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A tireless antique hunter, owner/designer Martha Holloway displays her eclectic tastes in the expansive Great Room.

SUN-DRENCHED VISTAS

*Shimmering Blue Water Provides
The Perfect Backdrop For This French Provençal Treasure*

INTERIOR DESIGN Martha Holloway, Westgate Interiors, Albany, GA
ARCHITECTURE Carey McWhorter and Lourdes V. Reynafarje, McWhorter Architects, Seagrove Beach, FL
TEXT Jeffrey C. Ward
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It didn't take Georgia residents Martha and Jimmy Holloway long to decide in which Florida locale to build their second home. Especially when you consider the surroundings — a stunning coastline, shimmering blue water and miles of award-winning beaches. For the Holloways, Florida's Panhandle was an easy choice. The couple chose a waterfront lot in a private Santa Rosa Beach community, set between Sandestin and the Victorian village of Seaside. It was the perfect location for the couple who also wanted to be within close driving distance of their permanent residence.

The home, designed by architects Carey McWhorter and Lourdes V. Reynafarje, posed the unique challenge of maintaining the development's Mediterranean look — as well as its regulation white stucco walls and red tile roofs — while creating a home to suit the couple's tastes and lifestyle. By keeping the architecture clean and simple, McWhorter and Reynafarje steered clear of the trappings of traditional Mediterranean styling. Rough-hewn cypress was used to create the latticework, decks and ceilings, enhancing the textural quality of the home's exterior.

Martha designed this home to showcase her love of antiques and French Provençal style. Gracing the interior with her noteworthy collection of French antique furnishings, a mix of accessories and carefully selected design touches, Martha created a comfortable and sophisticated ambiance. "The architects and I worked together to bring out the home's innate charm," she says.

RIGHT: The third-floor mezzanine overlooks the dining and living areas, and functions as a gallery to display the Holloways' collection of 22 botanical lithographs by Rodriguez, a Brazilian botanist. They were printed in Switzerland, circa 1878.







“We planned a simply crafted interior,” says McWhorter, referring to the architectural details. “That’s why you don’t see elements such as crown molding. We wanted to provide a showroom for Martha.”

Centered around a spacious, sunlit Great Room, the home’s floor plan is unconventional yet accommodating. Guests enter from a trellis-covered stairway that arrives on the second floor. In addition to the Great

Room, the second floor encompasses the kitchen, a powder room and the master bedroom.

The third-floor mezzanine, accessible from a stairway near the entrance and an elevator that serves all three floors, leads to the upper deck, where endless ocean views delight the eye. The railing, made of aluminum with a bronze finish, wraps around the dining and living areas on three sides.



ABOVE: Located on the first floor, the guestrooms share a lower terrace that opens to the beach. In this guestroom, the use of natural elements — wicker, pine and linen — and an assortment of framed shell prints above the beds hint at the raw beauty outside. Touches of greenery complete the effect.

LEFT: A hand-painted, wooden French screen acts as a canvas for delicate shell paintings that hang above an antique console in the second-floor master bedroom. Creamy-yellow hues soften the weathered appearance of Country French furnishings. Between the chair and armoire stands an 18th-century lion sculpture.

Burnt-red Italian tiles in varying tones establish a warm foundation for the expansive Great Room. Its off-white shades and subtle textures reflect the qualities of the white-sand beaches beyond, and provide uncluttered space to exhibit Martha's many French antique treasures. Her eclectic collection includes a 19th-century Country French, cherry-wood dining table and 10 chairs, an 18th-century Louis XV-style

chestnut-pine armoire from Lyons, France, a pine étagère that came from a French fabric shop, and an 1890 Turkish Oushah area rug. The room's tall, narrow windows are framed by shutters that were crafted from a wall in a French chateau. A gracious expanse of arched windows affords a beeline view of the Gulf of Mexico just outside.

In contrast to the openness of the Great Room, the



ABOVE: Rough-hewn cypress, used to create the latticework for the entryway, decks and ceiling beams, was hand-selected by the Holloways from trees on a friend's farm. The stairway leads to the second-floor front entrance, which opens to the Great Room.

seclusion of the master bedroom offers a quiet retreat to rejuvenate the senses. More of Martha's antiques are highlighted, including lamps made from 18th-century Italian architectural wood details. A large pine armoire and console, a Country French armchair, and creamy-yellow damask bed coverings complete the restful mood. An 18th-century French faience lion sculpture adds a touch of ornamentation to the room's simplicity.

Like the master bedroom, a first-floor guestroom, one of three, features a neutral palette: off-white bed coverings, wicker-framed linen headboards and a pine bedside chest.

Uncomplicated elegance endures outside on the second-floor patio, a peaceful area to dine or bask in the ocean's breeze. "I think it's really elegant, not overdone," McWhorter says. "It's made up of really simple geometric shapes. It was just a matter of creating the right spaces."



Antique chairs with rush seats give weight to the Country French table linens. Cypress beams blur the line between the outdoor patio and the natural environment.

