

• beach home

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# BEACH BLISS

Relaxation and family fun take on  
a whole new meaning  
at **WaterColor**

**FACING PAGE:** Originally slated to be WaterColor architect Matt Sovie's house, this beach retreat has little extras that make it unique. For instance, no other beach house has a cover above the window, a small touch that packs a lot of punch. **THIS PAGE:** Photographs from the three families who collaborated to design this beach house line the entry hall. Dr. Harold Wehby and his wife Najwa, along with close friends Dr. Charles Herlihy, Sharon Moloney and Janis and Bobby Hayden, chose WaterColor for their second home.



It takes a lot of planning to appear natural. Women have known this for years. But the same could be said for communities. Take WaterColor for instance. This coastal resort and

residential community, located in Northwest Florida just west of Seaside on Scenic Highway 30-A, is known for its ability to meld with the natural habitat, which includes not only pristine beaches but also coastal dune lakes and pine forests. This careful blend took years to craft, even with some of the nation's best architects on the job.

Perhaps that's why Dr. Harold Wehby and his wife Najwa, along with close friends Dr. Charles Herlihy, Sharon Moloney and Janis and Bobby Hayden, chose WaterColor for their second home. "Every tree has a place," Dr. Wehby observes. In fact, one particular "designated tree spot" dictated the entire process for building a walkway to their home.

But these homeowners wouldn't have it any other way. They can't rave enough about their new community. "I researched the St. Joe Company [developers] and found out that they are very committed to the project ... They go after every detail," Wehby says.

Although WaterColor is about place-making, it doesn't feel forced; the simple Southern craftsmanship of the cottages combines seamlessly with the native pines and garden habitats. "The landscaping at WaterColor is art itself," Moloney adds. "They take the environment and cultivate the design around it





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— they really use what’s there,” Wehby remarks.

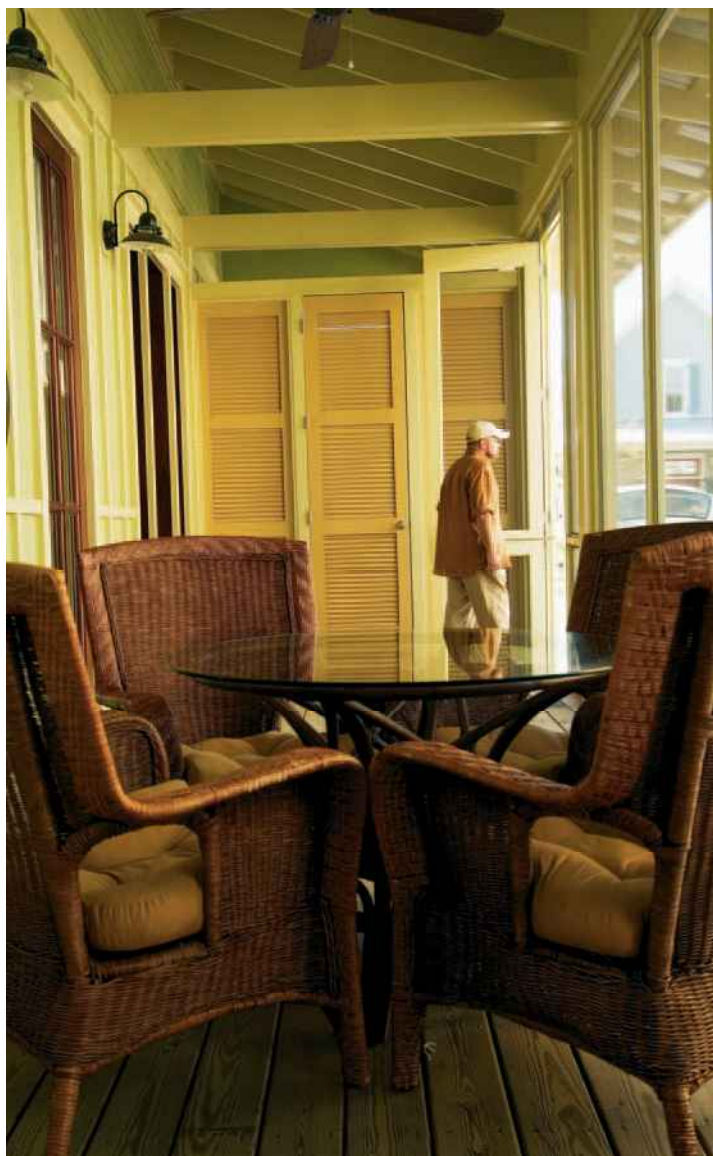
And they have a lot to work with. As so many of us who grew up in the South vacationing at the Gulf know, this stretch of coast is unique. For some, vacationing there as a child holds almost iconic status in our memories. Moloney recalls how her trips to the now visionary town of Seaside sparked her love for the area.

This familiarity and fondness led Dr. Herlihy and Moloney to WaterColor, Seaside’s new neighbor. Finally, when all of the families were

**FACING PAGE:** The beach house backs up to Cinnamon Fern Park. Owner Sharon Moloney likes that she can stand on the back porch and see her children playing in the pool. It’s almost a utopia. “We can just say ‘time for dinner,’ and the kids running without ever having to cross the street,” Sharon says. **THIS PAGE, LEFT:** The dining room is designed around the fireplace, a signature piece. Handcrafted pastel tiles create a functional mosaic and provide a natural focal point. Designed by artist Tricia Willis, the fireplace is a piece of art itself. **THIS PAGE, RIGHT:** Although there was a lot of collaboration involved in designing and decorating this house, personal touches from each family are evident throughout the home. Upstairs, a Persian runner from Janis and Bobby Hayden lends Old World charm to this decidedly beachy house.



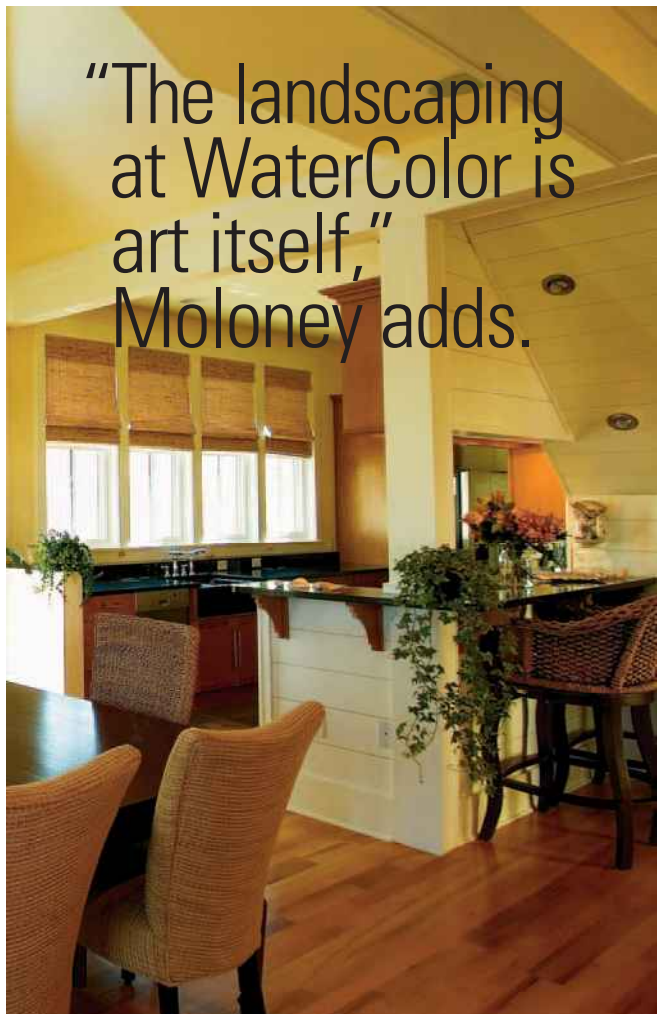




THIS PAGE, ABOVE LEFT: Three porches in the home provide separate adult teen and kid areas. "This way everyone has a special place to go," Dr. Wehby says. THIS PAGE, ABOVE RIGHT: Moloney laughs about how long Dr. Herlihy and Dr. Wehby held up the antique farmhouse mirror above the fireplace while the others decided if they liked it. "It took forever," Wehby recounts. But they all agree the payoff is worth it. "The mirror reflects the entire room, making it possible at once to see throughout the house," Moloney says. THIS PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT: Adjacent to Cinnamon Fern Park, which has a large lawn for sports, a pool, and beyond that a lake, the back porch offers a great vantage point to watch the sunset over the lake. Here, light fixtures with stars cut out cast an impressive imitation of a nighttime sky on the porch ceiling. FACING PAGE: WaterColor is also known for masterfully incorporating art into the surroundings. Hand-blown glass cattail lights protrude along the banks of the lake and along the bridge, an understated daytime touch and an elegant nighttime display.



"The landscaping at WaterColor is art itself," Moloney adds.



on board, the biggest challenge of all was realized — collaborating with three families in three cities to design a home that suits everyone. With the Wehbys and the Haydens in Birmingham and New Orleans, respectively, Moloney and Herlihy, who live in Mobile, led the charge, armed with lots of input from the other families — and an ongoing spreadsheet.

"It did work out well. We were able to keep everyone involved," Moloney recalls. "Chuck was very involved and did a lot of coordinating the upgrades," Sharon says. He and Moloney's daughter Alex even hand-painted the table in the teen room. "We shopped the country for the right items," says Sharon. "It was hard, and it was fun," Wehby adds.

To be fair, there were times when the collaboration came in handy — Sharon laughs about how long Herlihy and Wehby held up the antique farmhouse mirror above the fireplace while the others decided if they liked it. "It took forever," Wehby recounts. But they all agree payoff is worth it. "The mirror reflects the entire room, making it possible to see throughout the house at a glance," Sharon says.

Moloney and Herlihy made another purchase that played a major role in this beach home. Bold blue pendant lights make a daring statement in the dining room and dictate the "artsy-playful" feel of this home. The main design goal was to make the place beachy and fun. "We wanted things to 'pop' when you walk into a room," Wehby says. But there's also a touch from each family. Upstairs, a Persian runner from the Haydens lends Old World charm to this decidedly beachy house. Every five to seven years, the families plan to remodel, with each couple taking a turn "at the helm."

Just as WaterColor seeks to incorporate art into the community, art plays a leading role in this home's current decor. The dining room is designed around the fireplace, a signature piece. Handcrafted pastel







**THIS PAGE, ABOVE LEFT:** Little details reveal careful planning — the convenient sand room on the side of the house with an outdoor shower provides the perfect spot for sand filled shoes and wet suits to be tossed aside. **THIS PAGE, ABOVE RIGHT:** WaterColor boasts the best of two worlds — from pine forests and lakes to breathtaking views of the Gulf. At the BeachClub pool, guests can enjoy waterside activities or relax on a teak lounge chair. **THIS PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** Located on a rare 220-acre coastal dune lake bordered by pine forests, the Boathouse offers canoe, kayak and sailing excursions. Staff even arrange fly-fishing instructions. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT:** For those not seeking a home on the rental program, the Watercolor Inn, a David Rockwell work of art, will be a welcome retreat. This boutique inn is described as having “the warmth and hospitality of a traditional Southern grand hotel, with the intimacy of a bed and breakfast inn.” **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** For the great room, Moloney sought out sound sturdy structures like this round table. “We shopped the country for the right items,” Moloney says.

tiles create a functional mosaic and provide a natural focal point.

But artistic flair doesn't mean this house is stuffy. It's designed for accommodating the large families who frequent the home. “This house holds 12 people,” Wehby says. Little details reveal careful planning — the convenient sand room on the side of the house provides the perfect spot for sand filled shoes and wet suits to be tossed aside.

The porches are designed with family in mind, as well. Adjacent to Cinnamon Fern Park, the back porch offers a great vantagepoint to watch the sunset over the lake. Here, light fixtures with stars cut

## the art of WaterColor

Just next door to Seaside along the Scenic 30A, a new type of resort and residential community has sprung to life. WaterColor is a nestled-in community known for bridging two worlds. Here, pristine beaches connect to 499 acres leading to the large Western Lake. Architect Kent Findley, vice president of planning and design at developing powerhouse St. Joe Company, was a key player in the design from the beginning. He says from the start, the design philosophy centered on connecting these two worlds with subtle grace.

A complement to the natural surroundings, the houses are characterized by simple Southern craftsmanship and large porches for gathering. Here communion is encouraged by houses placed close to the street and intimate crushed shell pathways. Careful attention is paid to the proportions of the architecture, too — from the depth of the porches to the width of the columns.

Only native Walton County plants are allowed, and, in a nod toward water

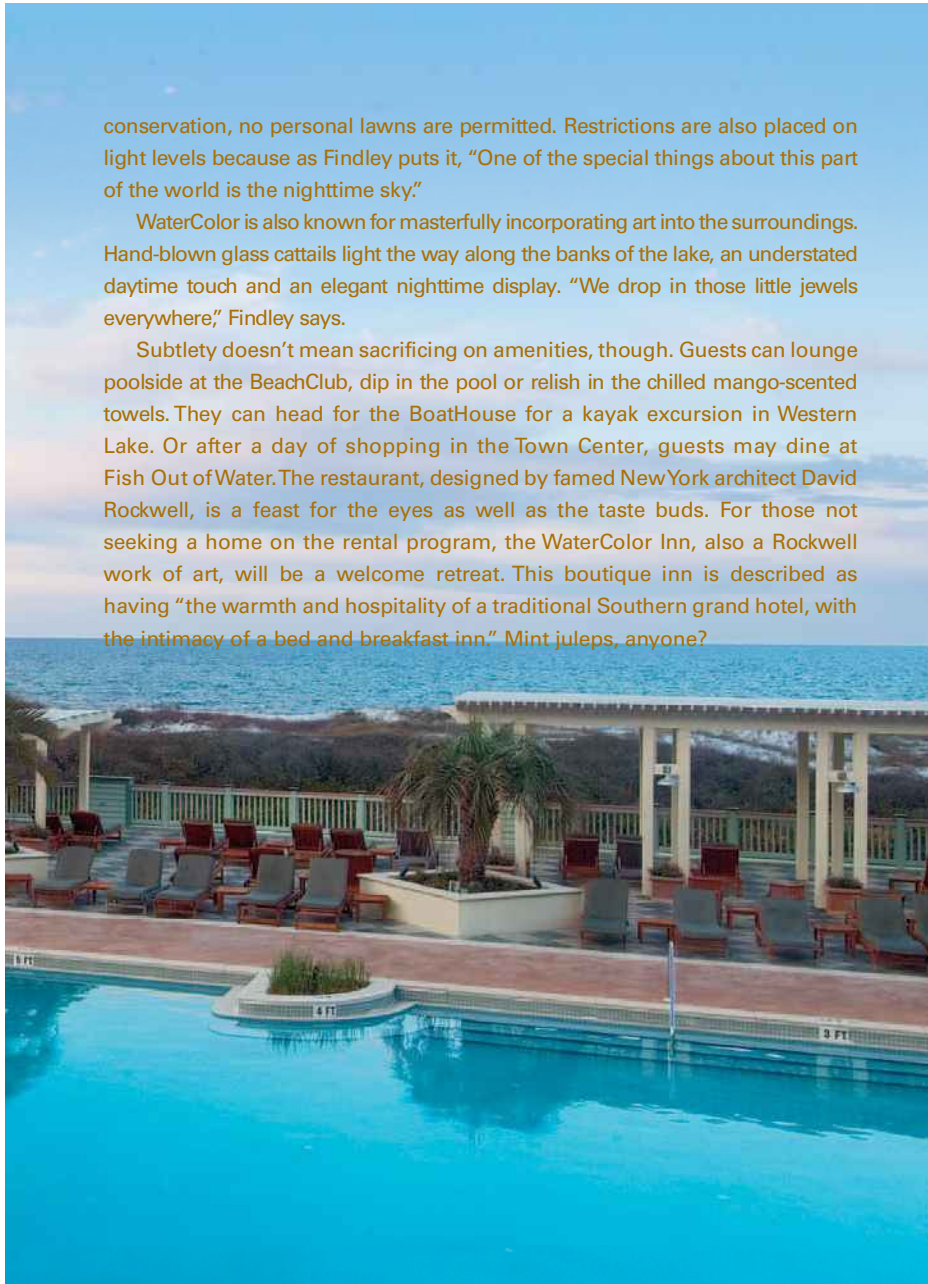




conservation, no personal lawns are permitted. Restrictions are also placed on light levels because as Findley puts it, "One of the special things about this part of the world is the nighttime sky."

WaterColor is also known for masterfully incorporating art into the surroundings. Hand-blown glass cattails light the way along the banks of the lake, an understated daytime touch and an elegant nighttime display. "We drop in those little jewels everywhere," Findley says.

Subtlety doesn't mean sacrificing on amenities, though. Guests can lounge poolside at the BeachClub, dip in the pool or relish in the chilled mango-scented towels. They can head for the BoatHouse for a kayak excursion in Western Lake. Or after a day of shopping in the Town Center, guests may dine at Fish Out of Water. The restaurant, designed by famed New York architect David Rockwell, is a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds. For those not seeking a home on the rental program, the WaterColor Inn, also a Rockwell work of art, will be a welcome retreat. This boutique inn is described as having "the warmth and hospitality of a traditional Southern grand hotel, with the intimacy of a bed and breakfast inn." Mint juleps, anyone?



out cast an impressive imitation of a night-time sky on the porch ceiling.

Dr. Wehby likes the side porch, perfect for smoking cigars. "Only the best cigars," he laughs. Three porches in the home provide separate adult, teen and kid areas. "This way everyone has a special place to go," Wehby says.

Moloney would agree. She likes that she can stand on the back porch and see her children playing in the pool. It's almost a utopia. "We can just say 'time for dinner,' and the kids come running without ever having to cross the street."

Najwa, the esteemed chef of the family, loves the cozy kitchen where everything is at arm's reach. And the Wehbys' grandchildren, Hannah, Isabella and Katherine, have a great time there, too. When asked about her favorite part, Isabella declares that she likes going to the fountains and the outdoor showers. Hannah reminds us of the simple pleasures when she quickly chimes in, "I like climbing up the stairs." ●

