



INSPIRATION



## FRIENDS WITH KIDS

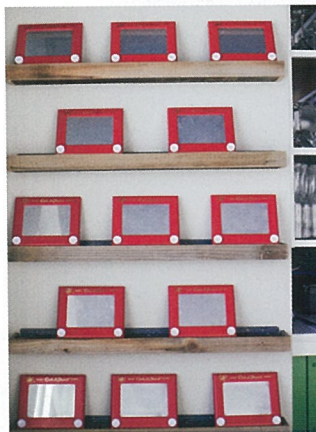
**Stapleton eatery Four Friends Kitchen caters to family fun with an indestructible, lighthearted aesthetic. Grab ideas for your own dining room.**

➔ ANY PARENT OF YOUNG children knows that going out to eat with kids is an exercise in risk-reward analysis. You're always hunting for the spot on the spectrum between two extremes: lousy food with uninspired but kid-proof decor on one end, and on the other, delicious fare you fail to enjoy because you're too busy making sure your preschooler doesn't go all Jackson Pollock on the silk curtains. (Not that we'd know anything about that.)

To the rescue: Stapleton's 1.5-year-old Four Friends Kitchen, which was designed with families in mind. The restaurant's high-impact, playful aesthetic serves as a fitting backdrop for Southern-inspired, locally sourced food.

For the 4,250-square-foot space, owners Kurt and Sarah Pletcher and Tim and Genefer Thornton—husband-and-wife couples, next-door neighbors, and parents of young children—wanted a playful vibe with a modern look that would cater to families and their unique needs.

So designer Jayna Kline of Rowland & Broughton created a space that's appealing to and appropriate for patrons of all ages. Stained concrete floors clean up easily, and wood-and-white tables (maple and painted medium-density fibreboard) are finished with epoxy for durability. The Globus dining chairs from Design Within Reach have curved backs, which are especially



appreciated by those who might have kids on their laps. And custom wallcoverings featuring old-fashioned photos, sourced from the expansive Everett Collection, add a whimsical touch.

But the space's crowning achievement is its rotating art wall. "We really wanted the thing that made waiting easier to be dynamic," Kline says, "and that's how we came up with the Etch A Sketch wall." Guests waiting for a table—or



their food—can turn the dials to pass the time and then place their finished creations back on ledges, custom-built by Denver-based Fin Art, to admire.

Not ready to brave a sit-down meal with a sleeping baby or tantrum-prone toddler? Head to the rear of the main-floor bar; garage doors open to a small area outside where families can belly up, eat, and get on home for nap-time (yours *and* theirs).

—SARAH PROTZMAN HOWLETT