

David and Babs Bowler's coastal cottage in Ponte Vedra Beach

Front Door

WEEKEND WARRIOR

# 5 ways to create

a Quaint Coastal Cottage Look

By Christi Elflein | Photography by Craig O'Neal



## Northeast Florida...the perfect place for a coastal cottage.

We turn to Lavinia Kubiak, a local interior design consultant, to suggest five ways to create a quaint coastal cottage. Her first tip is to define what coastal means to you. There are dozens of coastal aesthetics - from Old Florida to the island style. Then think about the locale and your home's design. For example, if you have an ocean view and plenty of bright light, you'll want to use vibrant colors so they won't be washed out. If you have a marsh view, you might want to choose a color palate of natural neutrals. For a more contemporary home, you may choose a rather high-tech, futuristic look. With your coastal style and color palate in mind, follow these five practical ways to create a quaint coastal cottage look.



### Fun beach décor at the beach

Located in the heart of both Neptune Beach and Atlantic Beach, the Beaches Town Center always provides shoppers with an eclectic experience. Tucked away in the courtyard of the shops at 200 First Street is Red Daisy, a one of a kind local store. It is a great place to look for inspiration for your coastal cottage.

Shop owner Tracy Raymond explains that her store is about "classic home fun," because Red Daisy celebrates the authenticity of North Florida living. Raymond says North Florida is a unique blend of culture, "part Georgia, part Cracker, and part beach." This style is reflected in both the new and repurposed items that fill Red Daisy. On the Red Daisy Porch are items perfect for outdoor living on the First Coast - such as outdoor pillows, a locally made dining table and recycled glass candle jars.

They also have vintage maps of local beach towns that have been updated with vibrant coastal colors and white frames. You can pick a map and have it customized - even putting a star where your home is located. Cute for any coastal cottage.

### 1. Incorporate natural materials.

"Texture and materials are actually more important than color," Kubiak says. Wicker, shells, coquina, aged woods, weathered metals and natural-fibered fabrics are all great coastal materials that can be used in many applications. The floors are an obvious place to focus on natural material. "Wall-to-wall carpet or porcelain tile is not coastal," Kubiak says. "Put a rug over the carpet and you can change the whole look." Or, better yet, replace carpet with wide, wood planks (or the synthetic version) and a textured rug as an accent.

### 2. Provide unexpected variations.

Not everything should be the same. That would be "dull, dull, dull," says Kubiak. A pop of color or an unusual piece of furniture can be a delightful surprise, but too many themes going on at once can be confusing. Eliminate unnecessary items to bring collections together, Kubiak says, "When it comes to multiples, group your items to find order rather than chaos." For instance, a grouping of canning jars with your special sea glass and sharks teeth would make a personal statement. Think out of the box to adapt old items for new uses, expressing your own lifestyle. For example, if fishing is a pastime, recycle old rods to serve as a rack or even crown molding. Or try using beach pails as planters or candleholders.

### 3. Let the sun shine in.

"Frame your windows, don't dress them," Kubiak advises. In a coastal scheme, natural light needs to be maximized. If you cover your windows with draperies, you've eliminated natural light. Instead, frame them, for example, with shutters and "let your view be the dressing." This increases natural illumination and brings in the outside Florida scene.

**4. Look up.** Ceilings are often ignored, but they are an integral part of each room. Kubiak explains that "in the old south, veranda ceilings were always wood, painted blue to reflect the sky and suggest coolness." If you want to go a step further, then coastal ceiling treatments can also include beadboard or pecky cypress. Palm-leaf ceiling fans and lanterns can also convey a coastal look.

### 5. Cover an old chair or sofa.

Slipcovers reflect the practical, casual attitude of coastal cottage living. Rather than tailored or fitted, fold and tuck a sheet/fabric/even shower curtain over the piece. Ropes tied around the back or tacks can be used to add details. Fiber-fill padding under the slipcover can give a soft, plush look.

Lavinia Kubiak is a practicing residential design consultant. She earned a M.S. from Florida State University and formally taught interior design at Florida State and Eastern Kentucky University. She also worked 18 years for Liberty Furniture in Jacksonville as a residential designer. You can contact her at [laviniakubiak@me.com](mailto:laviniakubiak@me.com).

See our list of great shops to find beach décor at [firstcoastmag.com/greatbeachcottagefinds](http://firstcoastmag.com/greatbeachcottagefinds).