

New Beginning

seaside home offers couple a fresh start





T“This is a house to accommodate everyone,” said ASID designer Barbara Ziebarth of MPLA, who recently redesigned interiors at this dramatic seaside home atop a cliff in Torrey Pines. “My clients wanted to start over with everything new.”

by Miriam Raftery

photos by Greg Seltzer



Neutral, oversized upholstered seating combined with elegant hardwood flooring and glass, overlook the La Jolla coastline.

The homeowners, a widow and widower, met on an island where both families had vacation homes. “She wanted to be near the ocean and still near enough for him to commute to his international business,” said Ziebarth, noting that the company’s main office is in Pasadena. “She loves the color red and they both are avid art collectors.”

The couple purchased a custom tri-level home built in the early ‘90s. In addition to replacing outdated features and pink cast stonework with clean, contemporary elements and all new lighting, the owners also wanted their new home to be comfortable for her young son.

Dewhurst and Associates provided architectural changes to the home’s exterior, adding a water feature as well as large new windows to dramatize ocean views. Inside, removing a fireplace created an expansive open floor plan.

Ziebarth appointed the adjoining media room with four scooped red leather chairs by Montis, a Dutch company. “These are ergonomically correct. They swivel and are very comfortable chairs,” she noted. “We also used a very large, five-foot red linen ottoman where anyone could put their feet up, or the kids could sit on it.” An open floor plan and large windows limit wall



space available for art. So the designer chose furnishings to reflect her clients' artistic passion. "The furniture almost acts as sculpture," she observes.

A Belgian rug adds to the room's international flair. "We pulled from everywhere," added the designer, noting that her well-traveled clients appreciate fine elements from around the world.

The designer grouped sconce lights together to create a repetitive light pattern on the media room wall. "It's a wonderful effect, almost like light sculpture and also very utilitarian," Ziebarth said.

A flat screen TV and Italian cabinet from Casa Milano with glass front allow access to the receiver via remote control, while motorized sunscreen shades in an aluminum cornice box provide sun protection.

MPLA created a custom wet bar from Bon Tempi with Caesar stone counters, glossy laminate and aluminum trim around all drawers and doors for a cool, contemporary look. The wet bar also features a built-in refrigerator and ice maker for convenient entertaining.



Sleek, contemporary furnishings arranged in separate groupings facilitate entertaining for small and not-so-small groups of guests.



In the dining room, a full mirrored wall topped by smaller square mirrors reflects images of a glass-topped table and grey linen chairs from B & B Italia. A center panel pops up to extend the table for additional dining space to accommodate guests. A brushed oak buffet from Max Alto in Italy provides both serving and storage space.

Contemporary glass art painted on the reverse side with bold brush strokes provides a dramatic focal point. "It's very intense," said Ziebarth. "The colors are saturated and it's really quite beautiful."

As a finishing touch, the designer added a

sculptural Italian glass and metal light fixture that can be raised or lowered. As an added bonus, the lighting mechanism is encased, obscuring views of the dining room's light mechanism when descending from a staircase above.

A door off the dining room leads to the home's kitchen, which was gutted and fully remodeled. MPLA associate Christopher Tifca designed a multi-colored, glass-tiled backsplash. "It really brings that reflection of the ocean into the kitchen. It's a very nice mix," Ziebarth said of the eye-catching tiled creation.



The kitchen's long, narrow shape posed a challenge for designers to meet the couple's needs. "He's an avid cook," said Ziebarth, noting that the homeowners needed a prep area and cooking area as well as comfortable seating for six with access to both a cooking area and adjacent patio. The solution? Create a secondary island connect-

ed to the main island, off-set and supported by stainless steel on opposite sides.

The main island and countertops feature blue pearl granite, reflecting ocean hues. The secondary island, which is at a different level, features Misty Carrera honed Caesar stone in a matte finish. "It's also very durable," said the designer.







Hydraulic barstools adjust to standard chair height, bar height, or anything in between. “The reason we did that is so her son, who is younger, could adjust the height,” said the designer.

Bontempi Cucine cabinetry in a white gloss lacquer also has a durable finish “equivalent to how they would apply paint to a car,” Ziebarth noted. A trio of clear pendant lights add understated lighting to the remodeled kitchen, along with recessed and in-cabinet lighting visible through glass insets in upper cabinet doors. A fold-down television enables the household chefs to view favorite programs while preparing family dinners. A professional 48-inch Thermador range and double-oven accommodate cooking needs, while stainless steel appliances from Standards of Excellence enhance the room’s contemporary appeal.

A deck off the kitchen and living room has been appointed in slate flooring with glass rails to maximize views. Twilight casts a periwinkle glow across the deck, where adjustable Paola Lenti chaise lounges are trimmed in marine-grade material used for mountaineering ropes.

Downstairs, a colorful family room provides a welcoming place for the entire household. A large, comfortable sectional by Minotti, an Italian company, is festooned with vivid pillows that complement a bold-hued carpeting. “We took the colors that she really loves and designed this rug around that,” said Ziebarth.

The room also features a display of vividly-colored glass bottles. “These are from a group of very young glass blowers in Italy called Arcada,” said the designer, who travels to Italy each spring to visit an international furniture fair in Milan, where new lines and looks are featured.

The family room doubles as an office for the lady of the house, complete with built-in natural wood desk and storage area beneath a flat-screen TV. “It’s a child comfortable room to play games, hang out and watch TV, or bring the toys in there,” said Ziebarth, who also designed a colorful child’s bedroom and guest room on the same level of the home.

A separate retreat for Mom features a red sofa that doubles as sleeper, as well as cream-colored bucket chairs that swivel for savoring ocean views. Lighting adds dimension via a projected







circle within a square, casting repeating light patterns on the ceiling that mimic a similar design in cushions. Additional light patterns provide visual interest in a nearby hall.

The master suite occupies the home's entire upper level, which has glorious coastal vistas viewed through a wall of windows. "It's really a wonderful room," said Ziebarth, who added motorized blackout shades that roll up into an aluminum cornice during daylight hours.

A custom bed has the appearance of a platform without the bulk of double mattress and boxspring, framed in dark-stained wood. Wall

sconces beside the bed provide soft, glowing illumination, while Max Alto Italian chairs with ottoman provide a comfortable fireside reading area. Rose-hued stone in the fireplace and master bath remain as original elements from the home, adding touches of warmth to the remodeled residence's clean, contemporary design.

The remodel, which took approximately a year to finish, has been well worth the investment for the happy couple, who are enjoying purchasing accessories to complete their new home. "They love it," the designer concluded. "Now they're ready to start their new life here." □



RESOURCES

DESIGNERS: Barbara Ziebarth, ASID and Christopher Tifca, associate, MPLA Associates, La Jolla

CONTRACTOR AND ARCHITECT: Dewhurst and Associates, La Jolla

CABINETRY: Bontempi Cucine, through MPLA Associates

GRANITE AND CAESAR STONE: Fabrication American Marble, Vista

APPLIANCES: Standards of Excellence

LIVING ROOM SOFA AND CHAIRS: Kreiss Collection

ALL OTHER FURNITURE AND LIGHTING: Available through MPLA Associates