

At Home with Bryan Cranston

Bryan Cranston and his wife, Robin Dearden, relax on a Lagune sofa by Roche Bobois. The couple's home occupies a beachfront site that they've owned for several years. The original structure, affectionately dubbed the "love shack" was born as 1940s-era military housing that in subsequent decades became an uneven hodgepodge that defied local permits and was slowly sinking into the sand.



The star of *Breaking Bad* opens the doors to his family's recently completed beach house located just outside of Los Angeles.

As told to Amanda Dameron
Photos by Art Streiber



Tell us about the original structure.

Bryan: It was literally a shack, a kind of Quonset hut that became a lean-to. It kept changing—people adjusting the roofline and adding more space onto it. Then it got to be the 1960s, the hippie days, and the building was encroaching on neighbors' property, [there were] no permits drawn. Two-by-fours beneath the building like carpeting, then a layer of plywood, then on top of that rested two-by-sixes that were embedded in the sand. So the whole house just listed. When you'd walk through it, you could feel the mushy moisture, the salt air-softened wood.

Robin: There was carpeting in the kitchen that looked like it came from the Golden Nugget in Vegas in the 1960s. The back bathroom was so small that you could sit on the toilet and wash your hands at the same time. It got to the point that I didn't want to come anymore except to sit on the deck. You just knew there was mold. It was not a healthy house. We came up only on the weekends, and it became quite the party house.

Bryan: It was really fun—we called it the "love shack." But it truly outlived its purpose, and it was incredibly wasteful, energy-wise. ▶▶



Roche Bobois Ublo barstools pull up to the kitchen island; a Reduced fixture from Louis Poulsen hangs above. The dining area features a Lunch Time dining table and Chabada chairs, also from Roche Bobois. A detail shot (above) shows a small aperture between the kitchen wall and the deck outside, where the family likes to grill. Bryan and Robin relax in a corner of the living room (right); the custom rug is from the Rug Affair.



Cranston collaborated with project designer John A. Turturro and builder Bryan Henson of Allen Associates on the 2,400-square-foot house. The architect of record is Larry Graves. Eco-conscious materials were key: In the kitchen, Poggenpohl cabinets were chosen for their recycled wood content and for the company's low-waste factory efficiency. The Sub-Zero Wolf refrigerator uses less energy than a 100-watt light bulb.

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Outside the living room is outdoor furniture by Richard Frinier for Brown Jordan, selected for its powder-coated cast aluminum and its easily reupholstered slings. The deck, warmed by radiant heat, is poured-in-place structural concrete slab consisting of 25 percent fly ash, a coal-burning by-product that increases the durability of the concrete. The railing is a custom design of Turturro's and was fabricated by Trico Welding.



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How long did you occupy it before deciding to renovate?

We were there for a couple of years! I thought, Well, it doesn't make any sense to just buy it and tear it down because it will take years to get the right permits. So we used it as our little flop shack—we'd sleep on the floor, sleep on the deck, sleep in the little bedrooms that we had. We were there about three years before we tore it down.

So living at the site for years, you must have been planning the new house in your mind the entire time.

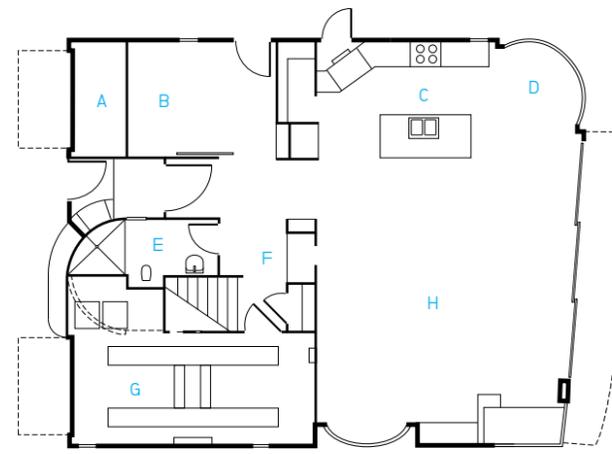
Bryan: Yes, that's very true. During that time I saw firsthand what a storm surge could do, flinging rocks like they were pebbles. There were cracked windows. Fortunately the new house's deck is several feet taller, and we are situated farther from the ocean than we were before. Also a permit thing.

Robin: I'll probably get more and more fond of the old house the further away I get from it.

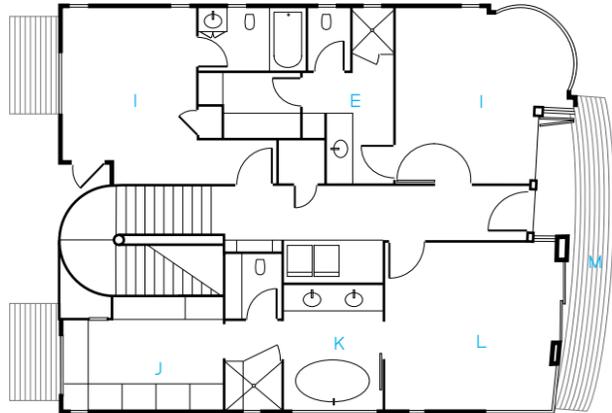
How did you use the original house as opposed to the way you live in the current one?

Bryan: [The first house] had become a party place and people would bring up the worst crap—bad food, booze, and beer, mixing drinks at ten in the

First Floor



Second Floor



Cranston House Floor Plan

- A Loft
- B Media Room
- C Kitchen
- D Dining
- E Bathroom
- F Office
- G Garage
- H Living Room
- I Bedroom
- J Walk-in closet
- K Master Bathroom
- L Master Bedroom
- M Balcony



In a bedroom that's used for guests, Robin demonstrates a foldable Murphy bed system, the Nuovoliola '10 from Clei/Resource Furniture. The artwork, *Orange Fish*, is by Pablo Campos. "Efficiency is really important, even more so when you're dealing with minimal square footage," Cranston explains. "I'm a stickler—I want every square inch to make sense."

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For the facade, exposed to the constant salt air, the team considered everything from copper or zinc to Kynar-coated aluminum. Eventually, a sample of titanium was tacked up for six months and showed no wear. "Part of the green philosophy is not just what is cheaper; it's what's sustainable," Cranston explains. "The titanium cladding was more expensive, but this is a house we plan to be in for the rest of our lives, so we wanted something that needed virtually no maintenance."



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Crowning the interior hallway is a Louis Poulsen PH Artichoke pendant (left). The narrow apertures were designed to funnel the ocean breeze, contributing to the home's passive cooling program. The walls are covered in American Clay, which helps to control humidity. In a corner of the living room (above) recessed automated shades provide glare control. All of the house's shades are programmed by season

and time of day through both the Lutron HomeWorks and ELAN home systems, which can be controlled through Bryan's iPad, even when he's on location filming. In the master bedroom (below), *Azul Giorgione* by Alberto Gálvez hangs above a locally manufactured bed from Soluzioni. The sheets, pillow cases and blanket are from Restoration Hardware; the decorative pillows and quilted coverlet are from Bed, Bath, and Beyond.

morning. We talked about it and decided to change the energy of this place completely. It's now our home, and we didn't want it to represent a lifestyle that we didn't want to perpetuate.

You had a group of people working on this project. Can you share some details of that process?

Bryan: If you like putting puzzles together, building a house is just that. I like the act of translating the two-dimensional into three-dimensional, looking at floor plans and imagining walking into a room and what I'm going to see, what I'm going to feel. I love architecture, it's a rich artistic history and it strikes me, it moves me, there's a message to it. In my business, it's about storytelling, and I think there's storytelling in architecture. It's all about having function and style working together. ▶



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Robin: My part of the conversation was more about aesthetics. I worked with John Turturro on the inside of the house, the furniture, the colors. I had a blast decorating, and it was a real learning experience because John knows his stuff. Our other house is very East Coast, very traditional. It's a whole different look for me, and I like it.

Your design team is pursuing LEED Platinum and Passive House U.S. certification. Why were these designations important to you?

Bryan: The sense of repurposing has been in my blood for a long time. If you have parents who grew up in the Depression, it's hammered into them—nothing goes to waste, not food, clothing, not a tin can. That was just part of our upbringing, we were raised with that frugality, and it's who I am. I've been recycling ever since I was a child. It's automatic to separate what is reusable. I believe we should live responsibly all the way around. ■■■

dwell.com/cranston
Head online for more about the project and to see shots of the original "love shack."



"We should be creating more energy than we need in this house," Cranston explains. The roof's solar array, from Schuco, contributes greatly.

In the garage (left), a collection of smart-home technology is on display alongside a Bendpak Auto Lift, which builder Bryan Henson calls "an integral part of the house's design: With the lift in place we met the county's requirements for two covered parking spaces in a narrower garage bay. This freed up nearly 400 square feet of precious floor area on the other side of the house to accommodate both a mechanical room and a media room on the first floor."

Other mechanisms include a Broan whole house vacuum system that keeps the indoor air free of dust and allergens; a Lutron HomeWorks system that controls lighting and shades; an ELAN g! home system that controls irrigation, lighting, and security; and an AM House home-entertainment rack.

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