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A SOUTH CAROLINA COUPLE DITCHES FORMALITY IN FAVOR OF OCEAN VIEWS AND BOHEMIAN VIBES.

WRITER JENNIFER KOPF PHOTOGRAPHER BRIE WILLIAMS FIELD EDITOR SANDRA L. MOHLMANN

This photo: "The homeowners like to bring things back from their travels, so they enjoyed the idea of a neutral palette that they could build on," designer Melissa Ervin says. In the living room, an antique Oushak rug tops a larger sisal, and collected pottery and other objects rest on narrow iron shelves crafted by local artisan Rick Avrett. *Opposite:* Ervin freshened the couple's inherited rosewood dining chairs with relaxed slipcovers in a variety of fun, abstract prints, then paired them with a casual driftwood-finish pedestal table.





Call it the island exhale.

It's that feeling you get as you cross the bridge, roll down the windows, and first breathe the ocean air, knowing you're entering a place where stress disappears and the focus turns to family, friends, and the beauty of nature.

With its small-town feel, golf cart restaurant commutes, and coastal views, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, is just that kind of place, and designer Melissa Ervin's lifelong friend was instantly smitten by the island's lure. After years of escaping from their traditional downtown Charleston home for too-short getaways, she and her husband knew just who to call when they decided to make their retreat locale their home base.

The couple's spacious dogtrot-inspired home gives them an open layout with an easy room-to-room flow, ideal for entertaining family and friends. Walls of windows flood the house with natural light and provide visitors ample views of the intercoastal waterway. Ervin brought in layers of natural materials to create interesting textures with minimal fuss. White cotton duck fabric simplifies upholstery and woven grass shades breezily dress windows. Wood furniture, accessories, and even lighting add further interest, with a variety of finishes including driftwood and dark mahogany. "Bringing textures that are found outdoors to the indoors creates a bohemian vibe that is very comfortable and relaxed . . . like a home on the coast should be," Ervin says.

From there, she took her color cues from the surrounding trees and marsh and incorporated fresh, crisp greens throughout with punchy pillows and slipcovers, pieces of modern art, and an assortment of colorful rugs that the homeowners fell in love with during their travels. Of one memorable trip to Istanbul, the homeowner recounts: "After they served us numerous glasses of raki, we departed with not one but four rugs!"

Add in a mix of inherited antiques, modern pieces, art and objects collected abroad, and the occasional "spur-of-the-moment" flea market treasure, and you have the eclectic home the couple was hoping for. "They are rooted in history and appreciate older things, but at the same time they liked taking a more transitional-to-modern approach to liven things up," Ervin says.

Now settled in for a never-ending staycation, Ervin's friend gushes over her cottage by the sea. "Everything about this home is light, cool, peaceful, and relaxing," she says. "We love all of it!" □






Opposite: On Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, it's all about the surrounding water. The home's tone-on-tone neutral exterior keeps attention on the main event.
This photo: Chunky stools and woven shades add a relaxed, coastal feel to the kitchen. Diamond- and hexagon-shape tiles bring subtle pattern to the all-neutral space.



Clockwise, from above left:
 The reading nook features a primitive painted cupboard and Saaren-style metal chairs, acquired with the Indian textile upholstery already in place. Inherited from the homeowner's aunt, the daybed is a cozy addition to the breakfast nook. A green lattice-pattern Roman shade adds a subtle wash of color to the master bath. The homeowners fell in love with the purple suzani print on display in one of the guest rooms.





This photo: The homeowners spend most days out on the large screen porch enjoying their backyard views. The set of vintage bamboo chairs, found at a Charleston consignment store, lends cool Palm Beach vibes.