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NOVEMBER 2019
THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

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GREEN SOLUTIONS

MODERN BEACH HOUSE A LESSON IN
LUXE, ENERGY-CONSCIOUS DESIGN

POLISHING A CLASSIC

REMODEL BRIDGES MODERN UPGRADES
AND 1930s SPANISH CHARM

DESIGN DREAM COME TRUE

ECO-FRIENDLY BEACH HOME IN LA JOLLA SHOWCASES OPEN PLAN, MODERN VISION

BY CARON GOLDEN

When Jill Nooren decided she wanted to build a home in La Jolla Shores, she had four stated priorities: It should be LEED Platinum certified, have a great-room concept, have a separate bathroom for everyone, and it should be minimalist.

The resulting 2,725-square-foot home just a couple of blocks away from Avenida de la Playa and the beach beyond is a sleek, modern, light-filled two-story space that — while tailored for the needs of Nooren and her family — is also designed to let her easily rent it out during the summer.

Nooren, a Realtor, worked with architect David Keitel from domusstudio architecture to develop what she calls her “Barbie Dream House.” The square home, she points out with amuse-



BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

A large terrace with an outdoor grill, plenty of bench seating and a fountain connects with the living room-kitchen, separated by folding glass doors. A long country-style oak table seats six.

La Jolla

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ment, is shaped exactly like the tri-fold cardboard dollhouse she played with as a young girl, when it was folded up.

She and her kids checked out lots of coastal homes — as surfers, they wanted to be near the beach — and in the process had seen other houses Keitel had designed.

“David came up with many ideas and listened to what we wanted,” said Nooren, who grew up in Iowa but envisioned a non-traditional floor plan.

Nooren bought the property, with its 800-square-foot Spanish-style cottage, in 2009. The idea was to tear it down and go the opposite way from the huge traditional house she had left in Iowa, that had large rooms to which everyone in the house withdrew. Instead, she wanted a large public space that would compel the family to gather from smaller, simple private rooms — an idea that took root years earlier, thanks to that childhood dollhouse. At least one collectibles blog credits it with introducing the open-concept house plan.

“Isn’t it funny how influenced we are by the things we grow up with?” she said.

But the concept for a contemporary white house got resistance from the various neighborhood planning boards that had

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PHOTOS BY BRADY

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The eco-friendly, four-bedroom house (inset) spans 2,725 square feet; 100-year-old recycled redwood was used for the upstairs walkway (right).



PHOTOS BY BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Off the master bedroom, the upstairs terrace is large enough for a bar table and seating for four as well as two couches.

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the power of approval. Ultimately, between the approval process, the design process and actual construction, it took until 2013 for her so-called Barbie Dream House to be completed.

The four-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom, eco-friendly house that Keitel designed offers exactly what Nooren wanted from the outset. Keitel pushed back the house's footprint to create a large terrace with an outdoor grill, plenty of bench seating and a fountain that cozies up to the living room-kitchen. It's separated only by folding glass doors.

The kitchen is barely noticeable. A sink, refrigerator, and storage are on one wall, with the refrigerator masked by custom cabinetry that goes up to the ceiling, requiring a library ladder.



The owner wanted an open floor plan with a large public space that would be inviting for family gatherings. Folding glass doors separate the kitchen from the outdoor living room.

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BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Custom cabinetry goes up to the ceiling with sliding doors to conceal the pantry, handy to the kitchen area.

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The kitchen island is outfitted with an oven and a gas stovetop and topped by a massive stainless-steel hood. Alongside the island is a long country-style oak table with seating for six that Nooren had originally bought at Crate & Barrel. She had it redone to match the width of the island; the carpenter even built matching leaves that hang in a closet when not in use.

At the other end of the room are built-in bookcases and a formidable fireplace with a concrete bench for more seating. To offset the linear design of the space, Nooren chose a curved sofa, shipped to her from Holland. The effect is a light-drenched, con-

temporary space that still creates a cozy environment.

Down the hall is a guest bedroom that leads out to a smaller patio, complete with an outdoor shower to wash off surfer beach sand. And there's a powder room with a dramatic six-foot chrome faucet hanging over the sink from the ceiling.

Off the kitchen, the attached garage was converted into a performance space.

"David knew my passion for music and performing and also knew that I loved entertaining and hosting friends at my home," Nooren said, "so he came up with this second garage door idea, which opens into the courtyard so we could perform for guests.

"My own band (and my kids) have performed there, and we

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also started a house concert project a few years ago called ‘Backstage At Jill’s’ in order to host small, intimate acoustic concerts to support our local artists. It’s one of my favorite parts of the house.”

Upstairs are a utility room hidden by a barn door and three more bedrooms, including a sanctuary of a master suite. All the bedrooms have two sets of closets: one that’s lockable for the family and the other for vacation guests. Nooren has kept the décor simple with white walls, oak floors, and limited tchotchkes. The effect is cool beach aerie. In the master suite, what stands out are the master bath with its seductive, free-standing Villeroy & Boch bathtub placed at an angle next to a large window facing toward the ocean — and the stunning terrace just outside the bedroom.



BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The master bathroom is a standout for its free-standing Villeroy & Boch bathtub placed at an angle, with views to the ocean beyond.



COURTESY OF JILL NOOREN

Architect David Keitel went with a cool palette throughout the house, using rift-cut veneer oak for the cabinetry.

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The terrace is large enough for a bar table and seating for four as well as two couches. Instead of a patio cover, Keitel designed a clever solar panel trellis that is almost invisible from the street. In the evening, the family projects movies on the simple white wall below the trellis topper.

Alongside the terrace is a deck/walkway to a bedroom that is constructed from 100-year-old recycled redwood from a water tower in Temecula.

Keitel went with a cool palette throughout the house. He used rift-cut veneer oak cabinets everywhere cabinetry was needed — along one wall of the great room, for the kitchen island and pantry storage and for bathroom vanities and storage, as well as bookcases. All of the counters throughout the house are a light quartz. Concrete floors are on the first floor while oak is upstairs in the bedrooms.

Keitel succeeded in designing a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certified home. In fact, it's only the third such home designed in La Jolla. The U.S. Green Building Council uses the LEED rating system to measure a build-

ing's sustainability and resource efficiency.

Along with the solar trellis feature, Keitel installed LED lighting throughout the house. There is bedroom radiant floor heating, and the solar installation provides hot water heating. The home's irrigation system is a LEED-certified, high-efficiency smart system with rain sensors and drip irrigation. Indoor plumbing is low-flow, and the toilets have dual-flush technology. The concrete blocks that make up the outdoor benches and wall features contain 25 percent recycled content. Keitel also embraced other environmentally preferred products for construction.

"This house is the closest to my own personal style," he said.

For Nooren, the results were worth the years of pushing for what she wanted.

"Building your dream home is truly a labor of love and such an incredible opportunity to get creative," she said.

See this home and at least 13 others in the 10th annual San Diego Green Homes Tour, presented Oct. 19-20 by the San Diego Green Building Council. Visit sdgreenhometour.org for details.

Caron Golden is a San Diego freelance writer and blogger.