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Into the Blue

A Point Loma kitchen becomes sailor's delight *By Ann Jarmusch*



For generations, thankful sailors have come home to Point Loma. One such lucky fellow, John Walton, lives in a cozy wood-and-glass home built in 1952 high above San Diego Bay by local modernist architect Loch Crane. It takes in the sweeping bay views and provides privacy, with most of the rooms opening onto a courtyard that's inviting year-round.

"This is a party house," declares Pam, John's wife. "That's what sailors do—they party."

Party Central in this comfortable, shipshape house? It's the recently expanded and remodeled kitchen, the first room you encounter after climbing steep stairs to the front door.

A blaze of brilliant azure framed by a slanted wood-beamed ceiling and minimalist mahogany cabinetry, the nearly 350-square-foot kitchen is the Waltons' rhapsody in blue.

Two walls came down to create this expansive, luminous space, which adjoins the original sunken family room, built of rich wood paneling, and a long brick fireplace wall. Parties spill out of the kitchen into this space and the courtyard.

Not content to merely upgrade and reorganize the kitchen, the Waltons aimed to make "a design statement" in harmony with Crane's architecture, notes senior interior designer Bonnie Bagley Catlin of Jackson Design & Remodeling. She worked with project architect Jim Groen, who considers Crane "kind of a local hero," on this design-build job. The owners and designers agreed to reinforce architectural elements by Crane (who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright and is also an avid sailor and sometime

Vivid blue tile and glass areas appear to ripple like water, from the backsplash to the doors of a custom liquor cabinet.





A model of the Waltons' sailboat, which won silver in the 1976 Olympics, skippered by John Kolius

boat builder), while improving transparency and strengthening indoor-outdoor connections.

Perhaps more attuned to the wind than most, John, who earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from UC San Diego, appreciates the way Crane sited the house and installed plenty of windows to catch cooling breezes. "The house is magic in that way," he says.

The Waltons also envisioned their kitchen as a practical yet sophisticated, nautically-inspired gathering place for family and friends, especially John's buddies, who crowd into the kitchen most weekends après sailing. Wet sailing togs are no problem, thanks to the kitchen's new stained and polished concrete floor. (Pam, who works for a non-profit in Southeast San Diego, notes that the washer and dryer stand ready just around the corner, in the next room.)

The kitchen is awash in shimmering, aqueous surfaces that reflect natural light entering the numerous windows. Vivid blue tile and glass areas appear to ripple like water, from the backsplash to the doors of a custom liquor cabinet. Bagley Catlin picked up this hue, the Waltons' favorite, from pyramidal glass light shades the couple had hung in the space prior to its renovation. She matched it with astonishing finesse.

Tiles often used to decorate pools and fountains cover one side of a new central work island. Their wavelike pattern dazzles the eye in flickering blues and greens tinged with gold and black, like the ocean itself. A stunning conversation piece for anyone seated on creamy leather-topped bar stools, this mural is visible through a clear-glass tabletop that floats on stainless-steel legs next to the island.

PAUL BODY: JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING

