

# CONSCIENTIOUSLY CONTEMPORARY

A La Jolla couple replaces their beachside bungalow with their vision of a perfect home

BY JENNIFER McENTEE  
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The look of a contemporary La Jolla home may appear effortless with its clean lines, diffused sunlight and bamboo swaying in the ocean breeze. But its creation was the culmination and refinement of myriad ideas.

The design-minded couple who commissioned its construction wanted a home in which they could age gracefully while satisfying a desire for form, function, light and privacy. Their beachside bungalow had served them well for several years, but it wasn't a modern indoor/outdoor home that reflected their lifelong love of art, architecture and design.

"They have for years had this vision of their perfect home. They had this little sketch on lined notebook paper," says Jim Groen, senior architect for Jackson Design and Remodeling.

They envisioned a single-story home with a Zen-like courtyard, a bright, open floor plan for the dining, kitchen and

living room areas; and sleek finishes and fixtures.

"They wanted something architectural and contemporary," Jim says, adding that he enjoyed bringing the home from rough sketch to reality. "It was a blast."

The homeowners were so committed to their design ideals that they were willing to raze the 1970s-era bungalow, endure coastal and community group reviews, and dedicate a sizable budget to ensure everything was just right.

"They took this one to a level that allowed us to do as a team what we were hoping we could accomplish," Jim says. "They chose wonderful products and detailing. It allowed us to be creative and come up with really interesting ideas for the textures and materials."

"I think they have a very good understanding of design and appreciate architecture," Senior Interior Designer Rosella Gonzalez says. "So they were willing to spend a little bit



The focus in the central living space is the fireplace and its open-ended firebox with a backing mosaic of iridescent tiles. The sculpture on the stone façade is a turtle crafted by Ryder Sloane Mackey from rebar and driftwood.





more where it was worth it, and they kind of knew where it was worth it.”

The attention to detail begins at the curb. As conceived by Falling Waters Landscape, the outdoor spaces include Japanese black pine trees being trained as bonsai. King palms flank the garage, whose door is made of opaque-glass panes framed in aluminum with a bronze anodized finish.

Western red cedar in 4-, 6- and 8-inch widths clads the right half of the home’s exterior, while the left side is smooth-finish stucco in a grayish white called *London Fog*. A powder-

coated trellis for bougainvillea was custom designed to extend over a master-bedroom window allowing light to filter in while affording privacy.

“We wanted to give the house a casual feel and some texture, especially since everything is so structured,” Jim says.

The exposed aggregate and river rock entryway leads to opaque-glass windows and a custom steel door in a faux-rust finish, fitted with a panel of green and blue sea glass collected by the homeowners on walks along beaches around the world.

**Above:** The porcelain-tile flooring in the entryway transitions to European white oak planks. Backlit wall niches showcase the homeowners’ collectibles.

**Right:** A custom wall unit made to match kitchen cabinetry includes a sliding 3form panel that conceals a flat-screen television and other electronics when they are not in use. Built-in under-lighting adds impact.



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The entryway flooring of glazed porcelain tiles with a metallic look mimics the faux-rust finish of the door. Beyond the entryway, the flooring transitions to European white oak planks.

The main living space centers on an ethanol-fueled fireplace faced with color-flecked andesite. Iridescent glass mosaic tiles back the open-ended firebox. The fireplace stands alone when glass pocket doors on both sides are opened to the outdoor deck.

The minimal backyard space is low maintenance. An L-shaped bench of red cedar with a concrete back provides seating near a fire bowl that doubles as a table when covered with a red cedar top. A trickling fountain cancels out street noise, and a stand of

bamboo screens off neighboring properties. A corner notch for a built-in Lynx grill adds a pop of color with a lining of bright green tile.

The ceiling height in the home gradually slopes from 12 to 14 feet, a feature intended to soften the architecture's geometrical lines. Drywall reveals along the ceiling accentuate the angle.

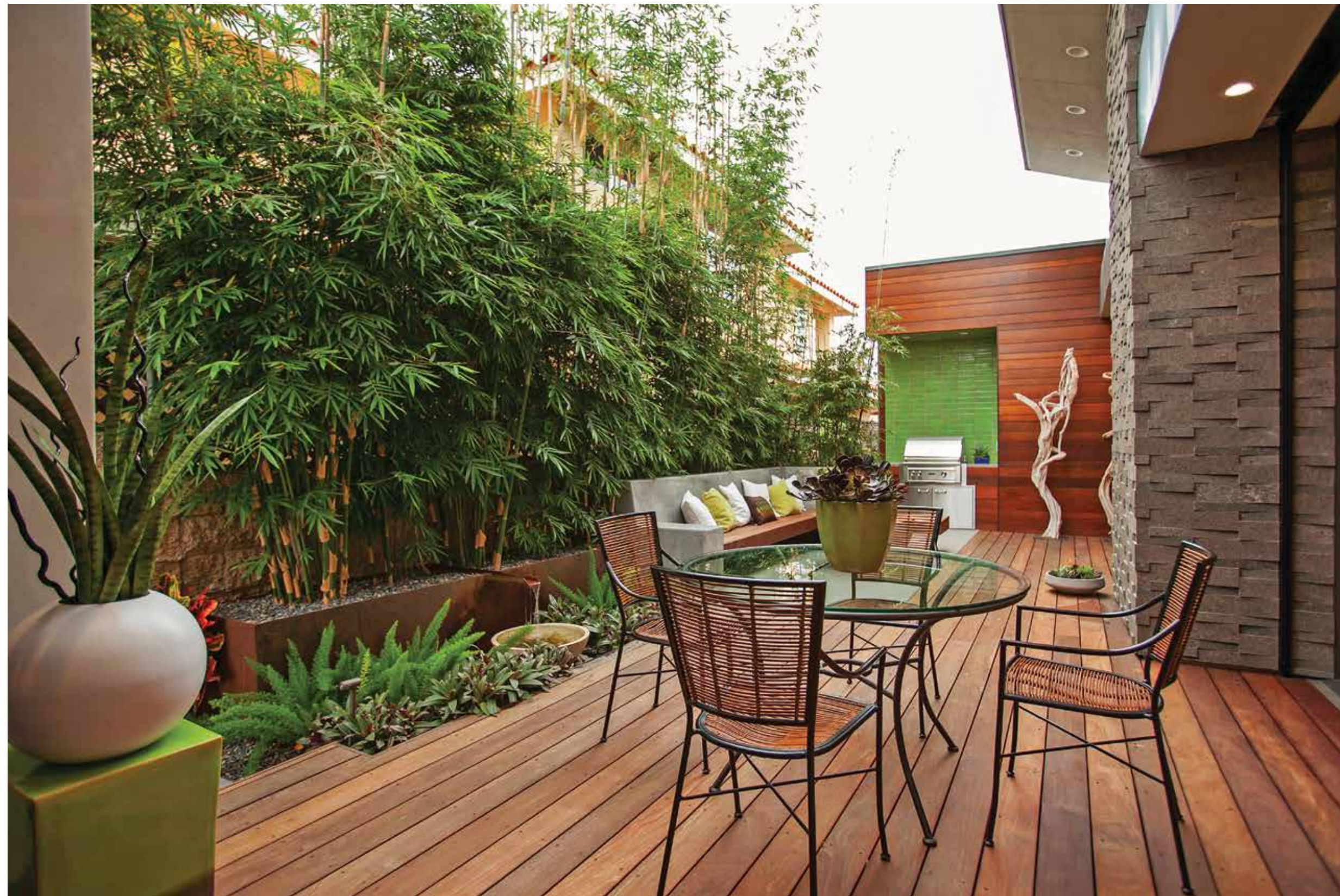
"It's subtle, but we wanted to make it noticeable," Jim says.

Anchored by a 12-foot island with seating at one corner, the kitchen features dark wenge wood cabinetry contrasting with white Caesarstone countertops. Open shelves and a trio of cabinets with sleek, white-glass doors line a wall of glazed tiles in a basket-weave pattern. Suspended over the island is

**Left:** The kitchen is anchored by a 12-foot island with a 10-foot task light overhead. White-glass doors on upper cabinets contrast with the dark wenge wood cabinetry and complement the hard-glazed backsplash tiles.

**Above:** A large niche makes an ideal spot for a sideboard and helps call attention to a 250-year-old Chinese window screen hung as artwork.





The deck features an L-shaped bench backed by a wall of bamboo. At the far end is a barbecue station notched into the exterior cedar and highlighted with bright-green tile. Red cedar also was used for the bench seat and to top a concrete fire bowl that doubles as a table (above left).

a 10-foot-long task light, and above that is a 6-foot-long skylight.

Light is an important element of the home's design. Clerestory windows throughout bring in natural light while maintaining privacy. LED lighting is tucked under upper kitchen cabinetry and the shelves of the living room's built-in media center. Light fixtures in neutral colors tend toward Mid-century Modern shapes, including a George Nelson *Saucer Lamp* and Bocci globes

over the dining table. Tubular skylights brighten the laundry room and closets.

While modern style prevails here, design elements hint at the home's proximity to the ocean. Art pieces crafted from driftwood are installed inside and out. Ocean colors, shells and pebbles accent bathroom floors, countertops and tile work.

"It's a very simple house overall," Jim says. "What matters are the materials and how they're applied." ❖