



# starting over

Forget golf and shuffleboard: Reg and Susan Tygret “retired” to their favorite beach town and opened a home-furnishings store.

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## lowcountry

residents know how to relax. Missing are the hurried strides and frantic cell phone calls. People feel at ease chatting up neighbors and taking their time over meals featuring the area’s famed she-crab soup. Five years ago, that languid charm convinced Susan and Reg Tygret to make coastal South Carolina their permanent home.

Before moving here, the college sweethearts and their two children had relocated for job-related reasons 15 times in 31 years. The resort of Hilton Head, at least, was a familiar and beloved destination. “It’s an area we have grown up with,” says Reg. “It’s fun to live where we once vacationed.”

Walking the streets in nearby Bluffton, armed with magazine clippings and a passion for decorating, the couple scoured shops for accents to fill their new home. But options fell far short of their expectations. Susan says, “I knew if I was having problems finding home-furnishing items, so were other people.”

Three years later, the Tygrets opened the doors to a solution: Coastal Chic furniture boutique. Susan explains that many newcomers relocate to the Bluffton area hoping

Reg and Susan Tygret moved to their favorite waterfront spot for some R&R—in their case, “retirement and retail.” “I found this lot four years ago, and we had the building constructed to look like the historic buildings that remain today,” says Susan about Coastal Chic’s corner location in downtown Bluffton.

to dress their home's interiors in casual, seaside spirit. "We provide items that make decor as formal or as comfortable as you want," she says.

Once inside the store, just steps from the May River, customers can browse among distressed farm tables, funky plantation chairs, and unique maritime accents. "We often hear, 'I wish your store had been here when I moved in,'" says Susan. "Those comments make up for the long workdays."

Long hours help create a successful business, but they don't usually typify retirement. Still, Susan and Reg consider themselves retired. They say Coastal Chic is just what they need after 30-plus years in the corporate world. The couple spends weekdays running their store, and weekends on their 26-foot powerboat, *Lucky Enough*. "The bonus is that our grown children have also relocated

## boutique business

**TEST YOUR MARKET.** Before opening the store, Susan had a clear idea of what styles and products would sell. She says the building boom surrounding Bluffton fueled a demand for home furnishings.

**CREATE A CREDO.** "We provide items that produce a relaxed atmosphere without giving up style," Susan says. "I guess that is the real definition of Coastal Chic."

**RECOGNIZE YOUR CUSTOMER.** Reg says Coastal Chic is "gender neutral" and caters to a wide spectrum of tastes. "Husbands are very involved in selecting items to purchase," adds Susan. "I am always especially flattered when a man says, 'I love your shop.'"

**GET GOOD HELP.** Running a business can be overwhelming. Know when to ask for assistance. "I thought it would be something I could manage by myself," says Susan. "Now, my husband and son have come on board full-time, and we have several part-time employees."

**HIRE THE BEST.** Son Geoffrey helps run Coastal Chic, but not just because he's family. "He's good with people, which is important in this business," Reg says.

**FOLLOW YOUR GUT.** "I knew Coastal Chic would be successful, but it has exceeded my expectations," Reg says. "Life is good."

## the good life



Coastal Chic stocks elegant furnishings and shell accents. “Quality and style are always the first criteria,” says Susan.



here,” Susan says. Son Geoffrey, 28, manages Coastal Chic, and 31-year-old daughter Helen lives near the store with her husband and 6-year-old son.

The boutique also provides the Tygrets with an extended (and ever-growing) family of friends. “Whenever I think, ‘I’m so tired; maybe I should get out of this business,’ I immediately think, ‘I couldn’t do that,’” Susan says. “How else would I get to meet all the wonderful people who are going to move here year after year?”

At the end of the day, Susan holds the door as the last customer leaves, weighed down by multiple shopping bags. After saying good-bye, she concludes, “Our trial retirement has been a huge success.” 🌿

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*Coastal Chic, Bluffton, South Carolina; 843/815-6611 or [coastalchic.com](http://coastalchic.com)*