

# Corollas the Soul

The artistic reimagining of  
a Corona Del Mar home.

By Bailey Badillo  
Photography by Lance Gerber

Personalization has been at the forefront of home designs for a while now and, for good reason, it's not going anywhere anytime soon. According to renowned Southern California interior designer Sandra Vila, the rise of adding personal elements to design that represented the homeowner started with COVID-19. As people stayed home, they realized their residences needed to be sanctuaries. And another stunning Corona Del Mar sanctuary home was born where ocean breezes carry whispers of timeless elegance.





## HISTORY PRESERVED IN MODERNITY

Under the creative vision of Vila and architect Daniel Martinez, this home bridges its historical roots with contemporary coastal luxury. With an inspired interplay of natural materials, sunlit spaces and modern functionality, it is a masterpiece that celebrates its location while honoring its past.

The original home, a traditional California Craftsman, bore all the marks of early 20th-century design: exposed wood beams, fieldstone accents and a focus on handcrafted details. It underwent a renovation that refreshed its look while still staying true to the original character and bones of the home, something that was very important for Vila.

“Our approach was to respect these elements while elevating them,” she explains. “We reimagined it in a modern way while infusing coastal elements that pay homage to the beachfront location.”

The team embraced the craftsman’s ICONIC linear detailing, subtly echoing it throughout the home in slatted wood wall treatments, reeded paneling and natural finishes that flow harmoniously from room to room.

For Martinez, this fusion of old and new was essential. “Renovations must answer to the preexisting design style,” he says. “This historical genre required new design elements to nod to ICONIC 20th-century California design while embracing the modern beach lifestyle our clients envisioned.”



## THE LANGUAGE OF LIGHT AND TEXTURE

Visualize the ocean for a moment. Hear its rhythmic tranquility and picture the way light reflects off the surface with each wave.

Such is the dialogue between light and material in every space of this home. Bleached white oak beams crown the vaulted ceilings, creating a serene interplay of shadow and warmth. Wide-plank white oak flooring stretches across the main living areas, grounding the home in organic simplicity. Textures abound—handcrafted dimensional tiles, marble terrazzo, and sun-drenched textiles create layers of visual interest that echo the home’s coastal surroundings.

“Inspiration often comes intuitively,” Vila reflects. “I leaned into the ocean, drawing on experiences from art, nature and travel to create something that feels both grounded and airy.”

## ELEGANT YET FUNCTIONAL

This home’s aesthetic exudes luxury without sacrificing practicality. “It was important that the home worked for everyday living,” Vila emphasizes.

The entryway features quartzite flagstone, which transitions effortlessly from the outdoors. A curved built-in bench offers a practical spot to remove sandy shoes, while concealed storage hides surfboards and beach gear. Performance textiles and commercial-grade wall coverings ensure durability with style.

One of the greatest testaments to blending durability with style is the elevator. Once a dark and utilitarian space, this area has been transformed into a playful highlight with a whimsical beach-inspired wallpaper by Gray Malin. “It’s become one of our favorite talking points,” Vila shares.

## ANCHORED BY VIEWS

For Martinez, the crowning achievement of this renovation isn’t a single feature but how the design celebrates its extraordinary surroundings. “My favorite part of this home is how the design elements work together to honor the view,” he explains.

Expansive windows frame the Pacific Ocean like a living painting, while



handblown glass lighting fixtures subtly complement the natural light and scenery. “We wanted the ocean to be the focal point,” Vila says. “Everything was designed to enhance, not distract.”

## MOMENTS OF ARTISTRY

It’s evident that every corner of this home tells a story, but some spaces shine with particular brilliance. Vila’s favorite transformation? The powder room. A jewel box design featuring modern marble terrazzo flooring by Ann Sacks is complemented with a floating Calacatta Matarazzo marble vanity and sculptural pendants by Alora. “The powder room really stands out to me with not a wall to be spared of materiality,” she shares.

Another favorite would be the primary bedroom. Inspired by nature’s subtle movements, Vila added a textured accent wall tile by Richards & Sterling, which added quiet drama. “It’s understated yet deeply impactful,” says Vila.

## THE SOUL CAPTURED

Through careful collaboration, thoughtful material selection, and a shared respect for the home’s history, Vila and Martinez have created a timeless and contemporary residence. “The goal is to capture the soul of the owner. No two homes should be alike,” Vila believes. “Our environments should resonate with who we are and reflect our highest selves.”

In Corona Del Mar, this transformed home now stands as a testament to that philosophy—a place where history and modernity converge and the whispers of the ocean find their way into this private sanctuary. 📍

**INTERIOR DESIGNER** Sandra Vila.  
**ARCHITECT** Daniel Martinez, AIA. **GENERAL CONTRACTOR** Kane Kassady, Olive Tree Construction. **WINDOWS** Copper Clad Jeld-Wen. **FLOORING** Legno Bastone wide plank white oak (supplied by Unique Hardwood). **SLATTED WOOD FEATURE WALLS** DuChateau. **ORIGINAL ARTWORK** Represented by Scape Gallery.

