

A Modern Mix

A mid-century beach house melds Southern California architecture with Italian styling and Asian accents



hidden heat

The flush-mounted heaters blend into the ceiling and don't detract from the view. In the shoulder season, the couple can still throw open the glass doors and remain warm.



room for a view

The motorized hood fan over the central island sucks up exhaust in a snap. But the movable fan also has an important esthetic role. When raised, it provides an unobstructed ocean and garden view.

TEXT AMY TYLER MAIR PHOTOGRAPHY ROB CAMPBELL

The tomato red island in Jonathan and Maia Brown's modern beach home kitchen is a jolt of colour in an otherwise Zen-like environment. The couple's builder, Ron Kliewer, says the punch of colour is reflective of Jonathan and Maia's personality. "It shares a little of who they are," says Kliewer. "There is a bit of an eccentric side to them. The punch of red also keeps you awake. It keeps your interest. There is an element of excitement. You enter the home and walk past an exposed concrete wall and all the sudden the kitchen is red. Why not?"

From the start, the Browns were inspired by Case Study Houses, a group of mid-20th-century residential homes built primarily in Southern California, featuring flat roofs, floor-to-ceiling windows and utilitarian design. The young family also wanted to maximize

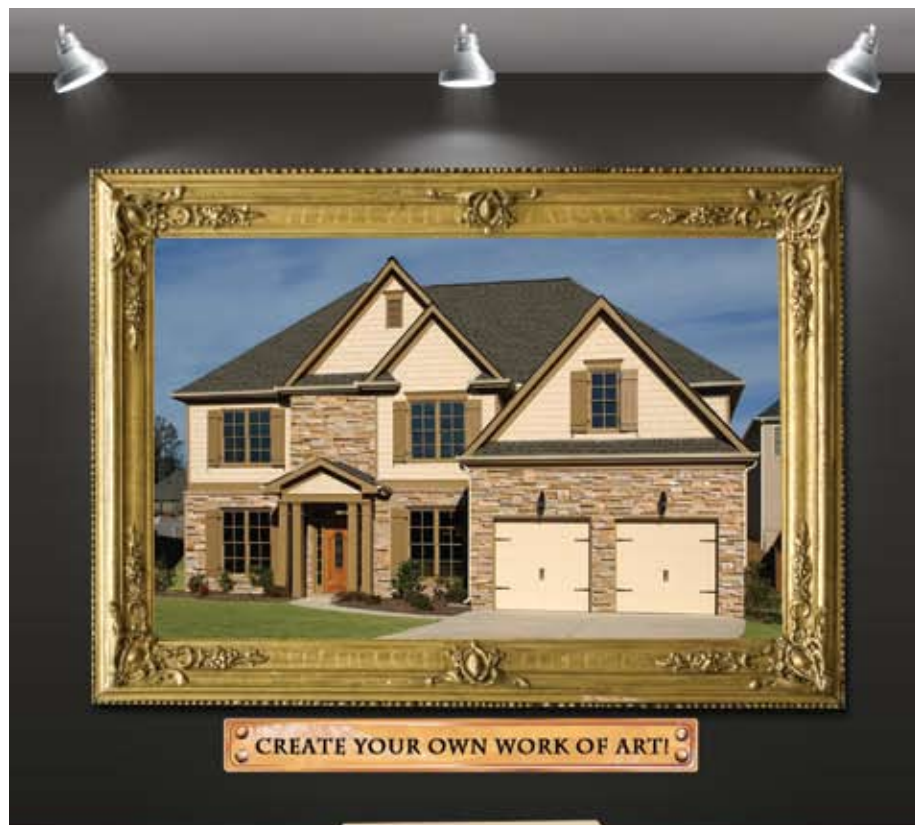
the White Rock home's ocean view and highlight their tropical garden full of banana trees, black bamboo and exotic grasses.

When it came to the kitchen, the Browns knew they wanted a mid-century-modern feel with ample storage.

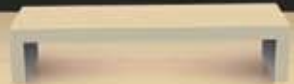
"We didn't want to look at a typical kitchen with cabinets, kettles and toasters," says Maia. "Everything is clean and things are hidden away. You can ram the doors shut and you don't know what is going on behind."

To achieve an uncluttered look, the Browns opted for an Italian kitchen. The main kitchen cabinets are made of clear-coated vertical-grain white oak. The aluminum lip on the doors functions as minimalist handles.

The cabinet interiors are covered with a reflective textured-aluminum finish and many of the pantry-depth cabinets have a specific function. There is



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a plate drawer, pot drawer and cabinets with hidden recycling storage.

"It isn't just a white box on the inside," says Ron. "All the cabinets are completely finished on the inside with European accessories."

One of the most distinctive aspects of the kitchen is its unusual shape, says Ron. The house, perched on a steep hill, is built on multiple gridlines to capture views of the ocean, surrounding hillside and the pier to the east of the home. As a result, the wall by the sink



EVERYTHING IN PLACE Built-in appliances and fully accessorized cabinets keep the kitchen streamlined. IN THE MIX A distinctive red chair hints at what's to come when one walks around the corner and enters the kitchen.

is placed on an angle, creating an unexpected twist on a standard L-shaped kitchen.

A white back-painted glass backsplash was selected instead of standard tile to avoid grout lines and create a calming foil to the red cabinetry below.

A stainless steel countertop with bevelled edges extends several inches up the sink wall, and this material



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glass + light

The key to the Browns indoor/outdoor space is the 35-foot-wide floor to ceiling glass door system separating the open family kitchen area from the deck. "People will often put in double French doors and then a series of windows because they figure a couch might be covering up the glass space, so why bother," says the Browns' builder Ron Kliewer. "A sliding glass door system allows you to completely open up the space." The translucent railing helps blur the line between indoors and outdoors.

exotic appeal

The couple wanted the environment surrounding their home to feel like a jungle. Along with the tropical garden, the couple has plenty of greenery inside the house and on the deck. Exotic printed throw pillows and a Buddha head extend the tropical theme into the interior of the home. □

is also used throughout the rest of the kitchen. Two integrated kitchen sinks are welded directly to the countertop for a seamless look and watertight seal. The Browns also installed two ovens in the kitchen. One is a conventional oven; the other is a steam oven that's used for cooking soups and vegetables and general baking.

All cabinetry stops just short of a lowered ceiling. "Nine-foot ceilings are considered the ideal height today," says Ron. "We lowered the ceiling a few inches and added recessed lighting. As you enter the home, the glass from the sliding glass doors extends all the way to the top. It gives the appearance of a floating ceiling and a roof structure that is light in weight."

In the adjoining family room, a blank white

wall features a built-in wood-burning fireplace. Chinese furniture and accessories, a fluorescent green couch, Canadiana art and musical instruments personalize the space.

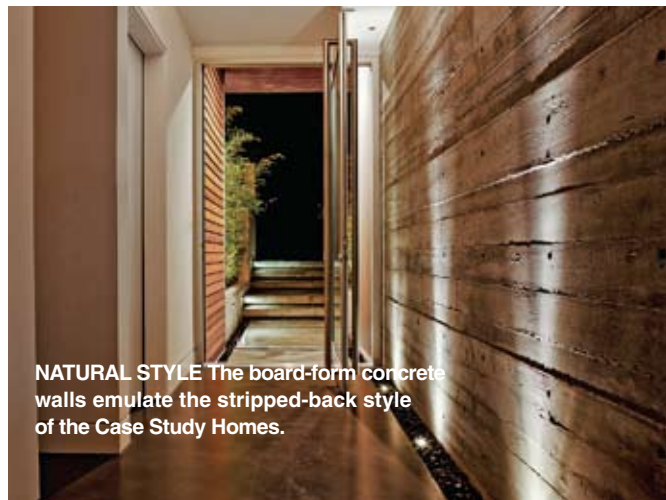
Concrete floors and raw, board-form concrete walls running along the interior hallway, emphasize the overall utilitarian feel of the space.

"The exposed concrete wall is a piece of art in itself," says Ron. "What warms it up is a little bit is the imprint of the wood grain left over from the forming process."

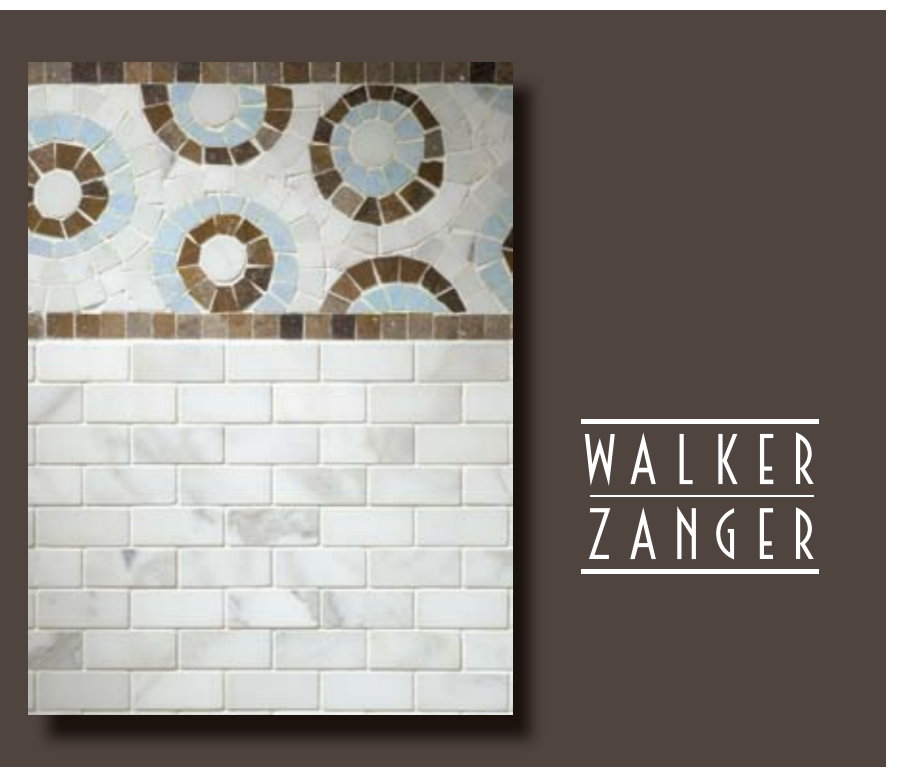
On the glass-top kitchen table rests a miniature model of Mies van der Rohe's mid-century-modern Farnsworth House, built from a Lego kit by the couple's 10-year-old son Leo. It is an ever-present reminder of the very homes that inspired the project.

"We didn't build a true Case Study or a mid-century-modern home. The lot was too steep and narrow, says Jonathan. "We tried to incorporate as many elements as we could. We love the elegance and timeless feel. They will never go out of date." ■

See SOURCES on page 50 STYLIST Heather Cameron



NATURAL STYLE The board-form concrete walls emulate the stripped-back style of the Case Study Homes.



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