



Going Coastal

Bringing the shore indoors

By Stephanie Riley

Despite being more than an hour's drive from the coast, many Sacramentans count beach cities among their favorite destinations. There's something about the charm of Carmel that keeps us coming back. Hawaii, Santa Barbara, Cape Cod—there is a romance in the waves as they crash on the shore that soothes and inspires. When vacation is over, many of us crave a few subtle reminders to bring a bit of the beach into our everyday lives.

Taking a clue from the fashion industry—which is going ga-ga over nautical this year—perhaps it's time to extend our love of the shore to the home. Besides, what is décor but fashion for the home? Even if you're not inclined to don a sailor hat and navy peacoat, you can incorporate accents that reflect a love of the sea into your home, making it feel a little more like your vacation house (even if you don't have one).

After years of richly painted rooms, sea-glass-inspired paint colors appear to be making a comeback in bedrooms and baths. When you consider that the master suite should be an oasis from the hustle-bustle world, it's only fitting that we should bring in elements of a favorite vacation to make it a personal retreat. Bright white wood furnishings, wicker and bleached-out floral fabrics call to mind beach houses without being overtly themey.

Accessories, including shells in tall glass urns and scattered pieces of driftwood collected on that last trip to Stinson Beach, are a great place to start. A bright striped beach bag located at the back door can collect your muddy Crocs this month and your flip-flops when the weather brightens up.

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From bedding to tabletop elements, coral accents have been popping up everywhere. There is something about the delicate scrolling of coral in deep orange or red that brings the beach home. Unless you've brought it home from a tropical destination, most of the coral you'll find in the marketplace today will be a faux product. That's OK: Natural coral can be impossibly brittle and sharp. (Never mind the fact that we should be gentle to our natural resources.) Ballard Designs has some neat silver- and gold-painted coral accents available through its catalog or online (ballarddesigns.com).

If you're leaning toward the tropical, take a look at the Aquavista 500. It's a completely self-contained aquarium that hangs on the wall

like a flat-panel TV or a piece of beautifully framed artwork. Imagine a 6 1/2-gallon tank, just 4 1/2 inches deep, with a fully integrated filtration system, hanging in an ornate frame (horchow.com).

In the kitchen and bath, try bringing in coastal-inspired accents in mother of pearl. Capiz shell chargers are available everywhere in a variety of colors (some not found in nature, but that's the beauty of creative expression). Mother-of-pearl flatware, sea grass placemats and a

striking centerpiece of blooming bird of paradise or calla lilies would make an elegant and surprisingly different Easter table this year.

Then again, there are those who will not stop at the subtle and absolutely must have nautical all the way. Red, white, blue, stars and stripes—the shore meets patriotism—can be a fun design choice as well.

Like the best vacations, great decorating depends on your individual point of view. ●