



THIS PHOTO: A painting by artist Holly Blanton hangs above a vintage mantel in Gavan and Orla Duffy's living room. Originally housed in the library at Yale University, the mantel's patina is echoed at the room's entrance by antique French doors that sport new mirror inserts. RIGHT: An entry hall connects the front of the Florida home with the back, allowing sea breezes to blow through and ring custom English chandeliers made of porcelain bells.

# aged to perfection

A sophisticated mix  
of antiques and modern  
touches channels European  
style into this seaside  
family home.

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THIS PHOTO: Bleached, whitewashed, and gray wood tones mingle with ease in the living room, lending a sense of timelessness to the decor. OPPOSITE: Gavan and Orla's beach home reflects design inspirations picked up while abroad. France, which is where they got engaged, holds a special place in their hearts.





Orla Duffy grew up in Ireland, but she credits much of her design sense to France, where she developed a love for antiques mixed with modern elements. "Ireland and France are so close geographically that it often feels like Europe is just one big country," Orla says. "The French influence is everywhere." In particular, frequent trips to France encouraged the notions that casual living should be defined by an eye for detail and that less is more.

Time in Europe also left Orla and her husband, Gavan, who also grew up in Ireland, with a love of the ocean inspired by their time near the Atlantic Ocean and the Irish and Celtic Seas. "Ever since we met almost 30 years ago, we've wanted a place on the beach," Orla says.

That dream became a reality after Gavan's medical practice brought them to Florida. The couple now have four children and a rambunctious golden retriever, and they slip away to their custom oceanfront house in Ponte Vedra Beach to relax—and to surround themselves with memories of Europe.

"The whole house has a wonderfully romantic feeling, with soft fabrics and welcoming mementos," says interior



THIS PHOTO: Modern chairs surround an English farmhouse table in the dining room, mimicking the chic yet casual look Orla grew up seeing when she visited French restaurants. OPPOSITE LEFT: Vintage wood accents add a touch of rusticity to the kitchen's urban blue-painted glass cabinet doors and stainless-steel and quartz countertops. OPPOSITE RIGHT: A champagne riddling rack anchors one side of the kitchen.





“I love the way mixing old and ultramodern things gives a house a curated, personal feeling.”

—homeowner ORLA DUFFY

designer Carol Kirchner, who helped the Duffys with the project from blueprint stage to move-in.

Giving the new house the patina of past centuries was a design priority for everyone. The home exudes the casual charm of coastal New England on the exterior, but inside, salvaged materials, family pieces, and antiques create weathered European ambience. Antique French doors frame the living room, an aged table originally from England anchors the dining room, and beloved paintings from an artist in Provence grace the walls.

“I like the idea of showing off your pretty things, even if it’s just a simple jug,” says Orla, who loves the European approach to displaying (and using) everyday items. “In the kitchen, I wanted open shelving—it feels very French.” The dining room also features a hutch with open shelves that showcase Orla’s collection of European silver and aged white serving pieces and drawers that house crisply ironed linens. “I grew up with cloth tablecloths and napkins, so that’s what we use,” she says, “even if it’s just for a piece of pizza.”

**RIGHT:** A Gustavian-style bench draws the eye at the end of a hallway. Billowing pinch-pleat draperies add romance. **BELLOW:** An old chest was transformed into a vanity in the master bath. The walls are papered in a pattern from England. **OPPOSITE:** A new headboard in a guest room was whitewashed to help it blend with wood ceiling beams and an antique chandelier from France.



As a counterpart to the storied elements, Kirchner and Orla added modern pieces, such as the living room's streamlined sofas and the glass globe pendants suspended above the dining table. In the kitchen, antique Belgian pantry doors and wood ceiling beams are paired with glass cabinet doors with backs painted a fabulous French blue color. "I wanted a mix of antique and new all throughout the house," Orla says. "It's something different than you usually see at the beach."

Gavan and Orla named their coastal house Rosebank after Gavan's grandparents' home in Ireland. "People give their house a name in Europe, and we wanted to continue that here," says Orla, who adds that she is counting on this house to bring joy to future generations. "We hope the house will stay in our family forever. But our house isn't a museum; for example, we welcome our golden retriever to come in wet from swimming. French style is about how you live." ☀

