

GEORGIAN GEM

Gray Walker reimagines
a Sea Island vacation
home with colorful,
comfortable furnishings.

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Previous pages: In the living room, the original chandelier—a piece reflective of the Sea Island aesthetic—was kept in place, while a dark palette was traded for energizing light neutrals and pastels. Left: A vintage painting, which now greets guests as they step inside the front door, provided color inspiration for the renovation and alludes to the home’s overall look. A wood plank ceiling juxtaposed with a gold chandelier and tulip table hint at the design’s effortless mix of pieces. Opposite: Characteristic of Sea Island’s Mediterranean-inspired architecture, the owners fell in love with the home’s exterior, opting to retain its charm while updates took place indoors.

High style and comfort go hand in hand for North Carolina-based interior designer Gray Walker. The combination was top of mind when she began renovating a Sea Island, Georgia, vacation home for dear friends. Having worked with them on their primary residence in Charlotte, she knew their

tastes well and was eager to blend this with the island’s aesthetic. “They are very family-oriented and hardworking,” she says, noting the importance of creating a relaxing retreat where they can unwind as well as entertain loved ones and business clients.

Inspired by Mediterranean architecture, the exterior of the home features a Spanish tile roof and stucco facade—features that have become distinctive of Sea Island style and that the owners did not want to change. However, the interior had a heavy, dated presence with a palette of dark neutrals and richly stained cabinetry that were not reflective of their personal tastes. “We wanted to honor the architecture but also give the interior a more edgy and sophisticated look,” Walker says. “They didn’t want it to feel like a beach house but still be different from their main residence,” she adds.

To accomplish this, the designer started by unifying the main rooms with a fresh coat of light paint. A stained beadboard ceiling treatment was applied to the ceiling of the foyer, the adjoining living and dining space, and the catwalk upstairs to bring both continuity and visual interest throughout the open space. In the





kitchen the footprint was retained, but doors were removed in arched entryways to allow for better traffic flow, and a small island was traded for a larger version that doubles as a breakfast table. While these renovations took place, a bedroom addition was also constructed above the property's guesthouse, giving the clients' college-age daughter a space of her own that was still easily accessible from the main house.

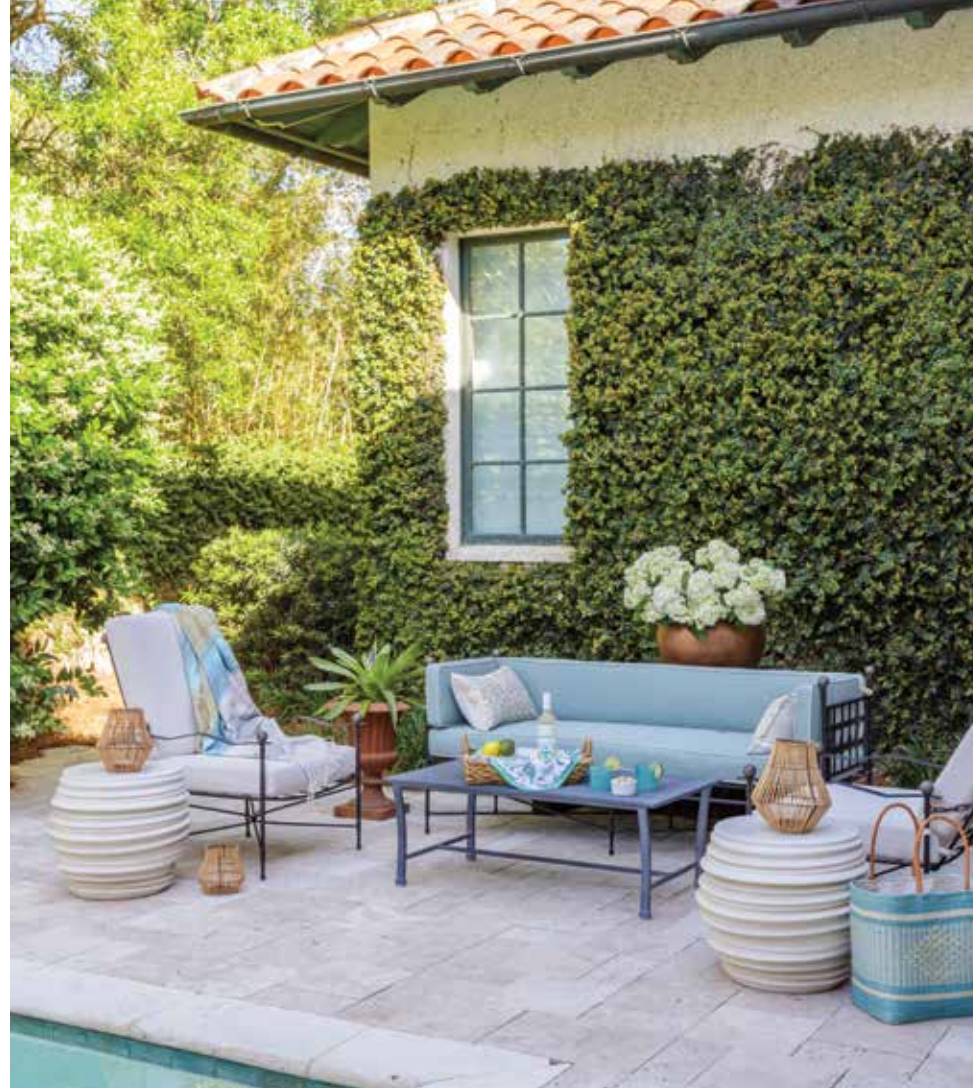
Turning her attention to furnishings, Walker brought in hues that speak to the family as well as the home's location. "I was meeting the clients at the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center (ADAC) and decided to go a day early," she recalls. "I saw the painting that is now in the foyer and loved it," she says. Her clients agreed, messaging her to purchase it as soon as she posted it on Instagram.

This piece became the starting point for the entire home's color scheme. "I always like to start with a rug or a piece of art and work from there," Walker says, noting that placing the artwork in the foyer provides an introduction to the rest of the home's design.

Aside from the painting's influence, blue became a predominant hue throughout the design. "I like to use a color throughout a house and change the intensity in different rooms," Walker says. For example, the living room and bedroom feature sky blues that turn to cobalt in the powder room and in the kitchen. The hue also makes a nontraditional appearance in a banana leaf wallpaper. "I wanted to make this room bright and fun—and a little bit tropical," she says. "Our goal is always to create a house that is livable but still very chic."

Below: Varying shades of blue wind their way throughout the home, with the most intense appearing in a Nobilis wallpaper in the kitchen. The whimsical banana leaf pattern is accented with a floral-themed chandelier. Opposite: The living and dining rooms are combined in one large, open space that is anchored by fireplaces on either end. An Italian gilt ray creates a focal point over the dining area's mantel.





From top: Ideal for either shade or sun, the pool space has loungers for sunbathing as well as a conversation area for gathering at cocktail hour. An addition over the guesthouse was designed as a separate bedroom for the couple's teenage daughter. Its arched doorways and classically chic feel both mimic the main house. Opposite: The owners' bedroom is a tailored retreat where the home's blue hue is accented with a light, cheerful green.

