



THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

By Eva Ditler
Photography by Preview First

IT WASN'T MONETARY REWARD or a flexible schedule that enticed Elizabeth Pritscher-Lewis to become a California real estate agent. She took on the challenge of getting her real estate license because she was determined to hunt down the perfect La Jolla house for her family — “one with character,” she says.

It took five years, but Elizabeth and her husband, Simon, finally were charmed by a La Jolla Farms home designed by noted modernist architect Dale Naegle, famed locally for his “shopkeeper homes” in La Jolla Shores and The Bell Pavilion (also known as

the Mushroom House) along the bluffs of Black's Beach.

“Dale and the homeowners, Hans and Ruth Suess, were friends,” Elizabeth says. “The architect built this house for them based on an Austrian stable design. The homeowners were originally from Austria.

“We love that the home has had only one homeowner before us,” she continues, “and we love the UCSD connection. [Hans was one of the four founding faculty members of the University of California, San Diego.] We met Walter Munk [world-renowned oceanographer and icon at UCSD], who said

Above: Homeowner Elizabeth Pritscher-Lewis, who loves anything Spanish, decided to keep the living room's terra-cotta tile, which the previous homeowner had installed over the original concrete flooring. Replacing a candle chandelier and removing drapes helped bring more light to a room that had been dark and dreary.

Facing page: The ceiling beams couldn't be appreciated in the old kitchen because the room had a small footprint and was cut off from the rest of the house. Now that the space is open and bright, this architectural detail is a standout. The original concrete flooring was too damaged to preserve, so new concrete was poured.

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Above: Heavy barn doors were retained on the south side of the living room; but for a lighter touch, bookcases were removed. On the other side of the doors is a modern kitchen/dining space. Here, Elizabeth opted for more ornate, Spanish-style furnishings.

Facing page: An island, almost 9 feet long, makes entertaining a breeze in the contemporary kitchen/dining area. The ceiling in this space is lower than in the living room. So, to give the space an illusion of height, designer Tatiana Machado Rosas suggested painting the wood between the beams white instead of keeping them teal, as in the Spanish-style living/dining area.

this was the party house for all the UCSD professors.”

Built in the mid-'60s, the concrete-block home with its L-shaped floor plan, covered walkway and courtyard space amplified its ranch hacienda influences when Ruth covered up the concrete floors with red Saltillo tile and installed a red-clay tile roof.

“Elizabeth fell in love with the Spanish incarnation of the home, and Simon adored the modern architecture,” says designer Tatiana Machado-Rosas of Jackson Design and Remodeling. “They ended up with the best of both worlds.”

Contemporary artwork throughout the house and the consistency of white walls melded with dark wood help fuse the contemporary kitchen/dining area (where Simon, the head family chef, is king) and the Spanish flavor elsewhere.

“Retaining the tile flooring in the living room was extremely important to Elizabeth,” Tatiana says. “Here, the main idea was just to keep it as open as possible.”

Resealing the floor and repainting the teal hue between the heavy wooden beams of the 14-foot ceiling was almost all that needed to be done in the living area. But to create a cleaner look, two bookshelves opposite the corner beehive fireplace were removed. To further lighten what was a dreary space, a chandelier that emitted dim candlelight was replaced. And since the home has no privacy issues, draperies were eliminated from the living room’s expansive windows. The large panes of glass are wood framed and have operable wood panels below. Dominating the walls on either side of the home, they turn the courtyard and back yard into extensions of the house.





Constructing a hallway provided better access to a back room, bedroom and the upstairs office. Before the remodel, one had to go through a bathroom to get to the back rooms. The family room has access to the courtyard. Just through the door to the left of the couch is one of the children's bedrooms.

Reconfiguring a bedroom, bathroom, dining area and galley kitchen made room for a new powder room, a convenient pantry/mudroom combination and a kitchen/dining space triple the size of the original. Tile flooring was jackhammered out so that concrete could be installed to "bring back Dale's original vision," Elizabeth says.

"Because we have two children, we decided to go with quartz on the kitchen

countertops. It's an easier material to maintain. We put this vein of calacatta marble behind and beside the stove, which is like a piece of built-in art. We used the leftover marble for a desk that's tucked in behind the kitchen's French doors."

Navigating the residence was problematic before the remodel. Bedrooms could only be reached through an exterior corridor. A new interior hallway solved the dilemma.



The makeover has given Elizabeth and Simon a functional house that provides an open, relaxing atmosphere. Their children, ages 9 and 7, often have their playmates visit. It's not unusual to see youngsters running from the courtyard through the home to the back yard.

And when Elizabeth and Simon entertain, guests can relax in the contemporary dining space with its Barcelona lounging chairs or

enjoy the romance of the Spanish-style dining area on the other side of the barn doors.

"Anyone else who bought this house might have wanted to tear it down and build a mansion on this three-quarters of an acre lot situated at the end of a cul de sac," Elizabeth says. "But I would have been so sad to see this Dale Naegle post-and-beam house destroyed." ❖

The red-tile roof and second-story tower added by the previous homeowner were kept intact. "We wanted to keep the home true to Dale's vision, as well as to how the house evolved over time," Elizabeth says. Most of the interior spaces face the generously sized courtyard that provides a play area for the children and the family dog.

