

Southern Accents

The magazine of fine Southern interiors and gardens

July-August 2007

Cool
Summer
Style

weekend
retreats

breezy colors

casual
collections



\$5.99US \$7.50CAN



Display Until August 28
www.southernaccents.com

special section:
our favorite showhouse rooms

With both dining and sitting areas, the back porch, overlooking the St. Lucie River, is as much a living space as the interior rooms.



vintage FLORIDA

Atlanta designer
Jackye Lanham
rekindles an owner's
childhood vacation
memories in a new
weekend getaway
on the St. Lucie River



THESE PAGES: The living room, with its beamed ceiling and sisal-covered floor, contains "a casual mix of English, Dutch, French, and American pieces from the 17th century to the 21st century," designer Jackye Lanham says. A brass-studded seamah's chest serves as a side table.





THE KIND OF LAID-BACK ATMOSPHERE WHERE BARE FEET AND SANDY FLOORS RULE

suits Deanna and Kenneth Kirchman just fine. The couple, avid fans of fishing—or any excuse to be on the water, for that matter—would just as soon live in a gritty fishing compound as a luxurious coastal retreat.

When they decided to buy such a weekend home in the southeast Florida town of Stuart, they knew that their search would be a swim against the popular tide of new construction and Mediterranean design. Yet on their side was Deanna's unwavering vision of the old Florida look that she wanted to re-create, a vision made crystal clear by fond memories of visits to her family's compound in Central Florida. Wood floors, beamed ceilings, and bunk rooms were etched firmly in her mind as she recalled her grandparents' Cape Canaveral fishing camp, where relatives came and went as frequently as the gulls. "It was all just good, clean outdoor



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: On the chest is a tramp art pocket watch receiver, where a ship's captain would hang his watch while in residence. A chaise and a trunk give the guest room a casual feel. The entry hall's carved blackened-oak bench is an English piece from the early 19th century. The stairwell to the master suite features a tramp art mirror and a collection of framed photos of sailing yachts built between 1880 and 1920. OPPOSITE PAGE: An early 18th-century English cupboard holds French and Swedish ironstone and antique bottles.





"THERE'S USUALLY SAND EVERYWHERE IN THE HOUSE, AND THE DOGS RUN IN AND OUT. BUT THE MINUTE PEOPLE COME IN, YOU HEAR THIS DEEP SIGH. THEY FEEL THAT IT'S LIVED IN AND LOVED."

—HOMEOWNER DEANNA KIRCHMAN



"THEY WANTED A HOUSE THAT THEY COULD
WALK IN AND
WITH EVERYONE, A PLACE TO WALK IN AND
THEIR SHOES WHEN THEY'RE NOT FISHING
THE WATER." —DESIGNER JACKYE LANAN

Built-ins framing a small dining area in the living room hold ironstone, mercury glass, barnacle-covered bottles, and, on the top shelf, 19th-century octagonal "sailor's valentines" made of tiny seashells.

OLD SHARE
KICK OFF
ENJOYING



fun, and that's what Stuart is to us," Deanna says.

Ultimately, she and Kenneth settled on a relatively new home located on the St. Lucie River. Outside, the house was painted yellow and white, "looking very Victorian," she recalls, while the interior was contemporary with vaulted ceilings. Neither style would do.

"But I didn't care if I had to sit on the house for six years," says Deanna, a fifth-generation Floridian. "I wanted it to capture the feel I was after," a throwback to simpler times.

Armed with photos of her family compound, the Kirchmans called on architect Bill Litchfield and designer Jackye Lanham, both based in Atlanta, to take them home again.

"Deanna was just a dream client," Lanham says. "She has such a wonderful free spirit that makes you sense that you're going to have the time of your life when you're around her. I think that translated well in their home."

The designer, a part-time Florida beachcomber herself, immediately understood Deanna's vision and set out to craft an open, breezy environment that recalls old Florida. Lanham combined casual furnishings and coastal-flavored art and accessories with French- and Spanish-influenced pieces for a more refined, collected look.

"They wanted a house that they could share with everyone, a place to walk in and kick off their shoes when they're not fishing or enjoying the water," Lanham says. "I also wanted to make it feel as if it were something that they had always had."

First, though, she and Litchfield



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Paneling is turned vertically in the kitchen and breakfast area to distinguish those spaces and add height. The table features a stone top and is surrounded by steel chairs.

had to deal with the bones of the house. Kenneth's nephew, builder Ronnie Kirchman of Kirchman Construction, altered much of the interior structure. Some rooms, including the kitchen, were moved or reconfigured. Drywall was replaced with horizontal boards. Ceilings, including the living room's vaulted one, were lowered and beams added to make the house more inviting and cottagelike. Lots of built-in cabinetry and shelves hold art, accessories, and memorabilia that create layers of texture.

And because most of the rooms extend to the large back porch to capture the river views and breezes, Lanham made sure that the house maintained an openness. Curtains replace cumbersome doors between some of the rooms, while shutters separate







others. Windows flood the master bath with light. Even some of the showers are doorless.

Ebonized wood floors topped with practical rugs, such as sisals, offer a dramatic contrast to white walls, ceilings, and trim. "I wanted everything to feel really clean and slipcovered, with fragments of blue randomly placed all around," Lanham says. The water-inspired palette extends outdoors to the wide back porch, where blue-and-white fabrics give a fresh perspective to rattan furniture. Even the swing is suspended by rugged boat rope. "It was important that the porch become an extension of the interior living spaces," says the designer.

The end result is a mini-compound that's chock-full of the old Florida flavor the Kirchmans wanted. "Looking back, we could have bought in Palm Beach or somewhere else, but we wanted to be here because it feels so much like us," Deanna says. "There's usually sand everywhere in the house, and the dogs run in and out, but the minute people come in, you hear this deep sigh. They feel that it's lived in and loved—just like getaways used to be—and that gives me so much joy and pleasure to be able to share." ♦

For details, see Sourcebook, page 134.

"LOOKING BACK, WE COULD HAVE BOUGHT IN PALM BEACH OR SOMEWHERE ELSE, BUT WE WANTED TO BE HERE BECAUSE IT FEELS SO MUCH LIKE US."

—DEANNA KIRCHMAN



ABOVE: Although it is partially surrounded by windows, the master bath is still private because of its location upstairs. Suspended from a ceiling rod, a mirror hangs in front of one of the windows. OPPOSITE PAGE: A porch off the master bedroom provides a spectacular view of the river. Nailhead trim, barley-twist furniture, and black accents give the peaceful room the rhythm of repetition. The fireplace makes the room cozy in cooler months.