

COASTAL

Homes & Lifestyles

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CELEBRATING LIFE ON THE EMERALD COAST

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Spec House to Special Home

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Photography by Tommy Crow

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OFTEN MAKE LASTING IMPRESSIONS. That's certainly true at the WaterColor home of Laura and Ed Hill. Designed by architect Lourdes Reynafarje of Kiara Designs, the front porch and overscaled door offer a proper introduction to the style and personality that radiates throughout the house.

It was also the porch that inspired Laura and Ed to buy the house. "We had been coming to Seaside for years, when some friends from Nashville who owned a cottage in WaterColor suggested we rent a place near them," recalls Laura. "We immediately fell in love with everything about WaterColor, and decided to see what was for sale."

Instead of driving around in a car, they hopped on bikes to explore the friendly streets and check out houses in various stages of construction.

"We had never really thought seriously about owning a place at the beach until we saw this house," says Laura. "It

In the living room, the fireplace and surrounding built-in cabinetry create a bold focal point. The television is set above the gas fireplace. Laura admits she had to make some very practical choices, prompting the selection of a pair of durable upholstered sofas and a leather armchair. "We have three children and this is a beach house," she adds.





In the master suite, a series of square paintings complements the rhythm of the square windows. The placement of the windows also allows the bed to be set against the wall, while taking advantage of the southern light. The double doors open onto the rear deck.



was so perfect. It was as if Lourdes had designed the home just for our family.”

That’s exactly what Lourdes had set out to do when she teamed up with Peter and Susan Horn of Artisan to design and build the house. Although Lourdes has a penchant for a more Modernist approach, she understands the demographics of the market and the design guidelines of WaterColor.

“My goal is to instill true Southern hospitality with a contemporary twist,” she explains. “People also want their beach house to be different from their primary residence.

They want comfort, relaxation, tranquility.”

Potential buyers also demand a livable floor plan with thoughtful use of every inch of space. The house is not large — approximately 1,800 square feet (not counting porches) — yet it accommodates a generous master suite, two bedrooms and baths upstairs, and playful built-in bunks.

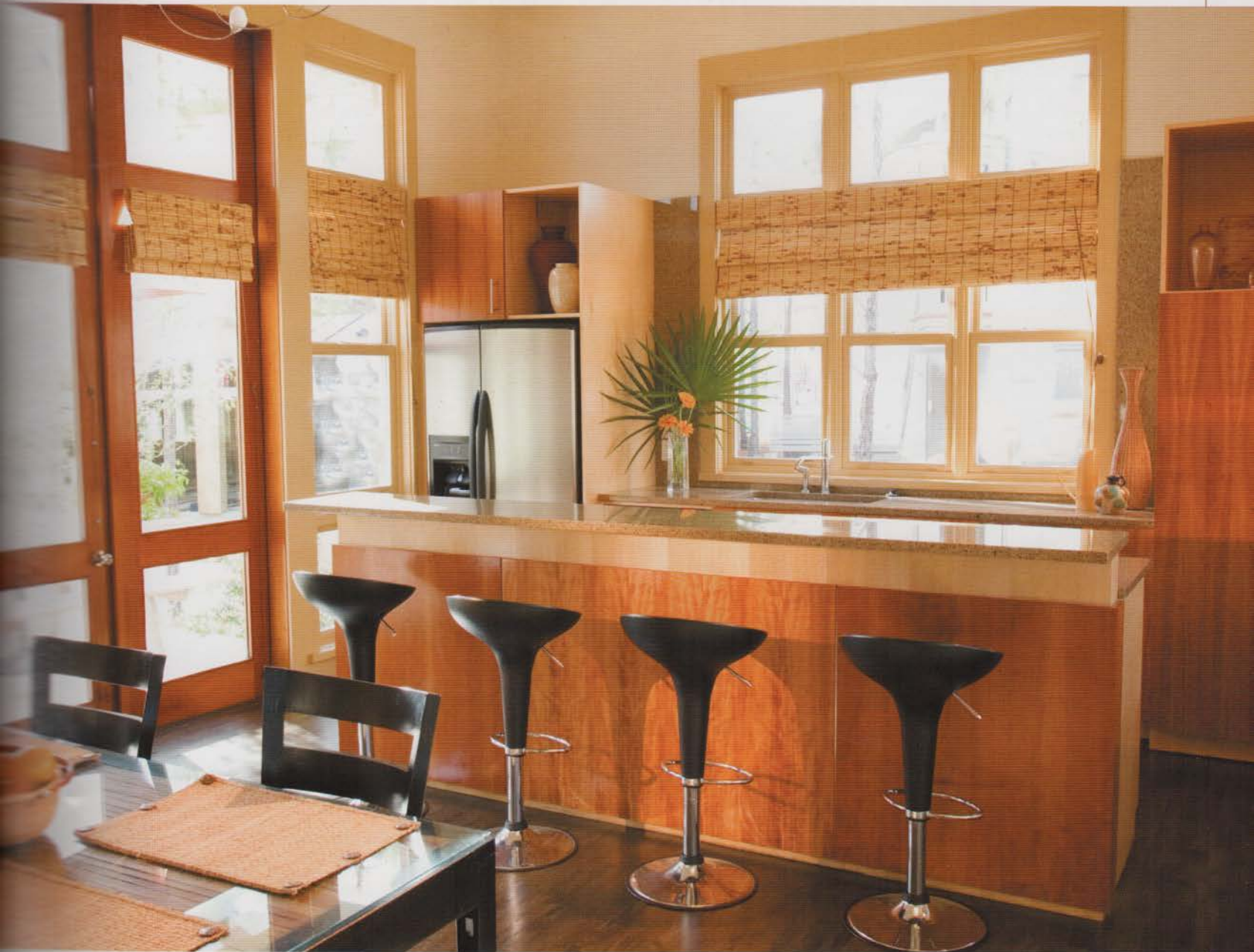
“For us it was the front porch. For our 5-year-old son, it was definitely the bunk beds,” says Laura. “He just loves to climb up and down the ladder.”

The lot is pie-shaped, which might have

deterred some architects, but Lourdes was inspired by the challenge, creating an L-shaped plan that encompasses a rear deck and a sheltered garden. The main structure comprises a two-story volume that is basically one-room deep, while a one-story master wing extends off the living room.

Along the front of the house, 10, 12-by-12-inch-square pillars lend an air of confidence to the porch. Running the length of the house at 12-feet deep, the porch is by far the largest gathering place in the house. A collection of sturdy teak furniture beckons

A pair of cabinets flank the kitchen's bank of tall windows. A mix of open and covered shelving creates visual interest. The bar-height counter offers a spot for casual dining and partially screens the workings of an active kitchen.



family to linger, and the pair of oversized swinging day beds anchors the two ends — by far the best spot for an afternoon nap.

Although the porch is symmetrical, Lourdes deliberately made the center bay larger to give hierarchy to the entrance.

"In historic European villas, the front door is always monumental," explains Lourdes. "I wanted this front door to make an equally bold statement, while embracing visitors."

The vertical aluminum bars against the glazing offers a sense of openness and

provides more privacy than clear glass, while establishing an interesting play of shade and shadow. Once inside, the theme continues as the aluminum bars rise up the stairway and along the end of the bunks to create a subtle distinction between spaces without a solid wall.

The interior configuration also allows public and private spaces to be just that. The master suite features a cathedral ceiling and double doors opening onto the rear deck. The guest suite and the girls' bedroom anchor opposite ends of the second floor, with the

bunks efficiently tucked along the stairway landings. Twelve-foot-tall ceilings, large windows, thoughtful use of circulation space and an inviting interchange between indoors and outdoors encourage the house to live larger than its actual square footage.

"Although the house was under construction when we bought it, we didn't change a thing," recalls Laura. "Lourdes had hand-picked every finish and fixture, including exquisite lighting throughout."

Laura relished the chance to furnish the interiors in keeping with the contemporary

The colors, fabrics, and furnishing take a decided turn toward warm neutrals and earth tones drawn from nature.

Tucked along the upstairs landing, the cozy bunk area is an efficient use of space. The aluminum bars along the end allow the stairway to retain its light and open feel.



Refined finishes and contemporary details in keeping with the character of the house enliven the master bathroom. A pair of green glass bowls, sleek modern faucets and individually framed mirrors define the vanity counter.



The wall curves as the stairway rises to carve out a display niche. A trio of woven vases echoes the colors of the landscape painting by Gordie Hinds.



Like a venerable Southern farmhouse that has stood the test of time, the house commands respect without shouting for attention thanks to a 12-foot-deep porch and a monumental front door.

interiors in keeping with the contemporary feel of the architecture and the custom built-in components in the living and dining rooms. The colors, fabrics and furnishing take a decided turn toward warm neutrals and earth tones drawn from nature.

In the kitchen, modern bar stools complement the sleek maple and granite finishes and stainless steel appliances. A sisal rug anchors the breakfast area. "Most everything came from the many wonderful shops along 30-A," says Laura.

A painting by artist Gordie Hinds occupies a prominent vantage point on the stairway. "I literally salivated over this painting when I saw it in a local gallery," says Laura. Then the friends who had introduced the Hills to WaterColor presented the painting to them as a housewarming gift. "It was a total surprise," recalls Laura. "We hung the painting, and I guess that's when it really sunk in that this is truly 'our' home."