


**OCEANFRONT**  
With direct access to the Gulf of Mexico, this quintessential beach cottage just needed a coat of paint to enhance its exterior. The inside took more effort to update and guestproof.



“When you can hear the waves behind you and see the stars at night, for a moment all seems okay in the world.”

A designer conjures a brief, but sweet, retreat in Rosemary Beach, Florida.

*interior designer* Ashley Gilbreath Interior Design  
*writer* Carisha Swanson / *photographer* Emily Followill



#### FAMILY ROOM

This sunlit gathering space on the second floor is filled with furniture that will age gracefully over time. **Lighting:** [Visual Comfort & Co.](#) **Woven chairs:** [Made Goods](#). **Sofa and accent chair:** [CR Laine](#). **Rug:** [Fibreworks](#). **Dining table and chairs:** [Parish by Ashley Gilbreath](#).

**WHILE ASHLEY GILBREATH ENDED** up designing an idyllic getaway, her first priority in renovating her family's oceanfront home in Rosemary Beach, Florida, was damage control—to help the house withstand the salty sea air *and* her family. “All the rules are broken at the beach,” she explains. “You have to be able to have the dog in there, three children, wet swimsuits, sandy feet, and sticky fingers because maybe we’re having cinnamon rolls for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We needed it to be very carefree.”

For Gilbreath, that meant taking inspiration from old Florida fish houses—less the actual style and more the way they celebrate slight imperfections from years of use. She envisioned well-worn wood floors with a natural sun-faded patina. While she left the facade of this '90s home intact, she rehabbed the two-story interior, removing an ill-placed spiral staircase to make the layout flow better and adding oak floors throughout to connect the spaces.

Upstairs, Gilbreath had the windows and multiple French doors between the living room and balcony painted Halcyon

Green by Sherwin-Williams—her favorite “neutral” color—to frame the outside view. Then she layered in a bleached oak coffee table (sandy feet on top—approved), bamboo folding chairs, a sisal rug, and lounge chairs wrapped in whitewashed lampakanay, a grass similar to abaca.

Off the living-dining area, the narrow kitchen is designed to maximize space. The island is just wide enough to offer additional seating while also housing the dishwasher and sink. A skirted shelf is topped with glass shelving that doesn't compete with the windows covering a majority of the two-story wall behind it, and one section of the custom white-oak cabinetry has a secret pass-through to a guest bedroom. **“When you're going to the beach, you have to be able to pack in everyone, because everyone wants to come with you,”** Gilbreath points out. “You can easily sleep 10 here and entertain at least 18 people without folks feeling cramped.”

Sadly for the designer, her husband saw so much value in the home that he immediately put it on the market, giving her only two months to enjoy it. “My heart is really at the beach,” she says. “I would buy it back again right now.”





**PRIMARY BEDROOM**  
A black-and-white-striped wallpaper by [Farrow & Ball](#) distinguishes this bedroom as the homeowners' sanctuary. **Mirror:** [Woven](#). **Pendant:** [Dovetail](#). **Console:** [Elegant Earth](#).



**^ BUNK SPACE**  
A former laundry room off the hall was recast as sleeping quarters. "It's like riding a business class train; just pull the curtains," Gilbreath says. "If you're seven years old, that's the coolest thing ever."

**v PRIMARY BATH**  
Off the owners' bedroom, Gilbreath squeezed in a four-piece en suite ideal for retreating from guests. **Mirror:** [Jamie Young Co.](#) **Sconce:** [Visual Comfort & Co.](#) **Fixtures:** [Waterworks](#).



## KITCHEN

White oak cabinetry and warm white walls keep this open floor plan feeling light and airy. **Barstools:** Kenian. **Glass shelving:** Soil & Oak. **Fixtures:** Waterstone. **Range:** Ilve.



A CABINET DOOR  
HIDES ACCESS TO A  
GUEST BEDROOM.

*“The fun part about this house is that it’s really small, but it lives big.”*

Ashley Gilbreath



## GUEST ROOM

One of two lower-level bedrooms offers a cozy enclave for visitors. **Headboard:** Circa Who. **Nightstand:** custom, Phillips Metal Works. **Paint:** Kittery Point Green, Benjamin Moore.