

# THOROUGHLY MODERN MANNERS

## SEASIDE

Ruskin Place is one of the more urban experiences of life along 30A. Conceived as an artist colony in Seaside's original plan, Ruskin Place is composed of twenty townhouses framing a landscaped park. As early embracers of the concept, David and Susan Withers purchased their home in 1999. With two young children and busy schedules, a low maintenance, lock-and-go townhouse suited them perfectly. "A few years ago, with our children in their twenties and spring break behind us, it seemed like a good time to update," recalls David. "We love to cook and entertain, so a new kitchen was our main objective."

Enter designer Beth Dillard, who took one look and immediately envisioned a more comprehensive approach. "We couldn't add on to the existing box, so the renovation became a complex puzzle of finding space and dealing with obstacles along the way," explains Beth. First order of business was removing a central lightwell that really didn't admit much light. Next came opening up the stairways and moving the HVAC systems to free up space in the kitchen. "Our builder, Roy Greene, was both practical and creative as the scope of the project grew," says David.

With structural issues deciphered, they turned to the more fun aspects of the design. "As it turned out we were in Paris days apart," says Beth. "I was able to scout the best European kitchens and direct David and Susan to my favorite showrooms." They agreed on a sleek Boffi kitchen with walnut cabinets and white marble countertop. Once they opened everything up with a fabulous new kitchen front and center, it was only natural to revamp living areas.

Beth basically wiped the slate clean as she set out to provide seating and dining for more people with less clutter, all the while introducing her signature contemporary touches throughout. "Modern design is easy to embrace when things are pared down to their simplest elements," Beth maintains. Her Spartan approach also opened up wall space for the Withers' art collection. Upstairs, the sleek walnut and marble finishes of the kitchen are repeated in the bathrooms while the bedrooms are outfitted with tailored custom beds, art, and accessories with a decidedly Eastern influence.

The project took on a life of its own, but things turned out all for the best. "It's a lot like our typical Seaside party," laughs David. "We start out with six for dinner and end up with sixteen, but everyone has a great time and that's all that really matters."