

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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ABOUT FACE

INSPIRED BY VIEWS OF THE PACIFIC, A COUPLE REIMAGINES THEIR PERSONAL STYLE TO CREATE A COASTAL HAVEN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

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ARCHITECTURE /
CLAUDE-ANTHONY MARENGO,
MARENGO MORTON ARCHITECTS INC
INTERIOR DESIGN / SANDRA VILA,
SANDRA VILA DESIGN HOUSE
HOME BUILDER / RYAN JANTZ,
JANTZ CONSTRUCTION

There is nothing like moving across the country to inspire a stylistic sea change, something a couple, newly transplanted from landlocked Atlanta to Southern California and its pristine Pacific blues, knows well. Wanting to create a home that was a departure from the Mediterranean-style structure they left behind, they discovered a bluff-top spot high above the ocean. "They were looking to go in a completely opposite direction," says their interior designer Sandra Vila, "with something much more modern that embraced their beautiful new surroundings."

Despite the stunning locale, the property's rambling Spanish-style abode, with its varying ceiling heights and floor levels, proved less than ideal for the couple's new vision. Also of no help: a few problematic architectural elements that impeded easy access to the outdoors. So they recruited residential designer Claude-Anthony Marengo to transform the abode into a contemporary escape by the sea. "They wanted to experience the beach throughout the home," says Marengo. "We tried to lose the lines and limitations of the previous structure to create open-style, great-room living, so they weren't compartmentalized into one place." This great room formed the core of the open-layout design, with sliding door systems that expanded the living area onto a terrace. He also notes that positioning all the bedrooms to face the ocean meant "nothing was hidden in the background."

Marengo's plan incorporates elegant moments of surprise as well, such as a dramatic exterior wall banded in wood-grain porcelain and limestone that flows seamlessly inside

the home. The feature "blurs the lines between inside and outside," he says. It also sets the tone for the statement-making front entrance, complete with a reflecting pool and a two-story, jewel-box tower that contains a floating staircase and a vivid painting by artist Joëlle Blouin. "The idea was that when you left the great room, which is all ocean view, and you move to the staircase, your view transitions to another body of water," says the residential designer.

Inside, Vila continued the homeowners' wish for a modern approach to beach living. "We wanted to bring in the outdoors, not just the soft tones of the coast, but the neutral hues of the rocks," says the interior designer. "And we used a lot of raw materials and metals to create a very understated feel." These subtle tones play throughout the main floor, with mocha creme limestone flooring, marble and weathered oak in the kitchen and slabs of soft gray stone for the minimalist, floor-to-ceiling fireplace. While the fire feature seems deceptively simple now, general contractor Ryan Jantz notes that creating it was a challenge. "It required a lot of care because the material is fragile," he says, adding that the floating hearth required welded steel behind it to give it structure.

When selecting the furnishings, Vila again welcomed the beach inside, incorporating warm wood accents inspired by natural driftwood—from the live-edge monkey pod table in the dining area to the one-of-a-kind chamcha wood coffee table in the living room. "We brought in textures that felt like things had rolled in from the ocean or fell off of the cliff," says Vila of her concept. These standout pieces were contrasted "with clean-lined, functional items, subtle enough to not overshadow what was going on with the view." For private areas, however, the scheme became bolder "to give each room its own personality, one you can feel the minute you walked through the door," she explains. "In these spaces, my clients wanted to take materials they liked to the next level. Why stop when you could do the whole thing?"

Striking wallcoverings help define the bedrooms, from leather tiles in the master to circular wood veneers in a guest room. The bathrooms are a study in contrast, beginning with the heavenly master bath where the floor, walls and integrated sinks are completely covered in Calacatta marble. Meanwhile, a guest bathroom embraces the dark side with limestone, portico slate and teak flooring, the latter inspired by the deck of a ship.

All of those carefully considered elements add up to a compelling whole, the ideal backdrop for the couple to enjoy their change of scenery. "Every little detail counted. There was no stone left unturned," says Vila. "And it's just a pure joy working with people willing to take a chance." ■

For a new home with sweeping views of the Southern California coastline, interior designer Sandra Vila encouraged "a very outdoors-in approach to living" by incorporating natural materials and earthy neutrals. This palette defines the living room and key pieces, including a Phillips Collection coffee table and A. Rudin chairs, which swivel to face the sunset.



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"Kitchens can sometimes feel devoured," notes residential designer Claude-Anthony Marengo. "So we enlarged the island to delineate the area and create more entertaining space."

A. Rudin counter chairs face the island topped with polished Calacatta Lincoln marble from Unique Stone Imports. The Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf range are from Renwes Sales; the Waterstone faucet is from Laguna's Fancy Faucets; the cabinetry is by SieMatic.





Above: "We wanted to let the marble speak for itself, tell its own story," Vila says of the stone chosen for the master bath. She incorporated sleek fixtures and streamlined silhouettes like the Porcelanosa freestanding tub, with Graff fittings, allowing the stonework to take center stage.

Left: In the master bedroom, Vila opted for soft hues and created depth and complexity through texture. This includes a statement wall of Garrett Leather tiles, an upholstered Poliform bed, lush Signoria linens and a Bernhardt bench.



Vila took a modern, minimalist yet comfortable approach to the outdoor furnishings. She appointed a spot overlooking the water with a pair of Home Infatuation chaises. On the terrace she placed a Phillips Collection cocktail table between chairs by Slide.

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