

# An Oasis

Ohara Davies-Gaetano and Jeffrey Dungan instill California style and sensibility into a vacation home in Alys Beach

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The concrete-and-stucco-clad exterior falls in line with the Alys Beach design direction while standing out from the surrounding structures due to the curvaceous and modern concrete details.  
OPPOSITE PAGE: In the living room, designer Ohara Davies-Gaetano installed a chandelier from Lucca Antiques, a sofa covered in Lee Industries fabric and a coffee table from Clubcu.





FROM LEFT: A chandelier from Allied Maker sheds light on a dining table by Clubcu and a custom rug by Kravet; nestled below a living room window sits a console by Clubcu that holds a marble vase from Noir Furniture.

“There are few locations we practice at that don’t have specific constraints and design goals, so we are accustomed to and enjoy a creative relationship with the constraints,” says architect Jeffrey Dungan about his work on a very special home located in Alys Beach that he designed in collaboration with Ohara Davies-Gaetano. “It’s a challenge for anyone designing at Alys since color has been limited and the envelope is so tightly coded in the zoning,” he says. “I have always believed that more limitations elevate creativity and not the other way around.”

Located on Florida’s west coast, the design-driven enclave has a very strict, distinct architectural style—set forth by the town architects—that adds an exclusive layer of magic. This allure captured the hearts of a young family who desired a vacation home inside the community that

captured its refined essence while remaining relaxed. “This house sits on a particularly important site on the corner of Scenic Highway 30A and one of the main southern beach access avenues of Alys Beach, so the bar was already set a little higher,” Dungan notes. “I love pressure—to a degree—so that was fun, and I decided this house needed to be calm and not scream for attention, since the well-viewed site already provided plenty of it.”

The all-white, newly constructed 5,000-square-foot concrete home features a private pool and a water feature that is set into a courtyard surrounded by white walls and charcoal-painted French casement windows. While the overall tone of the home is subdued, the architectural details and white concrete curves speak volumes. “One of my favorite design tools is to carve away the walls and shape them like we did as children making sandcastles, and concrete enables us to do this in a way wood framing never can.”

“Our client loves to cook and the kitchen is one of my favorite rooms within the home,” says Davies-Gaetano. A custom banquet in the kitchen is carved into the counter, which is surrounded by a row of stools from Thomas Hayes Studio.





**CLOCKWISE:** In the primary bedroom, an upholstered bench from Thomas Hayes Studio sits atop a custom rug; in the primary bathroom, a freestanding bathtub from Currey & Company sits inside a marble-covered arched nook; a floating vanity sits in front of a window covered in drapery from Pindler and Schumacher and Jonathan Browning pendants found at Thomas Lavin.



One of the most remarkable features at Alys Beach is that every home has a private courtyard and/or water feature. Here, Davies-Gaetano created a luxurious lounge with custom drapery and cozy outdoor furniture by Gloster.

The light on Florida's west coast is bright and enveloping and Dungan figured out how to perfectly pull it indoors. "You have to be careful as you can have too much of a good thing, and it gets really hot in Florida," Dungan articulates. "One of the sides of this site faces north, so we made the most of that facade because the sun rarely comes directly through that orientation. I always enjoy bringing in natural light in a few unsuspected ways, so there is a stair access, which we made of glass, to the third-floor roof terrace that became a light well that also lets light into the second floor."

Inside, designer Ohara Davies-Gaetano infused each room with her signature sophisticated style, which makes the home feel as if it was located on a Californian coast. "The interior architectural detailing set the tone for the curation of the design," she recalls. "It was essential to layer textures and juxtapose materials to create a grounded and inviting space. We envisioned life in bathing suits, fresh off the beach, no surface could

be precious, and everything we designed had to be livable and inviting."

This simple yet elevated selection of decor echoes the beautiful materials that make this home so luxurious. From the voluminous arches to the domed, beam-filled and paneled ceilings throughout, and the spectacular terrazzo floors, Dungan set the stage for a perfect dialogue between the architecture and the interiors. "The overall emotion of the home is special," Davies-Gaetano remarks. "You feel encapsulated by a sense of calm when you walk through the front door and that feeling stays with you as you move throughout the house."

"I like the house. It's a little bit of a warrior poet in that it is confident and comfortable in its own skin and not overly concerned with what people think of it," Dungan remarks. When asked how the client felt after the big reveal he notes, "Well, they came to stay for a week and ended up spending the entire summer, so I think the proof of the love and instant attachment was in there somewhere."