

LIVE

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Part sanctuary, part laboratory, Pamela Koide Hyatt's Encinitas property reflects a lifetime spent cultivating rare flora as the owner of Bird Rock Tropicals. Jackson Design & Remodeling was charged with connecting the living space to the surrounding landscape through seamless indoor-outdoor design.

ALL GROWN UP

BLEND IN. THAT WAS THE DIRECTIVE FOR THE DESIGN TEAM TO EVOLVE THIS ENCINITAS COTTAGE FOR AN ACCLAIMED BOTANIST

BY GILLIAN FLYNN

The house could never compete with the bromeliads. For Pamela Koide Hyatt — founder of Bird Rock Tropicals and an internationally renowned botanist — the Encinitas hillside she purchased in 1994 was never just real estate. It was a living laboratory and sanctuary where she spent decades cultivating

rare Paphiopedilum orchids, tillandsias, cycads, and palms. Over 40 years, her home and nursery became inextricably intertwined. Yet while her open-air jungle thrived under the coastal North County sun, the original cottage remained dark and insulated from the paradise outside. »



An expansive exposed-beam patio creates a welcoming setting for year-round dining and entertaining. With award-winning tropical gardens and ocean views on clear days, the residence reflects the couple's love of nature, community, and warm hospitality



“When Hyatt and her husband decided to reimagine the residence, the mandate was clear: expand the home without disturbing a single mature leaf, and let the structure take its cues from Polynesian and Hawaiian living. To execute the vision, they turned to Jackson Design & Remodeling, led by architect John Kavan and senior interior designer Leah Wade.

“The house was already nestled within the landscape, but the interior had very few views out,” says Kavan. “Our goal was to open up the house, bring the landscape into view, and connect the home visually to its natural environment. Rather than compete with the property’s character, the architecture was designed to reveal it.”

Protecting the botanical collection was everything. Instead of expanding the footprint into primary garden beds, Kavan strategically added the primary bathroom to a sparsely vegetated area on the side of the property. To elevate curb appeal, the team transformed the exterior with soft green-gray board-and-batten siding, warm wood-stained accents, espresso trim, and a reoriented staircase beneath a covered entry that intuitively guides guests to the front door.

Meanwhile, rather than competing with the fauna, the design team relied on scale and proportion to connect the cottage to its site. The most consequential change came in the main living area. Replacing cramped partitions with broad sliding glass doors, the team rebuilt the once-exposed deck beneath a pitched canopy of exposed timber beams, complete with natural wood decking and retractable screens

that extend the living footprint outward without interrupting garden sightlines. On clear days, the ocean peeks through the foliage.

“The biggest surprise was how the large windows and deck opened a view of the tropical garden that we never had before,” says Hyatt. “Although I had spent years planting and caring for the garden, I had never realized how beautiful it was from that elevated perspective.”

Though Hyatt travels internationally to speak about North County’s unique climate and topography — where desert flora, jungle species, and misty cloud-forest plants thrive together — the remodel allows her to fully savor the rare treasures growing in her own backyard. Now, mornings begin at the pond, hummingbirds dart among the flowers, and herons appear at the water’s edge. From the open-air living room, the couple can survey this enviable ecosystem and the Pacific beyond.

“In those moments, the garden never feels static,” Hyatt says. “Something is always blooming, a bird is visiting, or a plant I have watched for years is doing something new. It reminds me that a garden is never truly finished.” 