

Interiors

CALIFORNIA

THE KITCHEN & BATH ISSUE

CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS,
INSPIRATIONAL MAKEOVERS
& EXPERT ADVICE

A STUNNING LA JOLLA RETREAT BLURS
THE LINE BETWEEN GALLERY & HOME

GLAMOUR RESIDES AT BRADLEY BAYOU'S
DAZZLING HOLLYWOOD HILLS ABODE

SHELDON HARTE DESIGNS A SURF-CHIC
OCEANSIDE ESTATE IN ORANGE COUNTY

A TECH INDUSTRY FAMILY CREATES THE HOME
OF THEIR DREAMS JUST OUTSIDE OF S.F.

PLUS
TALKING DESIGN WITH INDIA HICKS,



COMFORTABLY CHIC
The living room of an Orange County couple's new beach house exudes a coastal charm that is at once easy-going and sophisticated.

ORANGE COUNTY

PARADISE FOUND

Two waterfront lots prove the ultimate lure—and catch—for a couple looking to build their dream weekend retreat.

By Maile Pingel | Interior photography by Grey Crawford | Portrait by Robert Benson

Everything seemed to be going along swimmingly for one Orange County couple who had found the perfect land upon which to build a new home. But complication struck when two prime oceanfront lots, side by side no less, suddenly came on the market in an even more desirable location: the coveted Newport Beach enclave of China Cove. With serendipity on their side, CONTINUED...



"THE HOME IS FILLED WITH GREAT FABRICS AND WONDERFUL FINISHES—THE KIND OF DETAILS THAT MAY GO UNNOTICED BY SOME, BUT OF WHICH THE HOMEOWNERS ARE KEENLY AWARE," SAYS HARTE.

...CONTINUED the couple changed course and swiftly secured the two lots, making a fast call to their longtime interior designer, Sheldon Harte of Harte Brownlee & Associates (hartebrownlee.com).

Working in tandem with Palm Springs-based architect Thomas Jakway (thomasjakway.com), Harte and the couple, who are in the financial industry, began an ambitious program of designing their dream beach house from the ground up. With Harte at the helm, as he has been for many of the couple's other properties (including sites in L.A., Utah and the California desert), the 4,200-square-foot home quickly took shape. The ground floor is essentially a great room with an open kitchen, as well as the wife's office, while upstairs contains an expansive double master suite, two en suite guest rooms and the husband's office.

When it came to decorating the interiors, the couple took their cues from the home's location: sea, sand and sky. "They wanted a blue-and-white palette," explains Harte, though touches of sandy neutrals come into play at carefully chosen points, like the celadon porcelain chargers that flank the fireplace in the living area, or the atmospheric blue upholstery that grounds the husband's office. "The home is filled with great fabrics and wonderful finishes—the kind of details that may go unnoticed by some, but of which the homeowners are keenly aware," says Harte, who opened his Laguna Beach-based firm in 1984 with the late John Brownlee.

Working closely with his senior designer, John Henry Kaufman, Harte and the homeowners shopped locally for furnishings, as well as new artworks. CONTINUED...

MARINE SANCTUARY
From top: The master bedroom is a restful setting at any time of day; a painting by Jamie Perry adds punch to the breakfast nook.





SEASIDE STYLE

Clockwise from top: Striated walls and clever cabinetry mark the master bath; the living room offers pristine sea views; Sheldon Harte and senior designer John Henry Kaufman.



...CONTINUED The couple, avid collectors, wanted to find pieces for this residence that were more in keeping with the casual feel. Cheerful impressionistic landscapes and ocean scenes now hang throughout the home, along with two hyperrealist pool scenes by Jamie Perry that add a decidedly playful spirit. Also adding to the home's spritely energy is the koi-patterned wallpaper in the downstairs powder room.

But the playfulness stops short of anchors, starfish and shells. "They didn't want anything too cute or too beachy. No gimmicks, and nothing overly complicated," Harte continues. But don't be fooled by simplicity, he warns. "Sometimes the most simple houses are the most complicated to create!"

Harte, who admits that the single difficulty of the project was limited parking, has built a reputation for designing clientcentric interiors. "We don't have one look—we do contemporary and traditional, but the backbone of each is the same: luxury. I just can't do cookie-cutter. I need it to be more exciting than that."

With their main house nearby, the China Cove home has become every inch the seaside escape the couple wanted. "The house is so approachable," Harte says, adding that it's a place they enjoy most when their grown children visit. "They love to just watch the boats on the harbor." Because no matter how beautiful a designer's work, the best of them know there's just no competing with Mother Nature. ■