



Beach Decor

I often write about changing your home with the seasons, and one easy way to bring summer to your interiors is by using items from the seashore in a decorative way. Traditional beach cottage décor may be a crisp, white summer palette with touches of blue, accented with things like sand, shells, driftwood, coral, fish netting, miniature boats, buoys or lighthouses...all examples of decorative items with a beach theme.

I had a client who loved the ocean so much that her entire home's interior was inspired by the sea. From the large model sailboat to the sea grass wall coverings; from the myriad of blues and greens in her accessories to the pieces of rattan furniture, it was obvious this woman was a beach bunny at heart. She lived in a cabin in the mountains, but because her home consistently reflected what she loved, it worked.

Consider using touches of the seaside throughout your home in the summer. A simple way to celebrate the season is to create a tablescape on your sideboard, entry or coffee table. A framed print, a glass bowl of shells and a brass lantern are examples of items that, when grouped together, pay homage to fun in the sea and sun.

If you have a room with neutral fabrics, the addition of some seasonal color in the form of slipcovers, pillows or bedspreads can turn the room from generic to summer-inspired. Blue and white are traditional nautical colors, and are attractive when grouped with summer solid, striped or floral patterns. Blue and white can also be beautifully accented with gold or red touches. A clean white chair could be livened up with a blue and white tropical print pillow with yellow trim, for example. On trend now are bright summer colors, like hot pink, turquoise, orange and lime green. Choose the colors that appeal to you, and add punch to your neutral areas.

Seashells are natural, beautiful, whimsical collectibles that can be used in inventive ways to add a touch of the beach to your everyday life. Lay a sea sponge on top of a stack of guest towels; prop several starfish up along a mantle; or attach some sand dollars to a ribbon to embellish a wrapped gift. A guest's name can be written on a fan shell and used as a place marker at dinner.

Cylindrical glass vases can be filled halfway with sand or sea glass before adding a thick pillar candle. Beach photos taken on vacation can be framed, hung from a length of thin rope with clothespins, or tucked into pieces of coral for display. Bright beach towels can

be stacked in the laundry room, mudroom or on the patio for a shot of summer color. Shells can be tied or glued onto the rim of a hat or on a beach bag as a nod to the season.

Outside, place a small beach ball on each seat as a fun pillow. Add tiki torches around the deck for evening light. Prop up an old surfboard or set of oars along the fence as summer accents.

Surf's up, so enjoy the ride.

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