

# Down to Earth

**TWO SISTERS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM NATURE  
AND AN UNLIKELY SPOT—A HOME.**

BY BLAKE MILLER PHOTOS BY DUSTIN PECK





The inspiration came organically. Elizabeth White and Jacquelyn Buckner were vacationing with family on Figure Eight Island last summer when the sisters began stringing oyster shells onto long pieces of twine to create necklaces. It wasn't until friends, family, and even strangers began asking where the duo bought their creations—which they layered with African beads they'd collected over the years—that they considered launching their own line of jewelry. “We love jewelry and fashion and we felt like there was something missing,” says Jacquelyn. Adds Elizabeth: “We couldn't find anything we wanted to buy so we came up with something we loved. [The necklaces] are items we're finding in nature and we've found a unique way to showcase it all.”



This page from top: The Whites' original 1940s ranch had to be torn down and in its place architect Ruard Veltman designed a chic three-story home. Twine & Twig necklaces are each handmade by White and Buckner and feature hand-carved beads from the Philippines, naturally-shed antlers sourced from Washington, seashells from Carolina beaches, and more. Opposite: Sisters White and Buckner brainstorm and design many of their designs at White's oversize dining room table designed by Veltman Meubles.



The result of years of collected beads, seashells, and a lot of design brainstorming is Twine & Twig, which the sisters launched last fall. The organic, natural line of handmade necklaces feature hand-carved beads from the Philippines, naturally-shed antlers sourced from Washington, seashells from the Carolina beaches, and more, strung on twine or the line's signature suede strap with a subtle stamped "T." "It's a piece of art that you wear that's inspired by nature," explains Elizabeth, who adds that that's part of the draw: each necklace is one of a kind and wholly natural.

The response to the line has been tremendous, the sisters say, considering Twine & Twig launched just a few months ago. Before the line had been picked up by boutiques across the country in cities

like Laguna Beach, Boulder, and locally at Sloane and poole shop, Elizabeth's Myers Park home she shares with her husband, Ian, and their three kids continues to serve dual purpose as showroom and design space for Twine & Twig.

The backdrop could not be more fitting for a line founded on an organic, raw, natural aesthetic. In 2010, with two-year-old twin girls and a six-month-old baby boy, Elizabeth and Ian knew that they'd outgrown their circa 1940s ranch. The couple enlisted architect Ruard Veltman to renovate the home to accommodate their growing family. But what began as a renovation soon turned into a teardown. "The Whites' home is a good example of how you can't just renovate something sometimes," explains Veltman, who designed a 5,000-square-

foot, three-story stacked home that not only was large enough for the soon-to-be family of five and provided a seamless layout that worked well for entertaining but that also reflected Elizabeth's down to earth style.

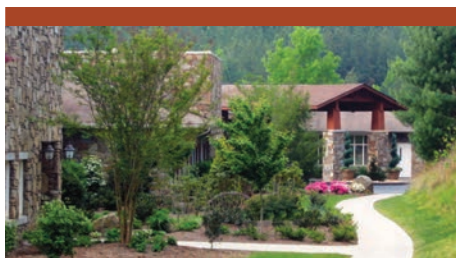
"Elizabeth had definite ideas about what she liked," explains Julia Wood, a designer with Ruard Veltman Architecture, who was integral in creating the home's natural and neutral aesthetic. "She likes things that are very earthy, organic, industrial. She really pushed us to do things that were not traditional." Case in point: after weeks of searching for the perfect sconces for the foyer, Elizabeth presented Wood and her husband, Evan, a lighting designer, with oyster sticks. "I said, 'Turn those into sconces and just make it look really natural,'" says Elizabeth.



Interior designer Julia Wood with Ruard Veltman Architecture collaborated with White on the interiors of the home including the family room, which features upholstered walls, which hide storage space, as well as rough-hewn barnwood around the fireplace surround, and an old Belgian drying rack that serves as a coffee table. Clockwise from top: Like the rest of the home, the kitchen boasts natural textures such as the concrete countertops, rough-hewn bar wood on the stove's hood, and plaster walls. Sconces by Evan Wood are made from oyster sticks that White found. Adjacent to the informal/formal dining room, the intimate living room, featuring a custom-designed sofa by Veltman Meubles, serves as the perfect place for entertaining.



White and Buckner's kids cozy up in the craft room where they can let loose with their own designs.



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"I would come up with these crazy, off-the-wall ideas and [Ruard's team] would bring them to fruition." Jute twine shades complete the sconces' chic, organic look.

Off the foyer is the living room and formal/informal dining room featuring a custom-made, oversize dining room table designed by Veltman Meubles, the architecture firm's in-house custom furniture division, that's designed to seat up to twenty adults. Raw, antique barn wood beams cover the alcove, which is flooded with natural light and serves as the perfect backdrop for Twine & Twig's jewelry. It's here that Elizabeth and Jacquelyn, a hairstylist in Dilworth, sip wine and catch up about their families, jobs, life, and, naturally, their jewelry as they thread beads, shells, and horse tassels onto twine and suede straps. (To date, they've hand made more than one thousand necklaces.)

Wide plank, white oak floors, which run throughout the first floor, complement the family room's linen-upholstered walls—a durable Sunbrella fabric was chosen—which were installed in lieu of traditional custom cabinetry to add texture to the space. The kitchen showcases an array of natural textures and elements such as the plaster

on the walls, the concrete counters, and the rough-hewn barn wood around the stove's hood, which mirrors the same material used on the fireplace surround in the adjacent family room. "It was great to work with Elizabeth because she was so open to testing new materials and taking something and using it in a different way," says Wood.

Like Twine & Twig's collection of found objects, White designed her interiors with earthy, eclectic pieces. "I feel like this naturalist vibe goes from my house to my personal style to my jewelry," says White. "Especially with the house; it feels very collected. I'm naturally drawn to these weird, curious items." An old Belgian drying rack serves as a coffee table while a pitchfork from Nepal and wooden sculptures, tribal baskets, and fighting shields from Africa decorate the White home. "I'm really drawn to pieces that have a meaning and story behind them."

Such is the case with each of Twine & Twig's necklaces. As White and Buckner slide each tiny piece onto the twine or smooth suede, they're literally telling a story with every knot and every bead. "Everything has been inspiring," says White. "It's what makes us want to create and design more." **SP**