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A Fresh Approach

For a Southern California couple seeking more living space, an architect reimagines a harborside home—and his original design.

BY CARRIE NIEMAN CULPEPPER > PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER DAVIES

SHEER DRAMA in the form of a hefty arched limestone entryway greets visitors to this Newport Beach, Calif., home. Guests of the owners pass beneath the outermost arch, through doors with Moorish carvings, and across a 900-square-foot courtyard to a second set of doors. These elements hint at the scale and craftsmanship awaiting inside the 16,300-square-foot waterfront estate, whose warmth creates a sense that the hacienda-style structure has been here for years. Yet it was not long ago that a different house—similar aesthetically but smaller—sat in its place.

The owners initially hired the architect Brion Jeannette and the designer Rachel Horn to remodel a Mediterranean-style ranch house that occupied the site at the time; it was a property the Newport Beach–based Jeannette had designed for different clients 42 years earlier, and it was inspired by the work of architect Cliff May. The current owners lived in that house for more than 10 years and loved it, but they wanted more space for entertaining their large family so they purchased an adjacent lot. Ultimately, however, they dispensed with plans for an addition because it was discovered that the property's circa-1925 seawall needed to be rebuilt—a project so large that the owners decided to build a new house altogether. The finished home, like the entry arches and other distinct elements, is Jeannette's reimagining of his original, with spot-on interiors by Horn.



Old-Meets-New World

"It's really a super-contemporary, light-filled home with touches of old-world elegance," says Horn, who operates her eponymous design business in Austin, Texas, and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, the latter location being where she commissions craftsmen to build her furniture line and where she also has a retail space. The challenge with the Newport Beach property, she says, was "to make this big, contemporary house feel warm and inviting. The way I did that," Horn adds, "was with old finishes and antique elements set in a contemporary way."

The owners requested the beams in the dining area (lower right), based on those from the original house. It was Horn's idea to bring the timbers into the living spaces (above and upper right) for continuity along sight lines. The thick beam above the buffet in the dining room

came from the original structure and bears the Spanish phrase "*Danos el pan de cada día*," or "Give us our daily bread." The 16-foot-long custom table seats 20.

Elegant Venetian plaster walls replace what had been rough plaster in the previous house, and French limestone flooring from Newport Beach's Neolithic Design takes the place of Saltillo terra-cotta tiles. "What [the owners] wanted to live with was more open, clean, and a little more sophisticated," says the designer. "It's a much more refined home."

Jeannette re-created the old double-sided fireplace to serve as a stately divider between the dining and living spaces. The Hand Chair is by the Mexican artist Pedro Friedeberg, and the chandeliers in the dining room and clerestory are Horn's designs.





Sights to Sea

Preserving the roughly half-acre property's expansive water views was paramount to Jeannette's architectural plan. The arched, steel windows in the living room (above) have a Mediterranean look and can withstand the gusty winds off Newport Bay. A wall of tumbled and sanded Palomino limestone lends rusticity, a quality that is further punctuated by antique French bricks in a chevron pattern inside the fireplace.

"A lot of view homes are boring because the view is all you look at," says Horn. "I think this house is

very balanced between the view, the interiors, and the details. Everywhere you look there's something substantial and beautiful."

Most of the home's furnishings, aside from a few antiques and some of the family's existing pieces, are Horn's creations. The home's large scale required it: "A regular sofa looked Barbie-sized," she says. Her made-to-measure pieces include the living room's pair of 12-foot-long sofas. The Mongolian-sheepskin stools are from the designer's namesake home line, while the



circa-1850 Persian Kashan-Mohtasham rug hails from the Nazmiyal Collection in New York.

Old-world and modern blend seamlessly at the hardwood card table (lower right), which Horn designed in a contemporary shape and paired with her take on an antique European chair. For the loggia's ceiling (upper right), Jeannette chose cedar grape stakes for their color and weathered look, but also because of their durability and bug resistance. The sofa is by Janus et Cie, the side tables by John Dickinson for Sutherland Furniture.



Rock Solid

Entertaining their large family is a passion of the homeowners, and they cook dinners for 20 or throw parties for 60 with equal ease. “He is an amazing cook,” says Horn of the husband. “They use this whole house, which is something I don’t see that often.”

Though the couple did not want marble countertops that might stain, they liked the look, so Horn sourced a marble-like granite from Granite & Marble Works in New York for the commercial-grade kitchen’s island, counters, and backsplash. A Capital stove and a wall-mounted Salamander broiler fit beneath a custom stainless-steel hood by Coast Sheet Metal. The Bulthup aluminum cabinetry hides a Sub-Zero refrigerator, and the copper pendant lights are by the Danish company Louis Poulsen. The swinging door (shown at far left), like all of the home’s interior doors, is a custom creation based on a Mexican colonial design. The door’s distressed surface and dark brown stain infuse a Spanish touch into the modern space.



Entertaining the Masses

The theater (above) seats 12, but because game-time gatherings at the home usually exceed that number, the husband suggested installing the black granite bar, to give standing guests a place to set down their drinks. The game room (below) is also well equipped: The homeowners had the snooker table custom made, and the two matching chests are from Horn's home collection.

Automating the recreational and other spaces was not an afterthought: The husband is a tech entrepreneur,

so technologies were planned for early in the design process. The house has LED lighting throughout and runs on an Apple-based Savant automation system that the husband can control from his iPhone. When the owners are away, they can check the security cameras or verify that the doors are locked; they can turn on music and control the temperature. "You can be extremely energy efficient when you control them properly," says Jeannette, "and the systems are so easy to use."





Bright Ideas

The architect had incorporated large skylights—signature Cliff May design elements—into the original house, and the owners wanted Jeannette to specify them for the new space as well. As part of the passive solar strategy for the project, he faced the skylights north and designed large sections to open for ventilation. The light entering during the day illuminates most of the home, but the use of high-performance, low-emissivity coated glass means that very little energy is emitted—no heat gain, no need for shades. “Even though the house is big, it doesn’t consume a lot of energy,” says Jeannette. “I think that’s the key with these large estates, that they’re easy to run.” For an upstairs bedroom (left), Horn custom-designed an iron four-poster bed. Jewel-tone pops of color against the space’s neutral palette give the eye places to rest.



Room to Relax

Highlights in the expansive master bathroom (above) include a clerestory window, a hand-carved marble tub, and a wall of large limestone blocks, each of which measures about 2 feet by 3 feet. Central to the space's air of relaxation is the 6-by-10-foot ottoman. "The room was so stunning without anything—just the tub, stone, and glass shower—that I put only what I absolutely had to put in there," says Horn.

Custom aluminum sliding-glass doors by Design Synthesis, of San Diego, open up to a view of the water in this guest retreat (below), which is one of five bedrooms in the home. Horn placed two large Jacobean-style armchairs from her collection at the foot of the bed. "I always think it's nice to be able to sit in a real chair if a guest is in there with someone, so they don't have to sit [on] the bed," she says.





Bay Watch

While the facade of the home is clever and does not reveal the residence's true size, the back of the house (above), with its 150-foot width and infinity-pool-hugging U-shape, is in full view from the water. The shape affords privacy from neighbors for the owners and their family.

"The client gave us a lot of freedom to contemporize the hacienda style," says Jeannette. Though he and the owners initially debated whether or not to create an arcade along the back porch to complement the entry

arch—an element that might be found on a mission-style home—Jeannette ultimately proceeded with his vision of square columns and a flat porch roof, so that no part of the view would be sacrificed. The design is in keeping with a hacienda-style ranch one might find in the Spanish countryside, and the bay is on full display. Jeannette says, "It really is one of those multimillion-dollar views that you don't want to obstruct." **M&S**

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