

HOME *of a* LIFETIME

A YOUNG COUPLE LOOKS TO THE DISTANT FUTURE IN LA JOLLA

BY JANICE KLEINSCHMIDT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN MANN

WHEN THEY WERE looking for a home to buy in 2012, Josh and Lauren Rosenthal also were thinking about having children. Like many San Diegan house hunters, they found the perfect location — with an imperfect structure.

“Our original vision was to knock everything down and start over, but we realized what they would entail,” Josh says. “So we kept 50 percent of the linear wall and decreased the time frame from four years to two years.

“When construction started, Lauren found out she was pregnant. While construction was going on, we could build the house for the family we were planning. Also we love to entertain, and we love to spend time at home. We wanted something large enough to relax and enjoy and not crave going out.”

Their 4,000-square-foot house sits on a 10,000-square-foot lot in La Jolla. But being on a corner meant they had to conform to 20-foot setbacks.

“We wanted outside space,” says Josh, an owner of the architectural and landscape design and construction firm Eco Minded Solutions Inc. “My company does landscaping. It was always my vision to use what I created [for clients] for my own property.

“I am a No. 1 believer in succulents and other low-water-usage plants,” he explains. “But I didn’t want to make something that looks like it’s in the desert.”

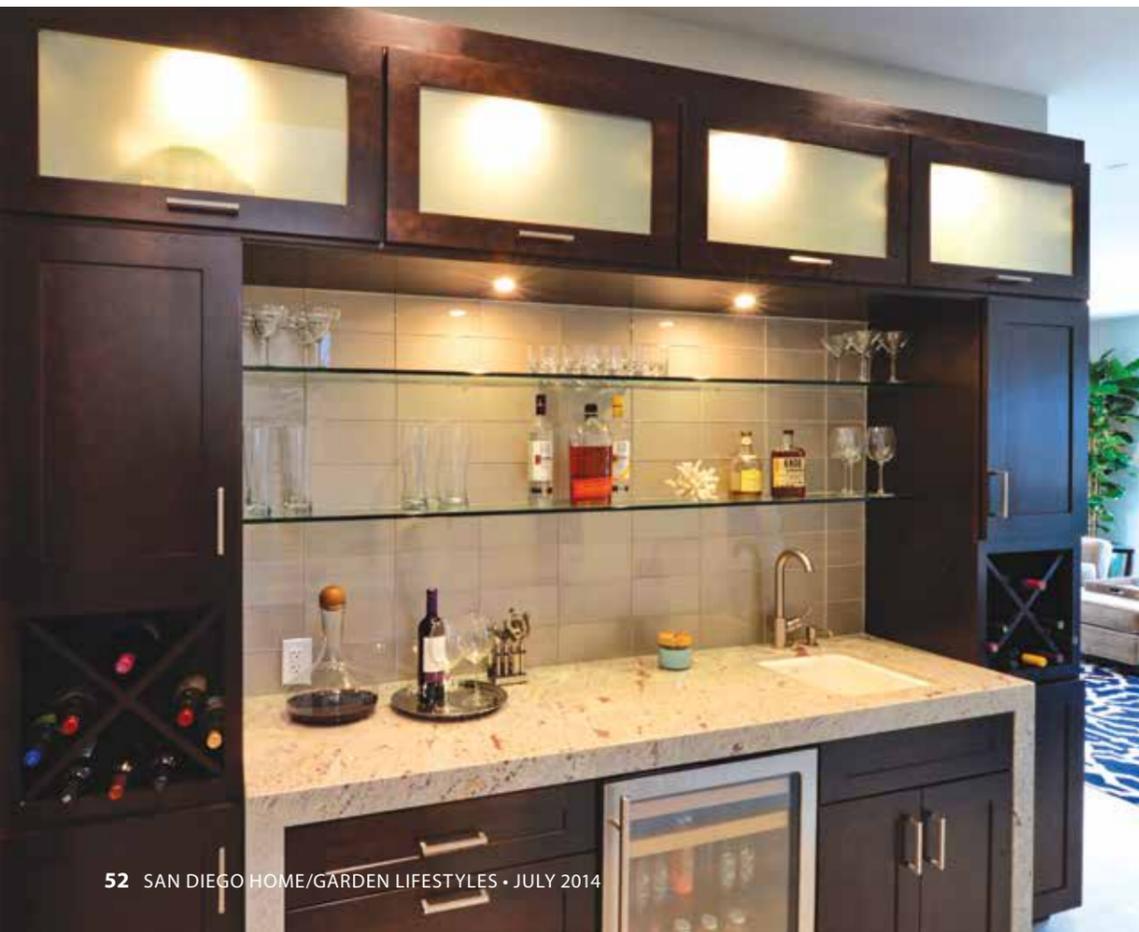
The result is a sculptured xeriscape with a broad plant palette for color and LED landscape lighting outside a 3-foot retaining wall for the family’s “usable” yard space, which includes an artificial-turf putting green and dog run for the couple’s cockapoo, Apollo.

The home was built with an environmentally conscious ethos, using LED lighting, solar panels, low-pressure plumbing fixtures and eco-friendly insulation.

One of Josh and Lauren’s desires was to create a grand entrance for visitors. Limestone tiles lead from street level up steps with custom railings to the front door — a 500-pound pivot door made from

The home’s upper level, composed of the living/dining and kitchen areas, offers ocean views through large glass doors and ocean air when the stackable sliders are opened.





Above: A 17-foot ceiling, a cut-out to the kitchen on the upper level and porcelain flooring that resembles wood give the entry gallery an air of space and light. Instead of mitered edges, the stairs are trimmed with stainless steel.

Left: A custom bar adjacent to the game room has a glass-tile backsplash and waterfall-edged, granite countertop.

Facing page, top: Designers Audra Siao and Jennifer Higgins were able, after much searching, to find a shallow linear fireplace that didn't sacrifice space. The surround is limestone.

Facing page, bottom: The kitchen island offers seating as well as usable counter space. Transparent-glass globes provide plenty of light, as does the wall opening to the atrium gallery.

mahogany. Inside is a wide gallery space with a 17-foot ceiling, from which two bubble-light chandeliers hang. The 5-foot-long strings of organic-shaped, clear glass balls particularly enchant Josh and Lauren's baby daughter, Madison.

For assistance with interior design, the couple turned to Audra Siao and Stephanie Higgins of Design Theory Studio.

"Our style," Josh says, "is modern Mediterranean. I like a little more contemporary. Lauren likes a little more traditional. So we fused those with the help of Audra and Stephanie."

In keeping with Josh and Lauren's desire for a grand entrance, the design duo had a bench custom made and selected an eclectic blend of art that was contemporary but "not too trendy," Stephanie says. "We mixed organic wood with





Above: Daughter Madison's room was designed with a sophistication that will easily adapt to suit her as she grows older.

Left: The powder room off the entrance gallery was created with high-end materials. The floor is marble; the back wall is sand-blasted, honed limestone; and the custom vanity is walnut.



coordinating acrylic pieces and framed, painted burlap."

"It was really important to us to make things comfortable," Lauren says. "We wanted it modern but welcoming."

They also wanted to make guests feel special — with a powder room just off the gallery. It's the only room in the house that does not have a porcelain floor that resembles wood. Instead, it features a marble floor, a sandblasted and honed limestone wall and a custom walnut vanity.

At the end of the gallery, a pocket door of white laminated glass framed in Douglas fir allows Josh and Lauren to entertain guests after putting Madison to bed in the wing containing the children's rooms (the couple plan to have a second child) and Josh's home office.



While many new parents go all out with baby décor, Josh and Lauren — with help from Audra and Stephanie — took a more transitionally sophisticated approach. As in the rest of the house, the walls in Madison's room are painted gray.

"I just love the look of gray tones," Lauren says. "I think it's calming and adds some color without being overwhelming."

Madison's bathroom, too, looks anything but childish. Natural stone provides texture and geometry, while white subway tile adds a clean and bright sheen.

Steps away is a 200-square-foot office where Josh often holds meetings and which, he says, "can be an area where the kids can do their homework."

In addition to custom cabinetry to accommodate files, Audra and Stephanie designed

an L-shaped desk with a sand-blasted marble top and a walnut base that is open to keep it from looking "heavy."

At the other end of the gallery lie the master bedroom and the master bath, which features a chevron-patterned, glass tile backsplash; marble vanity; walls in porcelain gray subway tiles with a subtle pinstripe; and motion-sensor lighting under the vanity kick. The bedroom has a pocket door that takes advantage of an ocean view and opens to a seating deck and terraced courtyard.

"We spend as much time outside the house as we do inside the house," Josh says.

A step down to the right leads to a gray concrete fire pit and U-shaped bench softened with custom cushions and pillows. To the right of that, a glass wall and

door keeps the 12-foot-long hot tub off limits to Madison. To the left of the fire pit, the yard steps down to a patch of artificial turf that Apollo enjoys.

The courtyard also can be accessed from the lower-level game room, which has surround-sound television, access to the home automation system and an area rug with replaceable carpet tiles — ideal for a family with children and a dog.

A Douglas fir barn door leads to an exercise room that doubles as a guest room, courtesy of a Murphy bed. Audra and Stephanie custom-designed both the door and bed, as well as the cabinetry for a built-in bar with glass-tile backsplash and wine chiller.

The upper level of the house — with a sweeping ocean view — comprises an open living, dining and kitchen area. Glass

The corner of the house that previously comprised part of the living room and a bedroom now serves as a 200-square-foot office. Audra Saio and Stephanie Higgins designed built-in, custom cabinetry and a large, L-shaped desk with a sand-blasted marble top over a walnut base.



Above: Custom exterior railings match those on the stairs inside. Limestone tiles lead from the front gate to the mahogany front pivot door.

Top left: The home offers distant views down the coastline.

Left: Multiple deck levels include a patio off the game room, a grassy area that is popular with the family dog, a deck with a fire pit and spa, a seating area off the master bedroom, a barbecue station with seating off the kitchen and, around the corner, a deck that stretches across the dining and living area up to two more levels, including a rooftop deck with another fire pit.

pendant fixtures tie the three spaces together yet distinguish them with their different styles. The glass teardrops over the custom, 10-foot, acacia dining table sway freely when the stackable sliders along the length of the living/dining space are open to an ocean breeze.

The living room features a linear fireplace with limestone surround flanked by grasscloth-covered niches and another carpet-tile rug.

Instead of upper cabinets on the interior kitchen wall, Josh and Lauren opted for a large

opening to the gallery, lending both areas an even greater sense of space. The glass backsplash in a vertical brick pattern reflects light, while sleek, dark cherry-wood cabinetry provides a rich accent to the surrounding subtle palette.

The deck around the corner, at the end of the dining room table, is the barbecue station, which overlooks the courtyard.

"We barbecue four times a week, so we wanted it close to the kitchen," Lauren says.

It's possible to get from courtyard to a series of decks without

coming inside. Steps up from the living/dining room deck lead to a seating area above the office. From there, another set of stairs lead higher.

"During construction, we got the brilliant idea, 'Let's go up even more,'" Josh recalls. "So we put a ladder up to see what more we could see."

What they can see from the roof deck, which is just shy of the city's 30-foot height restriction, is a 360-degree view that called for another fire pit and bench.

"We had a lot of meetings up here — until the wind

started blowing our plans away," Stephanie notes with amusement.

"This really excites me," Josh says, taking in the view. "I am originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This is one of the reasons I'm here."

Ultimately, there's even more than the vast Pacific behind Josh and Lauren's love for their property.

"We thought everything through as thoroughly as we could while we were building," Josh says. "We thought this could be a 'one home forever' for us." ❖

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