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BETH ELSEY'S GEORGIAN-STYLE HOME is a vision of class, elegance and a bit of Southern flair—just like the homeowner herself. It would be hard to guess that this beautifully appointed residence was decorated solely by this one-time nurse, who spent more than 20 years working with needles and stethoscopes. But Elsey's childhood gives a glimpse into her underlying passion. "I was fortunate to grow up in a family that loved and appreciated art and architecture," she recalls. "I loved visiting my Grandma's art studio because there were always different works in progress—oil paintings in one corner and pottery waiting to be fired in another."

But it was warm summer days spent on the sandy beaches of Dog Island, a tiny landmass in the Gulf of Mexico, which truly planted a love of art in Elsey and her cousins. "We'd stay for four weeks at the beach house and take sketch pads, charcoals and watercolors. We worked on a different project each year; one year we'd do collages, the next needlework," she shares. "My grandmother encouraged us to do anything in the realm of art, and all of her grandchildren now have some type of artistic ability."

Elsey's artistic passion fell into interiors. She left a nursing career in 1997 to open an interiors shop in south Georgia with a friend, the store's luxe and varied inventory of home furnishings, china and crystal giving Elsey an outlet to share her tailored and graceful style. But her husband's eventual job transfer meant leaving the successful venture behind, and re-focusing her creative energy on a new home in Duluth.

She drew inspiration from her idyllic childhood summers. "I love the colors of the beach, especially all spectrums of blue, from the water to the sky," Elsey says. "I also love the whites of the shells, and the neutrals of sand and driftwood. All of those influences dictated the direction."

The home's icy blue walls, however, started as light yellow. "Over the past nine years, this home has truly been a work in

Homeowner Beth Elsey, with her Labrador Emma, relaxes in the formal living room. The stylish table setting in the dining room features glass hurricanes and crystal stemware by William Yeoward. "Greenleaf" china by Anna Weatherly, one of the many patterns Elsey has collected over the years, is set upon custom linens, their monograms matching those of each slipcover. A display niche featuring Chinese porcelain plates from Jane Marsden Antiques is further evidence of Elsey's passion for delicate tableware. *opposite* A custom hand-painted screen by Raymond Goins.

