

# FAMILY RECIPE

## RENOVATION WHIPS UP BRIGHT, FUNCTIONAL DESIGN FOR 5

BY CARON GOLDEN

When you have three active young boys, the ideal “forever” home has lots of room for all their energy to disperse — not to mention space for friends — be easy to keep organized and be low maintenance (also read easy to clean). And, it should have the potential — once all those boys are off on their own — for Mom and Dad to age in place comfortably with a downstairs bedroom and bathroom.

That was the mandate of a Del Mar couple who had bought their 1972-era home in 2007 and found that by 2019, with three sons, changes to their dated home needed to be made.

The original 2,500-square-foot house had five bedrooms and three bathrooms — and still does. Mom and Dad have an upstairs suite. The rest of the rooms



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**This 1972 2,500-square-foot home in Del Mar was updated and expanded to accommodate the homeowners' changing needs and plans for the future.**

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**The large island, which seats six, serves as the focal point in the new kitchen. There is ample storage throughout the room, with cabinetry featuring durable Fenix laminate surfaces, which are resistant to fingerprints and abrasions.**

## Del Mar

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and baths are on the first floor, and typical of that '70's era, were a maze of rooms off narrow hallways that felt tight and dark. The cramped kitchen and dining room were separated by a wall and had contrasting flooring. The kitchen had Saltillo tiles, while hardwood was in the dining room.

The original fireplace in the front of the home was charming if you like heavy stacked stone, but the couple, who wished to remain anonymous, wanted a more modern look.

Then there were the two downstairs bathrooms shared by the boys. They were tired and small, and one reflected a peculiar '70s style of separating the vanity from the rest of the space.

Lastly, there was the laundry room, off the entrance from the attached garage. It was a narrow space, wholly unworkable for a



**The original, smaller kitchen and dining room were separated by a wall and had contrasting flooring.**

family of five.

Indeed, you could say that about the rest of the house. The couple weren't interested in adding more bedrooms and baths. They wanted to be able to spread

out in a house better suited to 21st century family life. And, they wanted the home's exterior to get a facelift that matched a light, bright new interior.

The couple reached out to

an office and the old fireplace was closed up. The laundry room was relocated by the office and expanded, allowing that hallway space off the garage to be transformed into a mudroom. The downstairs bathrooms were redesigned and updated. And the home's exterior was cleaned up and refreshed.

"They're a really busy family of five, with a lot of extracurricular activities and sports so they just wanted a space with more room and that felt organized," Contreras said. "They wanted a home that would make their lives easier. They hadn't done a lot to the house before, although some of it probably was remodeled by a previous owner. And that made it look kind of disjointed."

Contreras described the couple's style as modern but almost transitional. Being in Del Mar, the family loves the beach, and the house reflects a soft coastal palette of grays and blues.

"It's light and bright and very

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Like the kitchen, the family room features a great deal of natural light, including a sliding glass door that opens onto the patio and yard.

## Del Mar

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soothing,” Contreras said.

Hall had to design the addition at a 45-degree angle in order for the addition to fit into the lot.

“It’s a bit less conventional,” said Hall, “but it created a unique connection between the main living space and the dining room to the backyard with two 12-foot-wide sliding glass door systems. It was a nice balance of being both separated and connected. And while it’s all open, the angle, looking in from the home’s entrance, creates visual interest. But designing that angle was a challenge. Every inch had to be right; it had to be precise.”

The kitchen’s focal point is its massive island, which seats four across and two on one end. There’s plenty of storage in the gray DeWils Fenix cabinets on the working side of the island, where the undermounted Kohler



The original fireplace in the front of the home, featuring heavy stacked stone, was closed up in the remodeling process.

sink and Bosch stainless steel dishwasher are, as well as at the end of the island by the Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf wall oven.

The Fenix laminate surfaces were perfect for this family, given that they’re resistant to fingerprints, scratches and abrasions

as well as extremely durable. The counter — in fact, all the new counters throughout the renovation — is white Macaubas Quartzite. The quartzite has horizontal lines of beige, blue, cream and gray running through a white background. Above the island are three smoke-colored Mini Isla glass pendants from Circa Lighting.

A white version of the Fenix cabinetry is used on two sides of the island. Behind the Wolf range top and Vent-a-Hood stainless steel hood is a glittering Tessera cast glass mosaic tile backsplash from Oceanside Glass & Tile. There are two appliance garages and plenty of cabinet storage. Next to the refrigerator, Hall designed a large walk-in pantry with a smoky glass door. The effect is an efficient workspace with plenty of chill and lots of light. It’s a perfect gathering space for family and the boys’ friends.

“We wanted something that was open and light,” Contreras



explained. “The white cabinetry was going to bring in that light and add the brightness to the room. And then we picked out some colors off the countertop for the cabinetry below. The pendants are see through so they don’t feel heavy. It’s just another way to make the kitchen feel light.”

The kitchen is tied to the family room in the addition. And the family room is a clean, simple space featuring a sleek fireplace constructed from Haisa Blue Honed Stack Stone from Arizona Tile. The custom rustic modern mantel has an unusual feature.

“The husband, who is an engineer, wanted to hide the soundbar so we decided to put that in the mantel,” explained Hall. “When it opens, the front cover tucks underneath the mantel with magnets.”

The same cabinetry and countertop in the kitchen were built in on either side of the fireplace. As for the furniture, the couple kept the lounge chair they already had but purchased a large, leather sectional and area rug from Arhaus in La Jolla. The family room, like the kitchen, is filled with light, thanks also to the wall of glass, including the slider that opens onto the patio



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**Built-in storage and sleek display shelving create a hallway off the dining room.**


and yard.

In the original section of the structure’s downstairs, what had been the dining space and site of the lounge chair at the home’s entrance was transformed into a

bright, simple dining room with a built-in storage and display-shelving wall that created an open hall between it and the new laundry room. The dining room, too, opens to the patio, bringing

a flood of light into a previously dark space. Even the caged pendant over the family’s long-time dining table was selected to

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# Del Mar

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add to the airiness of the room.

Then there are the bathrooms. The two younger boys share one, and the original was cramped, with a single sink next to the toilet, which was next to the bath/shower combo. Contreras elongated the space and was able to fit in a dual vanity with dark gray cabinetry and black hardware, a separate toilet and enclosed shower/tub outfitted with 1-inch-square Platinum Non-Iridescent Glass Mosaic Tile from Oceanside Glass & Tile. The bathroom floor is digital white tile from Arizona Tile.

The second downstairs bathroom for the oldest son — and which the parents intend to use down the road — is the one that had that peculiar division between the open vanity and the rest of the bathroom. The wall that divided them was removed and a pocket door to the bathroom to create privacy was installed. Contreras designed a separate water closet next to the shower, which features two showerheads, white 4-inch-by-16-inch subway tiles on the walls, 12-inch-



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**The brick patio was replaced with a concrete slab and a patio cover overhead for shade.**

by-12-inch matte dark gray hexagon tiles on the floor and the same glass mosaic tiles for the niche as the younger boys' bathroom. Those tiles are also the

backsplash above the vanity, which has a wall-mounted, polished chrome Kohler faucet. Lighting the vanity are a pair of West Elm Light Rod sconces in

black. The bathroom's floor is 12-inch-by-24-inch digital gray tile from Arizona Tile.

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One of the original bathrooms was elongated to fit in a dual vanity with a separate toilet and enclosed shower/tub.

GemCore composite flooring — which is waterproof as well as dent- and scratch-resistant — was installed throughout the public spaces of the house. It was another concession to growing boys. The couple chose the Ruby collection, which has a 7-inch-wide plank.

In the backyard, Hall had a white Outdoor Elements louvered patio cover installed to create shade. The former brick patio was replaced by a light concrete slab.

Then there was the makeover of the front of the house. What had been an imposing boxy and dark entrance with no curb appeal was transformed into an open, light and welcoming first impression. Originally overgrown palms hid everything but the garage, but a cleaned-up and re-

done landscape with low-maintenance synthetic turf opened the entrance to reveal the full width of the house and a front yard. Hall removed the brick and deteriorating railroad ties of the driveway and replaced them with clean concrete. The original stone remains as a nice accent on the garage and arched entry. The original diagonal glass-block windows on the second floor over the garage were removed and filled in; the front of the house got new stucco and paint.

Hall and Contreras started the project in July 2019 and completed it in August 2020.

“Everything ran more smoothly than what we’re typically used to or what we can anticipate,” Hall said.

Caron Golden is a freelance writer.



An open hallway adjacent to the dining room leads to the home’s new laundry room.

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