



# beach blonde

PALE BLEACHED AND PAINTED SURFACES PROVIDE THE IDEAL BACKDROP FOR A COASTAL MICHELE THROSSELL SCHEME THAT'S ALL ABOUT KICKING BACK AND CLEAN CONTEMPORARY LINES

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A David Trubridge pendant above the dining table picks up on the geometric wall panelling. White 'Shanghai' chairs from Weylandts are combined with Indonesian dining chairs from Cécile & Boyd for a cross between classic and casual seating OPPOSITE PAGE The coffee table from Weylandts is almost camouflaged against a striped rug. In the foreground is a triangular table from L'Orangerie



oliday homes mean different things to different people. The one eternal theme is relaxation, a feeling Michele Throssell has mastered in her effortlessly breezy beach designs. But here – in this KwaZulu-Natal beach home for a London-based South African family – alongside her signature unbuttoned aesthetic is also a cognizance of convenient, practical living. This in itself is a nod to laid-back living.

**H&G What was your initial concept for the house?**

**Michele Throssell** Our brief was to create a home that truly reflected the family and a space where they could really relax – a genuine beach house. Ultra-casual and laid-back. So, we went in the direction of muted colours, natural materials, casual slipcovers – think pebbles on the beach.


**You seem to have mixed these natural elements, very successfully, with more linear and minimal lines though?**

**MT** The existing house needed a lot of updating and we wanted to contemporise the space with clean lines and minimal elements, but at the same time create a soulful feel – so we combined the two.

**Palette-wise, the look is quite classically beachy – blue, green and white – but also quite African in a way. How important was it to you to contextualise the decor as South African.**

**MT** We wanted to reflect our clients' heritage and we always like to support local South African design. But mainly we were just really drawn to the lovely colours and patterns of the fabrics. ▶





Minimal cabinets create a clean look in the kitchen  
OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP An antique  
rug from Paco sets an oceanic mood in the living room —  
blue and green fabrics and a cane chair from Cécile & Boyd  
complete the effect; two-tone kitchen stools from Casarredo  
mimic the blended floor; a further nod to the setting are  
vessels from Plumbago and a Sarah Ballam artwork

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**In addition to these blues and greens, golden wood seems to be a big theme...**

**MT** We loved the tone and texture and the way it blended in with our muted colours whilst complementing the softer, more organic elements of the scheme.

**Wood can sometimes look really rustic but you've interpreted it in a very polished way – how did you achieve this?**

**MT** The more knots the wood has, the more rustic the look, so we chose timber with less knots and also used a very light white oil tint on the wood, which adds to the uniformity.

**The flooring in the kitchen is a great example of this sophistication. And the transition also divides the zones in such a pleasing way.**

**MT** Yes, but there was also a practical reason behind it – we wanted the kitchen to be low-maintenance, hence the choice of tiles.

**The white helps, too, to keep the look modern – there are quite a few surfaces that look like they've been painted?**

**MT** 'Pebbles' – the nickname we gave this project – set the tone for all the design decisions, including the colour palette of soft greys and whites. We chose items that looked like they'd been bleached by the sun – like pieces of driftwood. By taking these organic items and giving them a coat of white paint, we could incorporate them in a fresh way – bridging the gap between organic and contemporary. The contrast of the natural subject matter and the crisp finish is a happy medium, in keeping with the overall aesthetic.

■ *Michele Throssell Interiors* ☎ 032 946 0590



'We chose ITEMS that *looked like* they'd been **BLEACHED** by the sun – like pieces of driftwood' *Michele Throssell*



Sandy blonde and white tones make up the restful palette in the master bedroom. Here, knitted textures and a Ronel Jordaan felt throw are a tactile foil for the clean lines of the Weylandts four-poster frame

OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Michele stands in the lounge area of a guest room, where painted turtle shells hang against a bamboo wall covering from Halogen International; the generous bathroom is a symphony of reflective surfaces. The Ronel Jordaan rug adds an organic element; wall lights from Créma Design fit in with the space's white-and-grey palette