



FRESH START

BACHELOR PAD REMODELED INTO HOME FOR NEWLYWEDS

BY MARTINA SCHIMITSCHEK

One year ago, Joan and Craig Leimkuehler finally got married. Neither of the two, both in their 50s, had wed before.

The couple had known each other for 17 years. They were one of the original internet dating success stories, quipped Craig, who is retired from retail management. They knew they would eventually get married, but they were both taking care of aging parents. After Craig's mother died in 2015, it was time to set a date.

But there was much to do before the celebration. One was to completely remodel the two-story Encinitas house where Craig had lived since 1984.

Joan, an assistant director at the VA hospital, was originally hesitant to move into the

home where Craig had lived with his mother for so long. But after some house hunting, they decided they loved the neighborhood, and with a complete overhaul, they could make the home their own.

Everything was dated in the 40-year-old house, from the popcorn ceiling to the blue and gray Berber-style carpeting.

"It was very much a bachelor's pad. It needed a fresh perspective," said Pamela Johnston, senior interior designer for Jackson Design and Remodeling, who was tasked with the redesign of the three-bedroom, three-bathroom, 1,900-square-foot house.

She and her team were also given a deadline for the project, which started in February 2016. It had to be completed before



JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING PHOTOS

By moving the fireplace from the center of the living room wall to the corner, interior designer Pamela Johnston created space for seating and the TV. Stacked quartzite walls and a farmhouse sink add to the kitchen's warm, rustic feel.

SEE ENCINITAS • 22

Encinitas

CONTINUED FROM 20

the September wedding.

Craig and Joan agreed on a style they called “Mid-century, industrial modern” with rustic farmhouse flair. Topping their list were a more open floor plan, a brighter, more accessible kitchen and his and hers bathrooms.

The wall between the living and dining rooms was removed, as was the kitchen peninsula, which made it hard to squeeze in and out of the kitchen. That allowed for a bigger opening from the kitchen to the dining area and an easier flow throughout the first floor.

To reduce the mass of the stairwell in the middle of the floor, the closet underneath was removed. The stairs, now clad in beech wood with cable railings, stand out as an architectural element.

The living room makeover included moving the fireplace from the center of the wall to the side near the backyard. “We wanted something they could use for added seating,” Johnston said. “And there was no place for the TV, so we moved the fireplace into the corner.”

A black granite bench now spans the wall, extending out from the split-face, travertine fireplace wall. The horizontal line of the bench adds a Mid-century flair, between the rustic feel of the stone fireplace and the natural wood cabinet and coffee table. The floor throughout is vinyl plank for easy care.

Natural stone and wood elements continue in the kitchen with stacked quartzite on the walls and oak Shaker-style cabinets. A small farmhouse sink overlooks the backyard, where the Leimkuehlers have added vegetable and flower beds.

On the opposite side of the sink, Johnston added a walk-in pantry and laundry closet hidden by opaque sliding-glass doors trimmed with black aluminum that are in keeping with the industrial look. A small island with seating for two overlooking the yard replaced the kitchen table. The island adds storage lost when some of the



JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING

A closet under the second flight of stairs was removed to open the area. A desk from Craig Leimkuehler’s grandmother - the only original piece of furniture left - occupies the space.

cabinets came down to open the space.

Upstairs, the Leimkuehlers each have what Craig called the “man and woman caves” - offices that can be used as guest rooms. Joan’s has a bright aqua accent wall and a Murphy bed, while Craig’s has a wood veneer wall, a TV and a foldout sofa. The wood wall, created with peel and stick tiles, gives the room a masculine feel.

“It’s a nice way to quickly transform a space,” Johnston said.

The master bathroom, which is Craig’s space, also has a slightly masculine feel with porcelain floor tiles that have the look of wood, a glass-and-stone tile shower surround and a cut pebble shower floor.

The hall bathroom was transformed into a Zen space for Joan by straightening out awkwardly angled corners and adding a jetted tub and porcelain floor tiles that look like stone.

“It stops a lot of fights,” Craig quipped about the sepa-



JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING

The corner fireplace in the master bedroom mimics the one in the living room. A vaulted wood-beamed ceiling adds a sense of spaciousness. The home was completely remodeled before Craig and Joan Leimkuehler’s wedding a year ago.

rate bathrooms.

The master bedroom also has a corner fireplace with the same stone as the one in the living room. The open-beamed

ceiling helps make it a bright, airy space with an adjoining balcony, which has treetop views.

Joan’s touch can be seen

throughout the home. The fish in her father’s artwork, which hangs in the dining room, were re-created on pillows that sit on the cantilevered living room bench. And each room has something black - design advice from Joan’s mother who had told her that every room needed something black to anchor it.

The balcony and the deck became part of the remodel when dry rot was found. Both have been rebuilt, and the deck now has a dining area and a seating area with fire pit.

For the finishing touch, the team painted the dark wood exterior of the house a weathered gray. The only things left untouched were three panels of stained glass at the top of the stairs - something Craig wanted to keep as an homage to the original home.

“It feels totally different,” Craig said of the house. “It feels like I’m living in a luxury hotel.”

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