

Best Outdoor Space: Outstanding Architecture

See the incredible details of the Alys Beach development in the Florida panhandle.



Charles Walton IV / Styling: Leigh Anne MontgomeryTodd Childs

Striking from the Street

Interrupting the traditional beach bungalows and candy-colored cottages and condos that line Scenic Highway 30A along Florida's Panhandle is Alys Beach. Founded in 2004, the development is an enclave of sparkling white stucco homes with angular tiled rooftops forming a network of narrow streetscapes that, at first sight, defy easy classification of style, region, or era.

From the highway, Alys Beach is clearly a world unto itself, marked by the unified aesthetic created by the clean lines and crisp white of the buildings.



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Bermudan Style

Largely Bermudan in style but with an unmistakable Mediterranean flair, Alys Beach was intended to neither follow nor set any building trend but to stand as a singular expression of architectural style and environmental stewardship.

Pairs of stylized structures reminiscent of dovecotes flank the road at either end of the stretch of Scenic Highway 30A that passes Alys Beach.



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Shutters for Beauty and Function

Pop-out shutters typical of island architecture provide circulation of air and protection from the sun. The soft green and mustard yellow colors are a great accent to the white stucco walls without being visually jarring. The use of this style of shutter offers privacy for the closely spaced homes.



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Enchanting Roofscape

Town founder Jason Comer envisioned a new community that was protective of its fragile 158-acre Gulf Coast setting. The homes were designed as permanent structures so resilient that they would easily withstand violent coastal weather and remain viable for much more than a few generations of use while making a minimal effect on the local environment.

Myriad cupolas and rooftops create a visually interesting roofscape, one of the hallmarks of Alys Beach's distinctive style.



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Soft Silhouettes

Serpentine parapet walls create soft silhouettes against the rich blue of the coastal sky and further underscore the island style of the entire development.



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Simple Palette

The simplicity of Alys Beach's palette allows details such as the spiral terminus of this stairway to be a subtle statement. The architecture of the development is not simplistic. However, the exuberance of some of the architecture's features is tempered by a monochromatic approach. No gilded lilies here.



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Local Flora

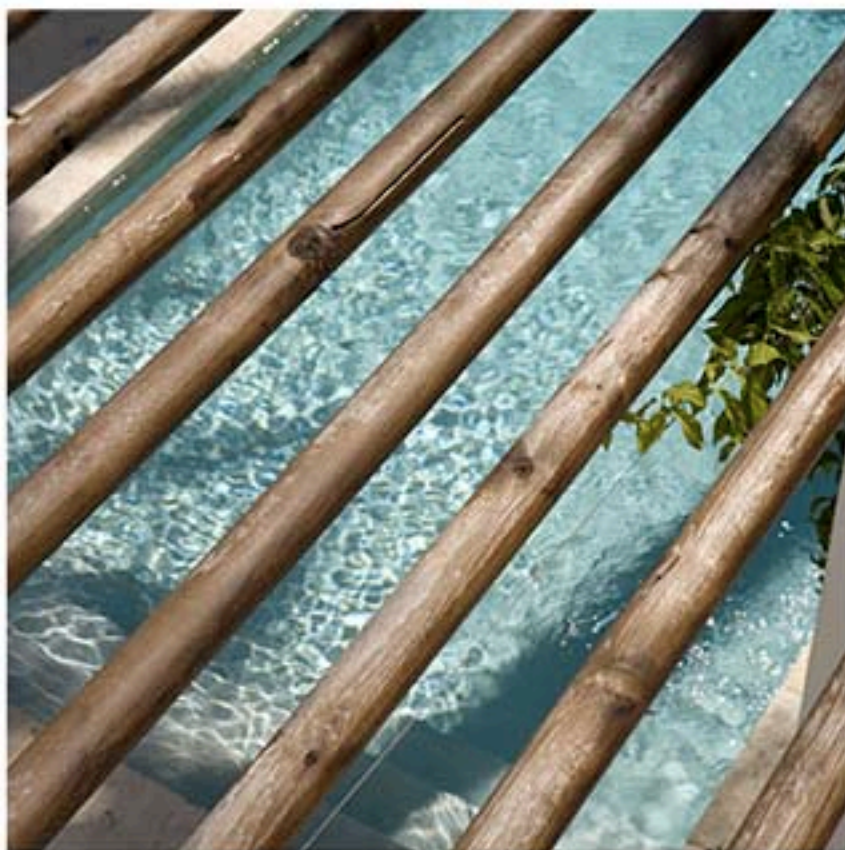
In one of many environmentally considerate features, drought- and heat-tolerant plants have been used to add lushness.



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Personal Space

Private courtyards provide residents with a bit of outdoor space all their own. The notion of quality over quantity is proven in these diminutive areas that boast a range of amenities from pools to fountains, depending on size.

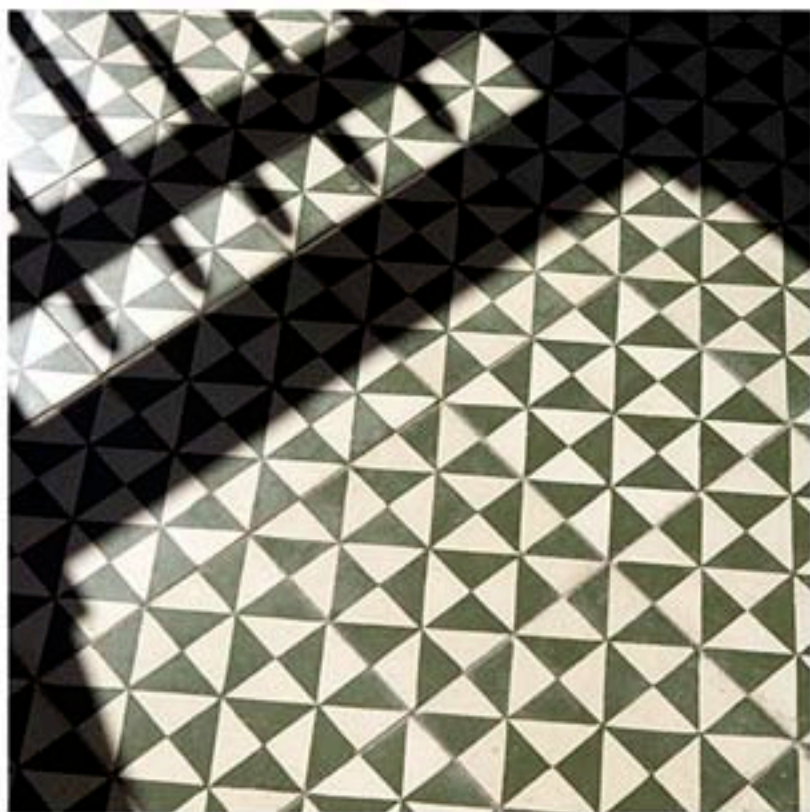


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Strong Materials

"Beauty is green," says Mike Ragsdale, a town spokesman. "Build a house that will last—from both construction and aesthetic viewpoints—and it will stand for centuries, not just decades."

Moisture-resistant woods like Western red cedar are used for arbors and trellises. Their use will guarantee years of service, while their appearance will merely take on a patina with age.



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Delightful Details

Exterior spaces are dressed up with tilework details that are evident only after closer inspection. Casual passersby notice only the gleaming white facades and subtly colored shutters. The details are a private and individual surprise.

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