way, Allison's equally stylish and sophisticated room is a touch more traditional and tailored. The Jane Churchill for Cowtan & Tout fabric Allen used on both the headboard and the window treatments served as the springboard for the room's overall design. "Her room was really driven by function because she needed somewhere to put on makeup, so the vintage desk doubles as a vanity and a bedside table to optimize its function," Allen says. The custom shams are by Schumacher and the artwork is by Slim Aarons.

The beach cottage also needed to double as an adults-only getaway and a family-friendly vacation spot, so the one-time master bedroom was transformed into a kids' retreat for the

ABOVE: A bold and bright shower curtain from Urban Outfitters is the standout in the Jack-and-Jill bathroom on the top floor of the home. A whimsical lantern sconce by Mitzi and a classic chrome faucet by Mirabelle complete the look.

OPPOSITE: Allison's bedroom features a more tailored, modern take on traditional Southern design with the use of Jane Churchill for Cowtan & Tout fabric on both the headboard and the window treatments. Custom shams by Schumacher coupled with artwork by Slim Aarons evoke a midcentury-modern Palm Beach vibe and balance the traditional lines of the bed and bed skirt.



sisters' combined four children and friends. Allen maximized the room's square footage with the addition of a pair of rattan headboards by Kenian, which the designer custom painted in a canary yellow. Allen also painted the window trim a coral hue to tie in with the whimsical color palette of the Peacock Alley bed linens and the custom pillows by Jim Thompson Studio B with Samuel & Sons cording.

Elsewhere in the home, Allen infused her signature coupling of sophisticated patterns and color, resulting in a laid-back

beach cottage for adults and families alike. The designer's ability to mix and match high-end and low-end, and vintage with modern also kept the project aligned with the sisters' vision of updating their family beach home affordably. The design in each space "represents a good equilibrium throughout—a mix of high and low, balanced colors and patterns, something old and something new in each space," Allen says. "I love that we were able to give an old house with so many memories a new look without losing any of its precious nostalgia."



Emily and Allison are elated with how Allen brought to fruition their vision of a stylish but comfortable family beach home. “It’s comfy and functional, and, aesthetically, it just feels good to be in this home,” Emily says. “Design-wise, MA knows the areas where she can push us to do things that we may not have thought of. But we respect her aesthetic and judgment, and we’ve been so pleased with those things she’s pushed us on. She has a great eye for the finished product.” ♦

ABOVE: The one-time master suite was transformed into a kids’ hideaway. Allen outfitted the room with a pair of streamlined rattan headboards by Kenian, which she custom painted in a canary yellow. The beds are topped with Peacock Alley bed linens and custom pillows by Jim Thompson Studio B with Samuel & Sons cording. Artwork is by Soicher Marin.

OPPOSITE: The guest bathroom’s design was founded on the playful fish-pattern wallpaper by Lulie Wallace. Allen complemented the print with bronze hardware by Colonial Bronze and a Delta faucet, both of which add modernity and warmth to the space.