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FEATURES

- 84 Lush Life** KAA Design and Pépe Studio join forces on a ground-up seaside home that seamlessly balances sophistication and ease.
- 94 Even Flow** Hollis | Jordyn Design creates a fresh, earthy and unique Sherman Oaks home for jeweler Andrea Fohrman and her family.
- 104 Natural Beauty** Designer Jae Omar used long vignettes and natural materials to maximize the vantage point and connect this narrow new Pacific Palisades property to its surroundings.

- 114 Neutral Territory** Insert Design used vintage pieces, patina finishes and durable textures to add history to this transitional Mediterranean new build in Dana Point.
- 124 On the House** From spectacular pools and spa bathrooms to amazing amenities, these local listings will wow and offer the ultimate escape for resort living—right at home.



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Lush Life

KAA DESIGN AND PÉPE
STUDIO JOIN FORCES
ON A GROUND-UP
SEASIDE HOME THAT
SEAMLESSLY BALANCES
SOPHISTICATION AND EASE.

BY LAURA ECKSTEIN JONES
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MANOLO LANGIS

Located on the Strand
in Manhattan Beach,
this three-level family
home is an homage to
its seaside community.
The lounge and
reading room seen here
connects the great
room and kitchen.





From left: The kitchen contains American walnut cabinetry adorned with hardware from Rocky Mountain Hardware, countertops crafted with basalt solidified from molten lava and wall tile from Exquisite Surfaces; a custom-bleached walnut plinth table and chairs by Pépe Studio center the dining room. The credenza is by Stan Bitters, the Natalie Page pendants were customized by Pépe Studio and the artwork is by Celia Gerard.



When KAA Design and Pépe Studio came up with a design plan for their clients' ground-up dream home on the Strand in Manhattan Beach, a few choice words led the way. Words and phrases like modern, tropical, escape, easy, durable, timeless and indoor-outdoor all played into the design plan for the project, which took nearly three years to complete. "Being a young family, the homeowners were looking to build something unique in their small community that's a reflection of who they are and everything they love," says Lynn Pépe, principal of Pépe Studio. "The interiors had to balance the sophistication of the architecture with the ultimate 'kickback' comfort you would expect from a family beach house. They wanted plenty of space for family activities and entertaining along with quiet, comfy spaces for individual downtime." "[The homeowners were after] easy beach living and coastal amenities, panoramic views from indoors and outdoors, flexible entertainment areas—a home that promotes both the involvement in and appreciation of multiple sporting interests of the family," adds Grant C. Kirkpatrick, FAIA, partner in charge at KAA Design. "Since this was new construction, the main goal was to incorporate the family's young, vibrant and active lifestyle."



Featuring custom furniture by Pépe Studio atop a rug from Woven—plus stunning 180-degree-plus ocean views—the primary suite connects to a generously sized covered terrace with a fire pit and multiple seating areas. Opposite page: Glass railings were chosen to allow for unobstructed views of sand and surf.

island getaway, but less was always more in order to keep it clean and modern.”

The plan—to create a tropical, modern escape—was brought to life by incorporating “finishes and textures reminiscent of staying at a luxury villa or resort on the other side of the globe,” says Pépe. “Everything throughout the home needed to be durable, organic and breathable for their family.” To stay organized, built-in cabinetry and storage—with just enough space to display books, accessories and family photos—was integrated, while custom furniture needed to balance sophistication with comfort and durability. “Not too casual, not too formal was always the plan,” says Pépe.

Architecturally, openness to the outdoors while maintaining privacy was one key goal, along with sticking to the architectural vision: simplicity, authenticity and craft. “The driftwood-inspired palette of materials responds to the seaside neighborhood,” says Kirkpatrick. “Stained wood, crisp troweled plaster, both rugged and smooth stone, steel and large expanses of glass are the canvas, while beach-chic appointments both inside and out promote the feeling of an unpretentious oasis.”

Some of Pépe’s favorite areas include the primary bedroom. “[It] has such a lovely, serene quality

As he does in all projects, Kirkpatrick took the site into consideration when coming up with the home’s architectural direction. “For KAA, the site and landscape are inclusive of the design process, bringing in the elements of the outdoors using glass to filter views and sunlight,” says the architect, who was inspired by “graceful proportions of sailboat masts or sturdy wood piles of the South Bay piers hovering over the foamy surf.” The family’s many trips to exotic locations helped inspire the interiors and the landscape design. “We encouraged them not to go so far into a tropical theme or it might feel contrived and out of place in their local community,” notes Pépe. “We wanted to achieve that subtle nod to an



to it,” she says. “Located on the upper level of the home, it feels as though you’re just floating above the sand—it takes my breath away every time I walk through it.” She incorporated a pair of Milo Baughman-inspired swivel chair into the suite, and an asymmetrical rug by Woven. “[The swivel chairs] allow them to enjoy morning coffee watching the surf or view the spectacular evening sunsets.”

The great room—which encompasses the living and dining rooms—is another standout spot. Featuring a custom vintage-inspired sectional by Pépe Studio and a glass and brass coffee table by Blackman Cruz, the living



From top: A stunning view through the great room and kitchen is framed by wood louvers that filter light throughout the day; the movie theater is the kids’ favorite room in the home. It’s become a go-to for play dates and sleepovers. Opposite page: The top-floor private family room—adjacent to the kids’ bedrooms—boasts ocean views and overlooks the courtyard and pool below.



room flows into the dining area. “We had an assortment of Natalie Page pendants made into a custom chandelier that hangs over the dining table,” says Pépe. “And we designed a whitewashed plinth-style dining table along with Jeanneret-inspired dining armchairs covered in a beachy Rogers & Goffigon stripe. My favorite piece is the Stan Bitters floating credenza,” she adds. “It’s a rare opportunity to procure one of those treasures.”

The kitchen is also worthy of a shout-out. “The stone island is made of basalt, a stain-forgiving lave stone,” says Pépe, “...and the island was engineered to hold a floating bar-height countertop and kitchen table for the kids.” Pépe also notes that nontoxic, organic products and finishes were used throughout. “It was an opportunity to broaden my understanding of these materials and where to source them,” she says. “I continue to promote and use these essential, sustainable resources on all our projects.”

Kirkpatrick names several architectural highlights, including “the view from the central courtyard looking west through the great room and out to the Pacific Ocean beyond” and a view-packed covered terrace with a fire pit and multiple seating areas off the primary suite. “An oculus frames blue skies and brings ever-changing light into the second-story terrace,” he adds, noting that glass railings were chosen to allow for unobstructed views of the sea.

“Dress it up or dress it down, this residence is both refined and effortless,” says Kirkpatrick. “[It is] perfect for a young family who wants to enjoy all that Southern California has to offer.” ■



From top: A view from the entry gate looks out toward the central courtyard, great room and the Pacific; a plunge pool in the lushly planted central courtyard has a hydraulic floor and can double as a dance floor for entertaining or for basketball. Opposite page: Simplicity, authenticity and craft played a huge part in the vision for this seaside home that overlooks the Santa Monica Bay and the California coastline.



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Single-family home

LOCATION

Manhattan Beach

ARCHITECTURE

Grant C. Kirkpatrick, FAIA, and
Todd Paollilo, KAA Design
kaadesigngroup.com

INTERIOR DESIGN

Lynn Pépe, Pépe Studio
lynnpepe.com

RESOURCES

BLACKMAN CRUZ

Living room coffee table
blackmancruz.com

DEDON

Patio furniture
dedon.de

EXQUISITE SURFACES

Kitchen wall tile, primary bathroom
flooring, pool tile
xsurfaces.com

FARROW & BALL

Wimbourne White paint throughout
farrow-ball.com

MIELE

Kitchen appliances
mieleusa.com

NATALIE PAGE

Dining room lighting
nataliepage.com

PÉPE STUDIO

Custom furniture throughout
lynnpepe.com

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARDWARE

Kitchen hardware
rockymountainhardware.com

ROSEMARY HALLGARTEN

Living room rug
rosemaryhallgarten.com

SOCIETY LIMONTA

Primary bedroom bedding
societylimonta.com

WATERWORKS

Primary bathroom hardware,
shower tile and rugs
waterworks.com

WOVEN

Primary bedroom rug
woven.is