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# EASY *Living*

Cool and calming, every element of this Central Coast beachside holiday home by interior designer Karen Akers has been selected and styled for casual coastal living.

Words Janette Chen  
Styling Karen Akers  
Photography Thomas Dalhoff





Artwork from Art2Muse Gallery in Sydney's Double Bay, side tables from Orient House and leather ottoman sourced from Morocco. "I love the bohemian textures and patterns of these designs," Karen says about the ottoman.

*"We created a space that was restful, calming, durable and timeless."*

All it takes is one moment feeling the sea spray on the sun-kissed sands of Avoca Beach to know that living here is easy. It was here in Avoca, in the Central Coast region of New South Wales, that a light-filled, three-bedroom apartment with a deck that looks out straight over the beach was left in the hands of leading Sydney-based interior designer Karen Akers. Inspired by the coastal location and with a brief to create a relaxed, textured and alluring space a fast-paced family of five can escape to on their holidays, Karen made selections for interiors that were natural in texture, simple in design and relaxing in their colour palette. The result is welcoming family environment for calm and casual beachside living.



#### EASY LIVING

A holiday home is a place for relaxing. “We created a space that was restful, calming, durable and timeless,” Karen says. Karen selected a Mark Tuckey sofa with simple lines and wooden sides to add texture and warmth to the room and allow for maximum seating space to stretch out on. Even the fabric of the cushions is durable and washable, and was chosen with the ‘easy living’ lifestyle in mind. The casual appeal and subject matter of the feature artwork hanging over the fireplace was an appropriate choice for the relaxed, neutral vibe and the textured application of paint caught Karen’s attention. The artwork also fits well with the room’s colour scheme, with the strokes of green matching well the cuttings of a frangipani plant decorating the room. “It was perfect,” Karen says.

### *Karen Akers' top coastal-style decorating tips*

- Keep it relaxed
- Blue and white are great colours near the coast
- Collect shells or hooks and display them en masse as it’s more effective
- Make sure you can stretch out on the couch
- Feature light-coloured timbers



"The accessories were selected for their character and texture," Karen says. "For example, the African necklaces and the large shells; these all assist to create a story and profile of the people who reside in the home."





The carved Indian mirror that features in the living space is from Orient House, while the sofa is from Mark Tuckey and the custom cushions are from Ashcraft Textiles and Wallcoverings.



Something old, something new: the African mirror from Orient House adds character to the sleek faucet and limed oak timber vanity. Bathroom tiles are from Bisanna Tiles in Surry Hills, Sydney.

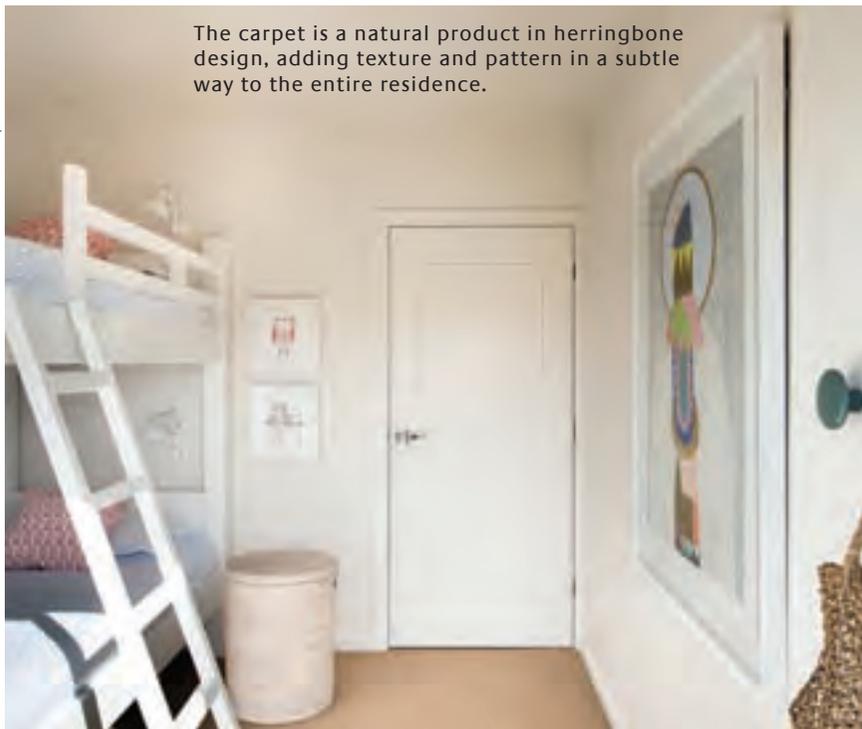


The wood panelling creates texture and interest in neutral white walls. The wall paint used was Dulux Natural White.





Karen created a fun and friendly kids' bedroom without breaking from the coastal theme and relaxed vibe of the rest of the house. The apartment has three bedrooms for a family of five to share, giving the young ones the fun of climbing up and down on bunk beds.



The carpet is a natural product in herringbone design, adding texture and pattern in a subtle way to the entire residence.



### SOFT PALETTE

Making a place feel as relaxing as a cool sea breeze means choosing the right colours for your surroundings. Karen selected a colour palette that she hoped would create a tranquil and calming vibe that would still feel warm and interesting.

Neutral colours are used throughout the apartment, with Dulux Natural White on the walls reflecting the natural light that fills every room. Wood panelling and the brick fireplace in the

living room bring added texture and depth to make for more interesting white walls.

“The colour palette comprises of soft pastels with bursts of tan,” Karen explains. The subtle blue hues of the couch complement the white walls and enhance the coastal location of the apartment. “The tan features in the marble floor tiles in the bathroom, natural leather ottoman, the timber and the cushions in the living area,” Karen says.





The bedhead in this light and airy master bedroom is a custom-coloured Thai ceiling rose screen from Orient House. Karen selected this piece for its patterns, as well as the texture and warmth it adds to the space.

*"I really like creating spaces that are eclectic in nature and layered. This is what makes a space unique and interesting to be in, rather than sterile and bland."*



The beachside apartment may be compact on the inside but the family have this expansive deck to enjoy together.

#### A WORLD OF ACCESSORIES

“My favourite space is the living area,” says Karen. “I love the fireplace and the wood panelling. And what about that view – uninterrupted to the ocean!” Given Karen’s favourite room is the living area, it makes sense that her two favourite pieces – the carved Indian mirror and the Moroccan ottoman, both reside in the same space. “These pieces add a lot of character and interest to the room,” Karen explains.

They aren’t the only accessories in the home that have had their origins in far-flung corners of the globe. The living room also features a beaded African necklace, while the master bedroom contains an antique Asian cabinet and a bedhead that’s a Thai ceiling rose screen, and finally the gorgeous bathroom mirror is from Africa. “I really like creating spaces that are eclectic in nature and layered. This is what makes a space unique and interesting to be in, rather than sterile and bland,” explains Karen, and it’s easy to see why this styling approach works for the talented interior designer. It’s these touches of exotic influences combined with the soft, neutral colour scheme that give the holiday home a measured bohemian vibe. “It is the type of space that worldly possessions can be added to in the future creating an even more intimate space,” Karen says. It’s also the type of space that happy beachside memories of relaxed family holidays can be made.



Sunny and spacious, the deck overlooks the beach, giving the family their own space to enjoy the sea views during the day, and listen to the crash of the waves in the evening.

**The apartment is now available for holiday lease.**  
**[www.stayz.com.au](http://www.stayz.com.au)**

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