

SEASIDE *Style*

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photography by Steven Brooke

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

urban by the sea

LIVING ABOVE THE STORE

Baratta/
Holtermann
Townhouse





The old-fashioned concept of living above the store has been revived with imaginative results at Quincy's, located along the entrance to Seaside's lively artist colony, Ruskin Place. Rather than relying on the more romantic notions of vernacular traditions and coastal bungalows, architect Lourdes Reynafarje of Kiara Designs summons urban aesthetics for a toy and arts supply emporium owned by native New Yorkers Dorothy Baratta and Cliff Holtermann.

The couple was immediately intrigued by Seaside's cohesive town plan and engaging architecture. "The first weekend we visited in the late 1980s we bought property and soon commissioned Deborah Berke to design a cottage," recalls Dorothy. "By the time we had completed our first house, we had a new appreciation of architecture."

As Seaside evolved, Dorothy and Cliff were drawn to the energy and density of the growing town center and the live-work units defining Ruskin Place. They soon purchased another lot. "This is as urban as Florida gets, and we love it," says Dorothy.

Design codes dictate ground-floor retail with apartments above for this section of the growing town. "From the beginning, we assumed we would lease the retail space, rent the second-floor apartment, and use the third floor as our vacation home," recalls Dorothy. As part of the process, they developed a concept for a ground-floor shop. "We were so impressed with our ideas for the store that we decided to establish a major business with the cavalier attitude of someone setting up a lemonade stand," she adds.

At once contemporary and contextual, the building from the lively ground-floor shop to the third-floor apartment responds to the modernist

tenet of efficiency and elegance by straightforward means and materials. The architect chose a hard, steel-troweled concrete exterior and the overscaled galvanized steel brackets to evoke the industrial sense of the maritime warehouses of the past. Following this premise, the store and residence appear as a transformation of an abandoned shell to vibrant spaces adapted to a variety of new functions.

Patterns of circulation and the rhythmic arrangement of spaces are continuous and constant. The three-story building features a front and a back stairway, which carve out a pair of light wells with corner windows to bring natural light into the mid-block townhouse. This arrangement also allows the second floor to function as two separate rental units.

Throughout, concrete floors, ceilings, walls, and countertops provide a bold, yet neutral backdrop for colorful accents of tile, eclectic furnishings, and art. For the owners' third-floor apartment, designer Kris Childs used a few large pieces of furniture to define the functions of the loftlike main living space. An antique farm table easily accommodates ten for dinner. An intimate conversation area focuses on a fireplace. Suspended shelving offers a subtle definition between the kitchen and living area, while providing decorative storage.

Modern design is easy to embrace when things are paired down to their simplest elements. "Lourdes created a space that is as elemental, raw, and sensuous as the beach, without sacrificing comfort and practicality," says Dorothy. "It is a home that has tested as well for quiet meditation, romantic encounters, and raucous parties."

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The master suite is an oasis of restraint with tall windows and minimalist details.

(Opposite)

Quincy's array of toys and arts supplies enlivens the shop's entrance. Stainless steel railings and industrial beams define the second-floor balcony.





(opposite)

One corner of the master suite accommodates a deep soaking tub set with a curving wall of pour-in-place concrete. A recessed fireplace anchors the opposite wall.



(Above)

An L-shaped counter defines the compact and efficient kitchen. Twelve-foot tall ceilings create a loft-light space for the central living and dining area. Open cabinets and shelving creates the illusion of deeper dimensions.