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HOME

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CLASSICALLY COOL IN
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Tips from the Pros

Blue INTO THE

by Mark Herrmann



"I JUST LOVE THE RELAXED, CASUAL
VIBE THAT BEACH HOUSES HAVE.
I WANTED THE DECORATING IN
OUR HOME TO BE JUST AS RELAXED."

For one Charlotte family, their discovery of a former builder-owned Myers Park home, was the perfect mix of a recent remodel and manageable floor plan. The home simply needed the finishing touches. It is now decorated with a relaxed, ocean-influenced style that perfectly balances traditional tastes with the ease and comfort often found in a beach home.

Like many older neighborhoods, the Smith family home was built right after the depression, in the early 1920s. A traditional Colonial style home, the home features one character filled room after the other. You can tell the craftsmen that built this home took pride in their work. Plaster and lath walls and hardwood floors are throughout the home, as is most of the original windows, door hardware and millwork.

As you enter the home, the formal living room is off to the left, a split level staircase is in the middle of the home and the dining room is off to the right. A den lies just beyond the two French doors in the living room and a butler pantry and expanded kitchen area sit in the back right corner. A playroom and several bedrooms are upstairs.



Jim Schmid Photography





But what first impresses you is despite the home's age, the decorating style is chic yet comfortable.

"I grew up near Elizabeth City, which is a big sailing town, and I suppose the water and the ocean, has been a big influence in my life," said Beth Smith, the owner. "Our family owns a home near Nags Head, and I just love the relaxed, casual vibe that beach houses have. I wanted the decorating in our home to be just as relaxed."

Very subtle nautical influences are spread throughout the home, yet that theme is more of a reminder in the background, and not at all, overly done.

"When we bought the home, I loved the fact that the former owner, a builder, had basically just left the walls a shade of antique white. It allowed me to see the home as an open canvas and not have any preconceived notions about the direction I should take the decorating," said Beth.

As a result, every room is infused with rich or vibrant color, each room distinct, yet the house flows. It feels relaxed.

"I read a lot of magazines like *Elle Décor* and *House Beautiful* for ideas," said Beth. "I'm drawn to just about every type of decorating style. Any genre can be well done. I just enjoy the spatial relationships of a more eclectic mix. I'm also very fortunate to have a very good interior designer, Holly Phillips from the English Room, who is my sounding board of new ideas."

Most recently, Beth decided to add French doors from the den to a new outdoor living area. She worked with Brice Thomason, who helped design a relaxed and inviting covered patio with an outdoor fireplace.

"We can't wait to use the space," said Beth.





Living Room

One of the original design elements untouched by the former owner was a beautiful maritime-themed tile that surrounds the fireplace in the formal living room. That blue is picked up and carried into the living space with the upholstered side chairs and accent pillows. The neutral sisal rug and drapes act more like a backdrop to frame the room, and focus the attention on the furniture and contemporary art. French-doors lead to a den. Glances upstairs through the open staircase and you catch a glimpse of color in the children's playroom and bedrooms.

"Because we don't have a foyer, your eye is immediately drawn into the living room," said Beth. "I really wanted this room to make a statement."



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Dining Room

This room is the quintessential mixture of old and new. A David Hicks rug from Stark Carpet exudes style while the traditional influences of an antique dining room table and sideboard from family, provide a touch of tradition. New floor-to-ceiling built-ins provide a safe home for Beth's china, which was handed down by Beth's grandmother. White vinyl chairs from Lee are a great conversation starter at dinner parties.



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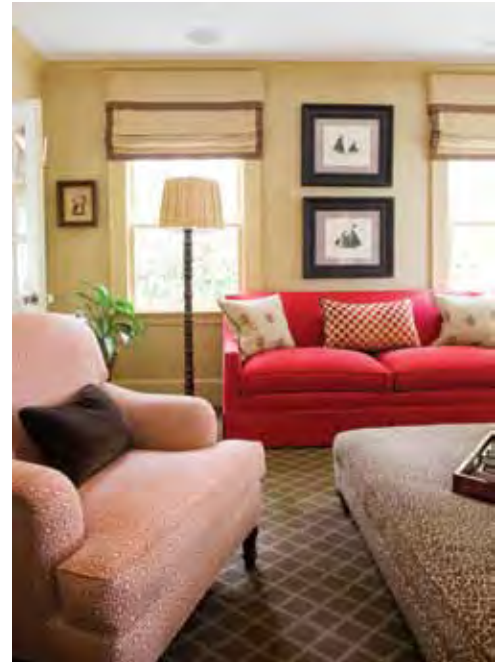
Children's Playroom

Vibrant orange painted walls help set the mood for fun in this space. A durable sofa and colorful rug from Ikea are almost indestructible while pops of green are provided from Jonathan Adler pillows. "My painters told me they dreamed in orange for weeks after painting this room," said Beth. Artwork from all the children is organized on framed cork boards.



Kitchen

White shaker cabinetry anchors the space with marble countertops and an island made from mahogany. A pantry near the stove provides ample storage. A limestone tiled floor connects an eat-in banquet with West Elm chairs. The table is reproduction antique from Englishman Furniture. A bowl filled with crayons and a stack of fresh paper inspires the children to create masterpieces at any moment. Beth's Mom framed some of her childhood art, which is featured on the wall.



Den

French doors that lead out to a covered patio and fireplace, were inspired by the French doors in the formal living room. Antique English reproduction hardware graces the doors. The room is done in red, tan and black and is the gathering spot for family and friends. ❖





