

COAST

ORANGE
COUNTY

Culinary CULTURE

How We Eat Now: Private Chefs

Dining Dynasties: Restaurant Families

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Ship Shape

BY ALEXANDRIA ABRAMIAN

It was the very first time Michelle Dean had visited the photo-sharing website Pinterest, but her maiden voyage into the high seas of curated image boards turned out to have lasting results on her nautically inspired cottage.

"I had never been on it before and was just trying to get ideas for our home when I clicked on one of my favorite pictures and the designer happened to be in Newport Beach," says Michelle, who along with husband Timothy was looking for someone to help update their Balboa Peninsula beachfront home.

A BALBOA PENINSULA HOME
FINDS ITS NAUTICAL SWEET SPOT
WITHOUT GOING OVERBOARD

A vintage farm table from Big Daddy's Antiques pairs with Ballard Designs' bistro chairs, while a series of Morse Pendant rope lamps from Cisco Home creates a nod to nautical design.



Colored in a "muddy blue" rather than a bright navy, the kitchen faces the open-plan living and dining areas. The copper pendant lights are from Restoration Hardware.

Make that their second home. The Deans' full-time residence is an easy walk away on Bay Island. They had purchased the second home, a three-story house right on the sand, in 2007. According to Michelle, the outpost was a convenient place for summer weekends. At a certain point, however, the couple decided it was time to update its '80s style.

"It almost looked like a tract home," says Michelle. "It had marble and green granite and travertine floors. We wanted it to feel more like a cottage inside."

She contacted interior designer Brittany Stiles, who guided the transformation from something that was cold and stark into a "warm and cozy home that would feel nautical without the seashells on every surface," says the decorator. Together the Deans and Stiles freshened every inch of the 2,900-square-foot, three-bedroom house without knocking down walls.

The Deans agreed they wanted a classic beach-style home, one where

wood features and a blue-and-white color scheme would reflect its waterfront location. Stiles focused on realizing this vision without straying into fickle design trends. "Right now everyone's doing these all-white and glass-tile contemporary beach homes," says Stiles. "I wanted it to have a nautical vibe without being super trendy."

Key to the entire feel, Michelle says, are the wood floors. "I was in Connecticut and saw older wood floors," she says. "They're great because you don't have to worry about them fading from the sun." From a design standpoint, Stiles says the woodwork throughout – also board-and-batten walls and tongue-and-groove ceiling – is what anchors the home in an authentic coastal interior.

When it came to the decor, however, the decision was to incorporate some classic beach design tropes such as stripes, rope and seashells, without going overboard. Stiles steered the clients toward



Michelle Dean's pets Tana and Kiera enjoy the dog-friendly home with features like sturdy reclaimed wood floors and a slip-covered sofa.



Mixing floral and geometric patterns with the occasional stripe helps prevent the beach home from becoming too "nautically theme-y," says the home's designer, Brittany Stiles.



Blue tile in the master bathroom contrasts with a more modern tub from Vintage Bath. The room's pebble tile, as well as all tile used in the home, is from Mission Tile West in Costa Mesa.

subtle takes on nautical decor such as the rope chandeliers and mixing stripes with plenty of florals and texture to keep it from looking "generic nautical," she says.

A key design decision in the house is the blue kitchen, which represents a compromise of sorts. While Timothy opted for a classic navy, Stiles felt that the color had the potential to overpower other areas of the ground-floor great room. "We went for something a little muddier than bright navy," she says. "I wanted it to be something that was going to be soft to live with while at the same time making a statement."

Today the couple use the home as a convenient and stylish outpost for beach weekends with their four grown children, book club brunches with friends and any time they want a change of scenery. "Now this home is much more similar to our Bay Island house, which is a cottage," says Michelle. "We move over for a couple months in the summer and come here throughout the year to entertain. Now this is a place where we can be with our kids and not worry about the dogs or the sand or anything." ■

The textiles are made to withstand wet bathing suits, sand, sunscreen and dogs, including the living room's sectional sofa from Wilford showroom in Laguna Niguel.