

INTERIOR DESIGN / LISA MCDENNON, LISA MCDENNON DESIGN  
ARCHITECTURE / HOMER OATMAN, OATMAN ARCHITECTS, INC.  
HOME BUILDER / TIM GRADY, T.M. GRADY BUILDERS, INC.  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / RICHARD KING, EXTERIORS INC.



# OLD WORLD MEETS NEW

TRADITIONAL SPANISH-STYLE  
ARCHITECTURE BELIES THE  
COSMOPOLITAN INTERIORS OF  
A NEW HOME IN LAGUNA BEACH.

WRITTEN BY MAILE PINGEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAREN ALPERT



A couple looking to move back to Laguna Beach after 10 years in Shady Canyon had a specific and extensive shopping list for their new property. It had to have a view, a backyard, plenty of privacy and be situated north of Main Beach. As the husband tells it, "We were willing to compromise on one. It was a small miracle that we got all four." Their two-year search finally led them to a hillside perch near Crystal Cove State Park with views south to Dana Point and gave them plenty of time to brainstorm ideas for how they wanted their residence to take shape both inside and outside. "We love the classic Santa Barbara style and wanted a home that fit into the amazing hillside," the wife says. "However, in the interiors, we wanted a contemporary yet comfortable feel that would showcase the views and our art collection." Their designer, Lisa McDennon, immediately knew how to execute their vision. "I think the clients and I were on the same page from the start," McDennon says. "The design concepts all just seemed to flow quickly."

And so it was for the architectural design. "During the interview, I did a quick back-of-the-envelope pencil sketch," says architect Homer Oatman. "They had a specific vision, and the final design isn't that different from that initial concept. It's one of my favorite residential styles, particularly for a home in Southern California." Plus, working with frequent collaborator and builder Tim Grady got things off on the right foot. Grady notes construction in the area isn't always easy with entitlement restrictions and review boards, but working with Oatman makes for smooth sailing. "Homer and his staff are very talented, provide very comprehensive planning and keep a close eye on their projects until they are fully completed," he says.

Inside, McDennon brought a Spanish-style accent consistent with Oatman's exterior vision while honoring the clients' request that the home have a cosmopolitan vibe. "In each space, it was important for me to always reflect back and include something in the space that aligned with the architectural style of the home," the designer says. In the entry, for example, a wrought-iron railing plays off a large

"It was a careful balance of a Spanish exterior with interiors that blended the husband's interest in contemporary style and the wife's interest in all the details," designer Lisa McDennon says of the Laguna Beach home she recently completed with architect Homer Oatman and builder Tim Grady. Landscape designer Richard King incorporated roses and succulents into the grounds.



The homeowners' art collection took center stage in the design process. McDennon placed a Hans Mendler painting in the living room. Below it are two stools of McDennon's design, made by The Flemming Group, upholstered with Romo fabric, and silver-leafed by artist Eloise Lowry of A Brush With Life.

A carved front door marks the transition from the traditional exterior to the loft-like interiors. The homeowners commissioned a Nicole Landau work for the entryway. McDennon designed the stair rail, fabricated by Saddleback Valley Ornamental Iron and the iron chandelier made by Del Mar Lighting Company with blown-glass globes by Bruce Freund. Lamps from Made Goods with shades in a Romo fabric top a Bernhardt console; the rugs are from Stark.





photographic work by Nicole Landau. “We could have easily designed a glass handrail; instead, we chose to create an iron railing with a modern Spanish interpretation,” says McDennon, adding that the complementary artwork sets the tone for the space. It joins works by Ed Moses and Curtis Ripley as well as pieces selected by L.A. art consultant Wendy Posner.

That juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary elements flows into the living room, a space the designer calls “the showstopper.” Comfortable seating options, including a two-seat sofa, a chaise and two klismos side chairs, are arranged for hosting small groups of family and friends. Minimalist shelves, set flush with the wall, flank a limestone fireplace, while a Mission-style buffet does double duty as a bar. “It’s our favorite room,” says the husband. “We enjoy a cocktail and take in the coastline.”

In the dining area, McDennon created a space that works as well for daily meals as it does for dinner parties. The wife, who enjoys cooking, knew she wanted something beautiful yet low-maintenance. “Great care was poured into that space,” the designer says, adding that the table has leaves, while the kitchen island doubles as a serving area. She kept the chandelier “light and airy” so as not to



**Opposite:** In the living room, a Mission-style buffet from Ebanista serves as a cocktail cabinet. Above it hangs *One Plus One* by artist Peter Lodato. The dark wood flooring throughout the home is from The Vintage Wood Floor Company.

**Below:** “I wanted to bring in texture and visually tie the family room to the loggia,” says McDennon of the stone wall by Pride Masonry. The custom sofa is covered with a Maxwell fabric, and the ottoman, also custom, is upholstered in Fabricut denim. To refresh an existing wing chair, the designer chose a velvet by The Design Company.



Lee Industries chairs upholstered in Jane Churchill velvet pull up to a table by Swaim, topped with flowers from Laguna Florist to form the dining area, which is crowned by a chandelier from Visual Comfort & Co. Panels in a Cowtan & Tout fabric flank the window. In the kitchen, McDennon selected surfaces from Venetian Tile & Stone Gallery, appliances from Pirch, Rohl sinks and faucets by Dornbracht. Custom counter stools by The Flemming Group are upholstered with Kravet faux leather. The custom pendant is by Del Mar Lighting Company.

“THE CONCEPT FOR THE DINING ROOM WAS TO CREATE A SIMPLE YET ELEGANT SPACE.”

—LISA MCDENNON



obstruct the ocean view or the visibility into the aesthetically pleasing kitchen, where custom elements include open shelves that flank the range hood and a built-in chrome hutch. But the designer also gave special attention to the sinks. "I separated the functions so dishwashing could be done by the window and near storage, while food prep could be done at the second sink adjacent to the refrigerator and cooktop," she says.

For the master bedroom, McDennon opted for a palette of whites, silvers and mineral blues, countered by darker finishes. "I tend to lean toward a neutral palette," the designer says. Sometimes color proves irresistible, though, as in the wife's boldly blue office and a powder room with hand-painted terra-cotta tile. In the master bathroom, she separated the wet room from the vanities with a glass partition, creating a subtle division, and softened the space with a mosaic floor and bespoke wallpaper in the water closet.

Downstairs, the family room opens to the loggia, where the couple likes to relax. Landscape designer Richard King had previously worked on the couple's Shady Canyon home and interpreted their ideas as naturally as Oatman had sketched the façade. He wove in olive and lemon trees, succulents, herbs and roses. Perimeter plantings blend the home into its hillside setting while providing protection against fires.

Though the clients had a clear vision from the start, they're still perpetually dazzled, delighted and surprised by the place they now call home. "Every day we appreciate it in some new way," the husband says. Recently McDennon had a chance to enjoy the space from a fresh perspective when she stopped by the house. "As designers, we're always focused on the creation," she says, "but with that visit, I got to appreciate the residence as a beautiful whole." ■

For the master bedroom, McDennon upholstered a Swaim bed with C&C Milano fabric; she also added a duvet and king shams in Romo fabrics, Euro shams in a Christian Fischbacher textile and a lumbar pillow in a Beacon Hill material, all sewn by The Quilting House. Custom MillCreek Furniture nightstands bookend the bed, over which hangs a chandelier from Fine Art Lamps. Nearby is a work by Henrik Aarrestad Uldalen.



"They let me be daring and develop my ideas," says McDennon, who clad the master bathroom in Calacatta Borghini marble from Venetian Tile & Stone Gallery. She paired a Victoria + Albert tub with a Kallista filler and designed the octagonal pendants made by Del Mar Lighting Company. The mosaic tile is from Waterworks.



On the loggia are lounge chairs from Century Furniture and a Seasonal Living table with a custom Perennials cushion. Euro Laguna Marble carved the fireplace to McDennon's design, and the mirror is from Ebanista. The lantern was a happy find by the homeowners on a trip to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. The home's windows and French doors are from Riviera Bronze.

“THE LOGGIA IS AN INTIMATE SPACE TO NESTLE UP TO THE FIREPLACE AND ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL COASTAL VIEWS, DAY OR NIGHT.”

—LISA MCDENNON