

Our Favorite Getaways on the Outer Banks

Southern Living

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Jessy and Rose Holtermann enjoy a game of checkers at the breakfast table.

Comfortable, Playful Space

Bright ideas for family living abound in this beach retreat.

This Seaside, Florida, home is full of playful touches and innovative ideas; the breakfast room chalkboard is just one example. And that's exactly what you would expect from owners Dorothy Baratta and Cliff Holtermann, who operate an art-supply and toy store just downstairs.

In fact, their combination kitchen/breakfast area/family room, in particular, has the look and feel of one of the brightly hued prints they sell. All around, fun furnishings contrast with the neutral palette.

The spaces are open and airy, and the interior details are left clean so that the accessories and paint colors can really stand out. "Dorothy and Cliff wanted to create a livable, practical, and maintenance-free home," says architect Lourdes Reynafarje. "And they wanted the maximum space possible."

Concrete countertops, concrete-block walls whitewashed with lime paint,



above: A series of inexpensive posters, which are copies of vintage European prints, adds color to this kitchen.

and even concrete floors provide a neutral backdrop for the more colorful decor. The materials also are suitable to withstand kids, elements, and constant traffic.

"We left a lot of the space some-

what raw and elemental, like the beach," says designer Kris Childs. "The result is not harsh—just simple, unfussy, and easy to care for."

Fun and fanciful touches abound. For example, the table in the breakfast room is surrounded by multicolored chairs, while vibrant throw pillows complement the family room's sofa.

What's more, the owners found some lighthearted and inexpensive ways to brighten the walls. In the kitchen, a group of food-related posters is hung next to the sink. Adjacent to this space, the breakfast room sports a chalkboard as its focal point. For additional interest, a bright green partition and header wall separate these areas.

"The chalkboard serves as both a surface to create impromptu art and a great place to leave messages, make grocery lists, and scribble phone numbers," says Dorothy. It was also simple to make.

The board is a piece of plywood cut to size. It is attached to the wall with bolts in a series of holes drilled along the edges of the plywood. The wood was painted with chalkboard paint (found at a hardware store). An inexpensive frame forms a ledge for holding chalk and erasers.

"Our goal was to create a fun and artistic space that was functional and comfortable," says Dorothy. Judging from the area's playful spirit, it seems they succeeded.

ALICIA K. CLAVELL

To see more of this home and for great decorating projects, check out the fall issue of *Decorating Step-by-Step*, available on newsstands in late August. ♦