

ORGANICALLY MODERN

34



Interior Designer Corinne Mathern creates a serene environment inspired by nature for a young couple in Santa Barbara.

By Victoria Abbott Riccardi

Photographs by Nicole Franzen



From the white oak casing to the honed stone island and countertops, the kitchen's natural colors and natural materials celebrate the home with an "of the earth" spirit.



Open-backed chairs with custom-woven pillows define the living room area. Colored around a selection of hand-carved stone hearth.

Left, A custom-chosen stone hearth set up with vintage rattan stools offers a gathering spot for friends and family with spectacular views.



A simple border—designed to hold pots of lush greenery—defines the second-level deck.

Above, A second-level nook offers a light-drenched spot for reading, thanks to the home's abundance of windows.



W

When a young couple saw this 3,000-square-foot home on a hillside in the Mission Canyon area of Santa Barbara, California, it had almost everything they wanted. It offered year-round sunshine in a peaceful rural setting, spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean, abundant space for them and their two wire-haired pointer Griffon dogs, and a perfect indoor-outdoor feel. The only problem? The interiors didn't match the couple's style.

"It was a nice house before the renovation, but it lacked functionality and warmth in many of the spaces," says the wife. Indeed, the two-level home, built in 2011, had great flow and a spacious, airy feeling. In addition to open-concept space, the property had floor-to-ceiling windows and doors that fully opened. What the couple needed was a designer to overhaul the interiors.



The dining area is part of the open-level space, which is designed to maximize the natural light throughout.

Enter Corinne Mathern, a California-based interior designer known for creating serene, elegant environments inspired by the natural world. "We feel so lucky to have been introduced to her by our architect, and from the start, we had a very natural rapport," says the wife. "After discussing the design direction we hoped to go in, Corinne used the term 'organic modernism' as the aesthetic. We felt like, 'Yes, you get us!' and that's what drove the project."

Mathern used various raw materials to soften the architecture's sleek lines and add

a welcoming feel throughout the house. On the ground floor, white oak warms the ceilings of the great room, a free-flowing space composed of the kitchen, bar, and dining and living room areas. The wood also accents many of the furnishings, including the chairs and dining area table topped with obsidian quartzite. White oak stools tuck under the quartzite island in the kitchen area, which has two-toned walnut cabinetry. Walnut also graces the cupboards of the nearby bar, appointed with a sea pearl quartzite countertop and charcoal plaster

A Kallista soaking tub feels right at home in the Asian-inspired bath with tile flooring and custom white oak millwork. Saturated sage green walls in Benjamin Moore "Victorian Garden" give this media room an intimate feel.



38

backslash. "I'm not afraid of mixing woods and bringing in a lot of natural elements," says Mathern, who used creamy, natural plaster to surround the living area fireplace set with a chunky stone hearth chiseled from an 800-pound block of Indian Buff limestone. "The natural plaster and stone hearth give the space a calm, earthy feeling, and we brought those same natural elements into the downstairs guest bath." The bathroom sink was chiseled from the same Indian Buff limestone as the hearth and has a white oak apron. An oak mirror hangs above the sink area, tying the two elements together.

A huge priority for the couple was remodeling the primary bedroom and bath, a fully detached space above the garage about twenty yards from the main house. "The wife really wanted the space to feel like an elegant hotel, where they could lay their heads and

feel calm," says Mathern. "The couple has traveled extensively, and a big source of inspiration for the home and their bedroom was the Aman Kyoto in Japan."

White oak flooring and a custom white oak wall behind the couple's bed give the room an earthy warmth. A wheat-colored area rug softens and grounds the room, while natural linen drapery offers privacy. Other than two oak bedside tables, the room is soothingly minimalist.

White oak millwork also adds an organic glow to the primary bath, separated from the bedroom with pocket doors. Next to a large window that ushers in views of nature and copious light sits a luxurious soaking tub. Large-format floor tiles in a warm gray anchor the space.

An expansive deck off the suite lets the couple savor morning coffee or twilight

drinks al fresco. In a nod to the concept of staying in a hotel, Mathern furnished the guest suite next to the couple's quarters with a full bar, refrigerator, and coffee maker.

To enhance the home's natural flow, Mathern used the same floor tiles in the primary bath as the ground floor's surface. The tiles even extend outside to a covered patio area and around the lap pool, creating a seamless link between the inside and out. Shrubs, flowering plants, and grasses add color and soften the architecture's clean edges. A chunky stone firepit in a gravel "garden" offers a secluded place to contemplate the views and hang out with friends.

Given the couple's love of entertaining, Mathern created a media room on the ground floor to the left of the entry. The husband, who retired from the Dallas Cowboys in 2021 after an eleven-year career, now has a place



39

for movie nights and game days. A ten-foot pocket door gives the space a cave-like feel, further enhanced by forest-green walls and a pine-colored linen sofa. "Green was really the only color we worked with, except for some blues," says the designer. Most of the home's colors come from natural materials, like wood, stone, clay, and plaster.

"It's so wonderful to finally feel the home's full realization with comfortable spaces that fully function," says the wife. "To be able to cook in our kitchen with our doors wide open to the views of the Pacific Ocean is such a privilege that we don't take for granted. We are particularly pleased with the primary bedroom suite, which feels just as luxurious as a hotel, but homey, cozy, and completely ours, in a way that a hotel never can."*

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT corinnemathern.com



The minimalist, Japanese-inspired character of the primary bedroom is further enhanced by a forest-green wall and a pine-colored linen sofa.

Above: In a nod to the concept of staying in a hotel, Mathern furnished the guest suite with a full bar, refrigerator, and coffee maker.

*Corinne Mathern and her husband, Matt, are the authors of the book "The Art of Living: A Guide to the Art of Living."