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ARCHITECTS: MALICK AND ASSOCIATES, EMERYVILLE

Bringing the Beach HOME

Few places conjure fun and relaxation as much as a seaside cottage, and that's exactly the feeling Julie and Jeff Brody wanted when designing the 3,500-square-foot guesthouse-cum-pool house adjacent to their Atherton home.

“T

m from the Midwest, and I've always loved older homes," Julie says. "The idea was to create the sense of being on vacation at the seashore or on an old farm, with lots of palm trees, porches, and French doors opening to the yard. We wanted the house to be simple and airy, with open beams inside."

Before moving to Atherton, Julie and Jeff had lived in a 1920's farmhouse in San Carlos. It was "precious," Julie says. But with a family of six, they needed more space. Julie spotted the main house while driving through Atherton. It was large enough for four young kids, yet close to Jeff's work at a venture capital firm on Sand Hill Road.

A few years later, the house next door (now the pool house) came on the market. "We weren't thinking about buying, but a realtor asked if we were interested and the timing was right," Julie says. They bought the house, and after renting it for a short time, decided to build a fun, "beachy" place their kids could enjoy while still living at home.



A neutral palette in the pool house is enlivened with punches of turquoise, orange, and lemon. The result is delightfully fresh and whimsical.

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They had worked with John Malick and Greg Klein of John Malick and Associates in Emeryville on another house and knew they wanted them to help with this property as well. The neighboring house was a 1950's ranch and they wanted to transform it into a combination Victorian farmhouse and seaside cottage.

"This is real Americana," John says, "with covered porches, whitewashed wood, and authentic touches like a terne metal roof." Inside are high ceilings with roof rafters and trusses. The TV room and bedroom hall ceilings are painted metal, like an old Victorian farmhouse might have, and interior walls are unfinished to evoke the informality of a beach cottage. "It was a scavenger hunt finding the furnishings and details because we didn't want common items," John says. "We wanted to create a step back in time."

Greg designed rows of clerestories to bring light into the gabled main room as well as the bedrooms and other parts of the home. Windows are double-hung chain and pulley with restoration glass to replicate the wavy look of old glass. Old-fashioned schoolhouse light fixtures embrace the Americana feel, and inspiration for the



Eclectic, almost kitschy, touches throughout the pool house have a lightness and sense of humor.

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harlequin-patterned painted floor came from a book on old cottages.

The kitchen was integral to the design and features period touches like painted beadboard walls, zinc counters, and vintage appliances. “The kitchen is very ‘I Love Lucy,’” Julie says. “Jeff gave me a turquoise 1957 Oldsmobile convertible and we found an aqua stove in the same color to create a retro look. “The car set the tone for the house, which is all about outdoor living,” Greg adds.

Furnishings are eclectic. In the living room is an oversized shell mirror from Z Gallerie hanging above a refurbished wood chest from Menloville. The leather chair is from Traditions in Menlo Park. On the second floor is a bedroom and bathroom, where muralist David Steinhardt painted a seascape on the ceiling and clawfoot tub. Witty touches like a bright yellow railing and a lime-green painted mantle round out the décor.

Central to the design is a large tower. “Older homes in Atherton didn’t have their own water supply and had a water tower instead,” John says. “We thought it would be a great focal point from the main house as well as a place for the kids to hang out and be up in the trees.” The tower is also referred to as the “snack shack,” since it doesn’t have windows, just shutters, and acts as a serving area for the pool. Upstairs is an overlook room accessed by a Victorian-inspired, cast-iron spiral staircase.

The idea was to create an informal, relaxed place to get away, and for the Brodys, that dream has come true. Though two of their four children are now in college, the farmhouse is still put to good use by the remaining family and good friends. “It stretched our budget, but we love it,” Julie says. “It’s an escape to the beach or countryside without leaving home.” ■



The exquisite pool is the centerpiece of this unique property. Patios and verandas all focus toward its sparkling glory.

A 1957 Oldsmobile adds to the Americana vibe of the property (left).