

GOING COASTAL

A SEASIDE HOME IN CORONA DEL MAR HITS ALL THE RIGHT
NOTES FOR A DYNAMIC FAMILY WITH A MODERN LIFESTYLE.

WRITTEN BY LAURA MAUK / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARYN MILLET



Louie (right) and Hermès greet guests in the entry of a Corona del Mar home by interior designer Michael Fullen and residential designer Geoff Sumich. Fullen suspended an Ochre chandelier above a cantilevered staircase and arranged a custom modular bench upholstered in pink velvet by Pierre Frey from Kneeder Fauchère. The limestone flooring is by Solistone.



The architectural fabric of a seaside Corona del Mar neighborhood leans traditional, with houses generally falling into the Country French or Spanish Colonial Revival camp. But residential designer Geoff Sumich and interior designer Michael Fullen's clients were aiming for something different both in look and spirit for their new abode. Hailing from India, they wanted a home that reflected a more modern aesthetic and adhered to the principles of *Vastu*, a traditional Indian system of space planning akin to feng shui.

Sumich began by holding a strategy meeting with a *Vastu* expert. "I waited for her to direct my hand, and she did," he reports. "Among other things, she said the entry had to be on the side of the house. From there, a fabulous, very rational scheme developed." For instance, rather than a conventional street-facing front door, which would require traversing a series of spaces to reach the home's back areas with the view, Sumich devised a side-mounted entrance that allowed for short circulation and functional room adjacencies.

With the floor plan in place, the residential designer conceived a rectilinear shell with pared-down detailing but chose a cream-colored stucco exterior and a red tile roof to reflect the style of surrounding homes. Says Sumich, "I wanted to design something that would fit in and be a good neighbor and still express my clients' love of contemporary design." Tailored landscaping by Warwick Hunt and Ben Montrella of Studio H Landscape Architecture completes the outdoor picture.

To enter the house, a colonnade guides residents and visitors from the street to the front door. "I had asked if I could express their culture in a nonliteral way," Sumich explains. "We had been looking at front doors on Indian buildings that had openings in a grid pattern and were very heavy and strong." His interpretation is a substantial wood door inset with squares of glass, which is echoed in the foyer behind the massive cantilevered staircase. Of the structure, general contractor Greg McCaffery says, "Each step is a limestone monolith, just stacked and floating over one another in midair. The fact that they are not attached to the outer walls—there's a 6-inch gap—is unsettling! It took creative and precise steel fabrication to accomplish."

Fullen took cues from the architecture and crafted rooms that are equally bold and fresh with bright hues and the feel of a luxury hotel or resort. "We followed Geoff's lead and developed an interior that plays off his design and is even more contemporary," he says. The first inkling of the feel and color that pervade the home is the entry's center seating area composed of stools covered in vivid pink. Combined with striking floral arrangements, the vibe is grand lobby. In the main living room, which boasts a bar for a lounge-y quality, Fullen arranged a custom tufted sofa clad in violet velvet and a pair of custom chairs upholstered

in a riotous fuchsia, teal, violet and yellow floral-print fabric. He also placed gold-finished stainless steel coffee tables that resemble large-scale origami and hung a collection of gold-toned metal pendants designed by Tom Dixon. "I consider texture and tone in the same way I do color and pattern," he says. "I used glossy and metallic surfaces to pump up the aesthetics. This project was unique in the sense that there was a desire for high-energy colors and a mix of metals. Many people are more comfortable with neutrals whereas this family sees bold colors as neutral." In the formal dining room, Fullen deployed saturated shades and metallic elements to facilitate plenty of cheer and leisurely meals. Barrel chairs are wrapped in cobalt blue velvet and a John Pomp-designed glass and brass chandelier descends from a bronze-finished ceiling inset.

Fullen balanced the family's preference for strong color with some quieter moments, incorporating neutral tones and tempering dynamic textures with subdued finishes, to create lower-key moods for some areas. "The family room is where they unwind," he says. "There, I used non-reflective, relaxed textures such as grain-heavy wood, leather and mohair." Add in a sand, beige and chocolate palette, and it's a visual vacation. For the master suite, he selected soft hues that produce a soothing retreat. "I definitely wanted a sense of calm for the master," the interior designer says. "Neutrals bring the energy down."

Sumich's thoughtful and understated architectural scheme combined with Fullen's hotel-as-home intention for the interiors results in an idyllic balance for a house that's as classic as it is contemporary. "This family has been exposed to great design," Fullen says. "Interpreting a hotel as a residential environment was a challenge because we stay in hotels for only short periods of time. A home has to stand the test of time." ■

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—GEOFF SUMICH

Opposite: Calacatta Gold Neolith covers the Leicht kitchen's counters and backsplash. The Dornbracht faucet is from Pirch. In the dining area, a Ralph Pucci chandelier hangs above a Lexington table from Harsey & Harsey and chairs in Great Plains velvet.

Below: Fullen created a relaxed feel in the family room by employing a calming palette of soft neutrals along with a pair of Minotti barrel chairs and a custom carpet.



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—MICHAEL FULLEN

Fabrics by Créations Métaphores, Romo, Jim Thompson and Villa Nova are on the modular seating in the cozy playroom. Window shades in a Maxwell fabric from Harsey & Harsey filter the light.



In the living room's bar, a pair of J. Alexander brass stools upholstered in violet Pollack leather from Donghia hint at the vibrant hue found throughout. Thømmes Cabinet Makers fabricated the shelving.

A Nobilis wallcovering is the backdrop for the master's custom bed, which is upholstered in a Jerry Pair leather and dressed in Frette linens and an Hermès throw. Atop the custom nightstand is an Arteriors lamp. The rug is by Jaipur.



Below, left: Famosa supplied the stone for the master bath's vanity top and the stone mosaic tile on the backsplash. The chair is from DRC; the mirror is a custom piece.

Below, right: By combining a Phillip Jeffries wallcovering and a New Ravenna mosaic tile from Ann Sacks on the backsplash, Fullen turned a powder room into an intimate, eye-catching space. A Dornbracht faucet is set into the Calacatta Borghini marble vanity.

