



ARCHITECTURE / GEOFF SUMICH, GEOFF SUMICH DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / LISA MCDENNON, LISA MCDENNON DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / MARK STODDER, STODDER CONSTRUCTION INC
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / M. CAROLE MCELWEE,
MARGARET CAROLE MCELWEE LANDSCAPE DESIGN



EASTWARD BOUND

A COUPLE REIMAGINES THE ROMANCE OF BALI FOR
THEIR CONTEMPORARY HOME IN LAGUNA BEACH.

WRITTEN BY MONIQUE MCINTOSH / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARYN MILLET

There's something magical about Bali—the natural majesty of mountains meeting ocean, of a rich past that lives on in temples constructed long ago. The Indonesian island served as Steven and Maura Short's honeymoon destination nearly two decades ago, and the couple has returned there since. So, after deciding to build a new home in Laguna Beach, it naturally followed that they would dream of infusing a Balinese spirit into their coastal dwelling. Though they favored a contemporary architectural approach, "we wanted our home to be organic and livable, a place where it would be okay to have sand on your feet," Maura reports. To translate this natural Indonesian warmth into a modern space, they turned to residential designer Geoff Sumich and interior designer Lisa McDennon.

For Sumich, the process began by imagining ways to weave the dreamy coastal daylight throughout the home while still maintaining privacy. To capture the brilliant oceanic luminance from the property's elevated position, "we rotated the house on a diagonal," explains the residential designer. "This created a front-on view of the ocean, but also the space for a beautiful raised deck." Sumich collaborated with general contractor Mark Stodder to engineer the 50-foot sliding doors connecting this outdoor space to the home, as well as the massive, cantilevered shade structure (a copper-clad steel frame), which was designed "more like the wing of an airplane," says Stodder. "A significant amount of the tension is in the upper skin, and a significant amount of compression is in the lower skin."

Inside, more sunshine filters through glass that punctuates walls of warm Texas limestone, chosen to "approximate the look and feel of Indonesian coral stone," notes Sumich. Since he designed the foundation on a system of nine steel posts, "walls were released from having to hold

up the house, so I was able to bring the light above and below the stone," he says. The residential designer also placed more glass panes under the sloped roofline "to let in this beautiful, soft northern light that bathes the house." To mitigate glare and heat gain and provide privacy, a high-tech louver system offers "a more veiled light," he explains. "The louvers are an incredible instrument to fine-tune the quality of light in the house."

Not just the sun-filled soul of the house speaks to Indonesia—the home also became a showcase for pieces by local artisans there. The homeowners discovered carved figural sculptures and placed one in the family room and another in the garden. "They each have a different emotional feeling," says Steven. The couple also commissioned work, including the ornate carvings in the entry. "It was so fun to be a part of creating our pieces of art," recalls Maura. Of them, Sumich observes, "They produce this beautiful texture, warmth and soul within this contemporary house."

When composing the interiors, McDennon focused on straddling these traditional art forms with the home's contemporary architecture. For the furnishings, the interior designer turned to midcentury modern pieces to bridge the gap between the diverging styles. "I like the clean lines and how the beautiful wood elements complement all those artworks," she says. "The more midcentury design allowed the wood elements to easily be incorporated." The choice also allowed for a pleasing tension—balancing hard and soft and uniform and organic.

To smooth the transitions indoors and out, the interior designer also employed a central palette "intended to be warm and harmonious, with a very organic influence," she notes. "It's about not interrupting what you're experiencing when you walk in, the volume of the space, and the beautiful panoramic view of the ocean." These tone-on-tone gestures provide seamless movement, "but at the same time, each room has its own personality," adds McDennon. For example, earthy, volcanic grays help ground the kitchen, like the raked granite island countertop. In the bedroom, gentler grays and whites, she says, "bring a softer, more romantic mood that plays off the beautiful stone walls." Meanwhile, radiant yellow velvet armchairs inject energy among the cool grays of the living room, drawing the eye to the artwork. "We weren't afraid to bring in color," says McDennon. "It was just about making sure that we played with color in a calculated way."

Though the family may be thousands of miles away from the island that inspired them, the Balinese communion with nature now defines daily life in their new home—from spending lazy afternoons on the patio sharing moments in the sun, to greeting the new year with a plunge into the ocean. "It was an adventure and a dream come true for us," says Maura, "building a house around the way we wanted to live." ■

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Interior designer Lisa McDennon's clients commissioned artist Andrea Welton to create a painting for the living area. It forms an arresting vignette with the pair of tailored Kelly Hoppen for Sonder Living lounge chairs in a bold Pindler velvet.



Residential designer Geoff Sumich specified mechanical louvers on the exterior of a Laguna Beach residence to ensure privacy and mitigate heat gain. On the terrace outside the main living spaces, McDennon placed a sectional the homeowners commissioned from Bali.



“We went back and forth about whether to install a chandelier in the dining area,” McDennon explains. “I was okay with not having one there.” After her clients saw a fixture from her Lisa McDennon Collection for Hinkley, though, they decided it was the perfect fit. Below, Four Hands chairs gather around a live-edge table the couple discovered on a trip abroad.



In the family room, a floating walnut entertainment unit “becomes one with the architecture,” says McDennon, who notes that the design team took great pains in choosing just the right grain pattern for the piece. She opted for furnishings that are simple and unfussy, such as the commodious custom sectional in a Pindler fabric and the Loloi carpet.

Opposite: Tanner, the homeowners’ dog, lounges on the stair landing near a photograph by Keoki Flagg that is printed on metal. The floating risers and glass railing continue the light, airy feel at play throughout the structure.

Below: “The metal rain chains were added toward the end of the project,” says McDennon of the detail in the family room. “Since we already had paintings, and there were so many hard edges in the space, I wanted something softer and more fluid.” The sculpture is a treasure from the couple’s travels to Bali; the artwork is by Marc Quinn.



Opposite: The master bedroom boasts the best view in the house, so, to take advantage of its perch overlooking the Pacific, McDennon devised an intimate seating area outfitted with a pair of Thomas Bina chairs from Codarus. She sourced the rug and tables from Nuance, her own shop in Laguna Beach.

Below: A shimmery Romo cork wallcovering from Thomas Lavin imbues the master bathroom with subtle texture. McDennon upped the textural ante with a vintage runner. She hung a dramatic Corbett Lighting chandelier above the tub—yet another Balinese gem. Visual Comfort & Co. lights illuminate the vanity.



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