The chair and garden stool are from Wisteria; the rug is by Dash & Albert. The Christmas tree ornaments are by Mudpie.

for all seasons

A supersized vacation retreat in Seaside, Florida, satisfies an extended family's love of holiday (or any day!) get-togethers

BY MARISA SPYKER   PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK GARDNER
STYLING BY LINDA HIRST AND LYNN NESMITH

For similar decorations, try Anthropologie.

The exterior shutters are painted Benjamin Moore's Tarrytown Green.

An evergreen garland adds texture to the mantel.

Silver beads and a snowflake-bedecked starfish top the tree.

"I KNEW WE NEEDED TO INFUSE A LITTLE SOPHISTICATION INTO THE DESIGN, BUT STILL KEEP IT RELAXED AND CASUAL"

W hen architect Braulio Casas was hired to design a Gulf-front vacation retreat for a Louisiana family in the town of Seaside, Florida, they had one important request: Make sure to include a large lounging room where the whole gang can gather for every occasion, from holiday celebrations to New Orleans Saints football games. "They had come here for vacations for 16 years and wanted something they could call their own, something that would be a reflection of them as a family," Braulio says. So when the fun-loving clan—a mother, stepfather, son, and daughter, plus the daughter's husband and their five kids—stumbled upon a prime open lot in town, they jumped on it, and began planning their dream house.

Armed with the family's requests and a list of local building codes, Braulio starting drawing up plans for the layout. Regulations for the town of Seaside dictated that the design had to maintain an existing pedestrian walkway running directly through the property, so Braulio designed two structures—one a formal living space that overlooks the ocean, the other a more casual counterpart—that are connected by raised walkways on the second and third floors to provide access to both without sacrificing privacy or disrupting the flow of the residence. While the home honors its location via louvered balcony railings and a pale pink exterior hue that Braulio says "mimics the color of the dunes when the sun's shadow is on them," touches such as brick patio flooring and dark green shutters borrow design cues from architecture commonly seen in New Orleans. "I wanted the house to be an expression of their roots, but in the context of Seaside," Braulio says.

The dining table is antique; the chairs are from Wisteria, and the rug is by Dash & Albert.

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The third-floor terrace's sofas and coffee table are from Restoration Hardware; the pillows are from Thomaspaul.

Inside the three-story, nearly 8,000-square-foot house (the largest in the community), the rooms are fairly modest in size—with the exception of the third-floor great room, which has 14-foot vaulted ceilings and enough room to accommodate a tall Christmas tree. The second-floor master suites (one for the mother and stepfather, another for the daughter and her husband) are smaller in scale, with intricate trimwork and wainscoting to bring a cozy feel to the home.

Braulio, whose firm also handles interior decor, tackled the design with direction from both the mother's and daughter's residences in New Orleans. "I noticed how simple everything was, with a muted palette," he says. "I knew we needed to infuse a little sophistication into the design, but still keep it relaxed and casual. At the end of the day, it is a beach house."

In the formal living room overlooking the ocean, lighter shades and smoother textures in the wood furnishings, such as the dining chairs and whitewashed sofa table, bring softness to the room and contrast the charcoal-stained oak floors; the furniture's elegant silhouettes are relaxed with linen and cotton slipcovers. The outdoor terrace beyond is laid-back, with wicker sofas and a farmhouse-style dining table and chairs. "The furniture needed to have texture without being attention-grabbing," Braulio says. "It was a balancing act from start to finish." Of course, references to the family's hometown, like the wooden fleurs de lis on the second-floor terrace, appear in accessories throughout.

Yet, with all the personal touches from life in the Big Easy, Braulio didn't distract from the home's most important asset—its views. "We designed it with as many windows as possible," he says, "so when the family walks up the stairs, the Gulf horizon is the first thing they see. It makes coming back that much more special." 🐚 **For more information, see Sources, page 106.**

From top: The upholstered bed in the master bedroom is from Restoration Hardware; the side chair is by Lee Industries. The bedding in the kids' bunk room is by Serena & Lily. Opposite: The blue slipcovered sofas in the carriage house living room are by Lee Industries, and the oak lamps are from Arteriors.