



A SEA CHANGE

AN ARIZONA COUPLE FULFILLS A DREAM WITH A BEACH COTTAGE IN LA JOLLA

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

WHILE VACATIONING IN LA JOLLA about 12 years ago, Dave pointed to a house a block and a half from the beach and told Minu, “Someday, maybe we’ll have enough money to buy a place like that.”

Five years ago, the Arizonans were looking for a second home when they again went to Windansea Beach and happened upon the house they’d seen years ago. It was for sale and Dave figured, “This just must be good karma.”

“I have always wanted a beach cottage house,” Minu says. They bought the property in 2008, but discovered that the wiring and plumbing were going bad in the 60-year-old house. So in 2009, they began “the architectural process” that was completed in spring of 2012.

“I wanted to do a big two-story with roof decks,” Dave says. Claude-Anthony Marengo of Marengo Morton Architects drew up plans.

“My wife said, ‘We don’t need that much space.’ We went to an elaborate one-story. My wife kept pulling me back and we went to the cottage style. We wanted to fit in with the neighbors and neighborhood and wanted to insert

Walls painted in subtle stripes complement the white tongue-and-groove ceilings and shutters that say “beach cottage.” The homeowners also own a residence in Arizona. “This is a casual place for us to come and relax,” Minu says. “We wanted it to be an easy lifestyle and easy living. The zebra-striped chair doesn’t scream ‘beach,’ but it’s fun.”



our own style on the house. The whole façade of the house was really Claude-Anthony's vision."

The couple calls their Arizona home "contemporary eclectic" with darker tones and decided to create a light and airy ambiance here. They worked with Joseph Diasparra of Hill Construction Co., directing aspects of the architectural elements and selecting materials from tile and stone to paint colors (even custom mixing and then having it matched in gallons).

In the living room, they went with very wide, vertical stripes in subtly different neutral shades that offset the white wood in

the moldings, ceiling, shelving and windows. They also wanted wider grooves in the ceiling than standard tongue and groove, so turned to a custom mill shop.

They kept a few elements they liked about the old house, like louvered doors (though with wider louvers) and a Dutch door that they often use to draw in fresh ocean air.

"Claude-Anthony suggested cast glass [for the Dutch door]," Dave says. "I did a design of leaves and handed it off to the glass manufacturer." The same pattern was used for pantry doors in the kitchen and on the garage doors.



Top: The wall between the living room and kitchen stops short of the ceiling, which creates a longer sight line. Rotterdam Industrial Dock Pendant light fixtures from Restoration Hardware hang over the quartzite island.

Above and facing page: Cast-glass in a leaf pattern designed by homeowner Dave is used for the kitchen pantry, garage doors and front Dutch door. All arches in the house share the same radius.



A side door also features a distinctive treatment: four fully functioning portholes.

“The porthole door was Claude-Anthony’s idea,” Dave says. “He always wanted to do one.”

“The porthole door is probably my favorite thing about the house,” Claude-Anthony says, adding that he has suggested one in previous projects, but it never came to fruition. “[Dave and Minu] felt the same passion I did, and they kept it in.”

It was Dave himself who came up with the idea of the long desk mounted on the wall at one end of the kitchen. It’s made from Brazilian parota wood and accented with a round mirror.

“It went from an iteration of a bar sink,” he says, “but with a kitchen this size, do we really

Above: Genuine portholes set into a side door carry out the ocean ambiance. Fully functioning, they allow fresh air to circulate through the house, especially when the top half of the Dutch front door is opened.

Left: A built-in desk on one end of the kitchen is made from Brazilian parota wood that reminded Dave of a surfboard.

Right: A bathroom tile mosaic was custom made from a photograph of nearby Windansea Beach by acclaimed surf photographer Aaron Chang, taken especially for the homeowners.

Below: The master bedroom features a custom bed and cabinets in walnut with a gray-wash stain, a customized quilt and walls painted in a muted blue/green/gray hand mixed by the homeowners and then matched by Dunn-Edwards.



need another bar area? We started looking at flitches. I had this idea to indicate a sunset and beach. The white [streak in the wood] makes it look like an old Woody surfboard.”

Minu chose blue/green/gray, round-glass mosaic tiles for the wall behind the Wolf stove and cabinets. Neither Dave nor Joseph liked the tile when they saw it lying flat. But after it was installed and grouted, they applauded Minu’s selection.

“Now we can’t imagine anything else,” Dave says. “It looks like the bubbles in the ocean.”

Minu also chose the flooring that runs throughout the house: faux-wood tiles that look like driftwood. The custom-made bed and flanking cabinetry in the master bedroom are made of walnut and stained with a gray wash that complements the floor.

Wall tile in the master bath is handcrafted Quemere tile. The guest bath uses Calacatta Gold marble tile with a mother-of-pearl border. A bathroom near the kitchen and porthole door

Above right: Round glass mosaic tiles on the kitchen backsplash call to mind the bubbles in the ocean surf.

Below right: Handcrafted Quemere tiles and quartz stone flooring give the master bath a pearlescent glow.



“We wanted to fit in with the neighborhood and insert our own style on the house.”

features a mosaic that covers an entire wall. The mosaic was created from an image by acclaimed surf photographer Aaron Chang, from whom Dave and Minu purchased a large photograph that hangs in the living room.

“He shot Windansea Beach for us, and we had it turned into tile,” Dave says.

Although the house is only 2,400 square feet, it seems larger

because of its sight lines. For example, the wall between the living room and kitchen does not touch the ceiling, allowing the eye to see beyond the edge of the room to the ceiling of the room on the other side.

“The only thing I would have done differently is listen to Minu from the beginning,” Dave says, referring to her urging to scale down the size of the home. “It fits our needs perfectly.” ❖

Below and right: Stonework in pillars, the chimney and the backyard fireplace was created by a stone mason after Dave said he wanted a beach feel in the design. As for the outdoor fireplace, he says, “We wanted a central focus with the sight line from the kitchen.”

