



Guided by Nature

This beachfront retreat charms with its global style and endless ocean views.

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Interior Architecture and Interior Design: Suzanne Tucker, Tucker & Marks
Home Builder: Bill Schultz, Schultz Construction



When reimagining this coastal home, designer Suzanne Tucker was inspired by the Spanish architecture. You can see the influence in handmade terra-cotta floor tiles from Tridentum and a stair rail by Jacobson Manufacturing in the entryway. The Moroccan bench is vintage, and the painting in the foreground is by Paul Resika.

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hen considering the work of Suzanne Tucker—a designer known for her classical styling, incorporation of antiques, and creation of sumptuous textiles—you’d be forgiven if the phrase “surf shack” isn’t the first

term that comes to mind. But when longtime clients asked the Santa Barbara-raised Tucker if she had any experience with the vernacular, she immediately replied, “I’m a beach girl, what do you have in mind?”

What the couple had in mind was a waterfront property they’d purchased on the California Coast that needed work. Noting that she’s willing to “go anywhere, as long as the clients are nice people—and if the architecture is good, that’s a plus,” Tucker took a road trip to take a look. “It has an amazing location,” she says, recalling her first impression. But the architecture? Well, let’s just say that there’s nothing Tucker can’t fix.

“I started researching the area and found many precedents for nice Spanish houses, and I became inspired,” Tucker explains. “We didn’t want to turn it into a pseudo-Spanish home but rather introduce the style with the right scale and proportion.” Working with design principal Amanda Ahlgren, builder Bill Schultz and a team of talented craftspeople (“There are a lot of skilled people up and down the coast and I felt really good about being able to utilize local people,” she notes), Tucker reworked the entire house for a better flow of rooms and ample guest space, adding arches, wood beams and wrought-iron details, as well as a glazed rear façade.

“Everything had to be approachable,” Tucker continues. “This is beach life and it’s meant to be welcoming to bare feet and bathing suits.” Because the clients are avid surfers who appreciate the natural environment, the designer pulled the palette directly from the landscape. “It was a given,” she says, pointing to the Pacific, just feet away. “There are blue-sky days and foggy days. Add the colors of the water, the sand and the plants and you have the California coastal palette.”

“Our goal was not to make the house too masculine or too feminine, and I think we achieved that,” Tucker says, adding that this is the third project she has done for the couple. Throughout the home, Tucker concentrated on “giving the rooms

soul” not only with interesting objects but also by choosing textured fabrics that “catch the light and create depth and shadow.” She also wanted to evoke a feeling that was more collected than decorated, electing to accomplish this with a cross-cultural assemblage of furniture and accessories. There are tribal baskets from Panama, lamps and rugs from Morocco, Chinese vases turned into the couple’s bedside lights, and pieces spanning all of Europe—from Denmark to the Mediterranean. “We’ve covered five continents here—that’s what makes it look unique—but there’s a little funk with the refinement, so it feels real. You don’t want it to feel like the decorator just left,” Tucker says, adding that if she had to choose a favorite find, it would likely be the 1960s Paul Becker coffee table in the living room. “It has a stone top inlaid with beach glass, and it looks like it was commissioned for this house.”

Also imbuing the home with personality is the couple’s art collection. “It was the icing on the cake,” says Tucker. “They collect what they love and don’t treat it as precious, but rather as meaningful. Everyone could take a page out of their book.” The designer went to great lengths to find just the right place for each piece, which created moments that truly delight, such as a vestibule that pairs a 17th-century Italian table with a painting by French artist André Brasilier that depicts figures on a beach, and thus is perfect for the site. The ever-changing views, which include dolphins, migrating whales and spectacular sunsets, are artworks of another kind, enjoyed from within the home or on the new limestone-slab terrace, its woven furnishings and blue upholstery a continuation of Tucker’s interior scheme.

“I’m proud of how we created the Spanish architecture and gave the house a really beautiful flow, one that’s open, yet still private,” the designer says. “But what I love most about this project is that it shows how you can take an existing home and give it classic lines and timeless character.” And when asked what her mentor Michael Taylor, a legendary interior designer and creator of the California Look, might say if he walked through the front door of this home, she suspects she knows the answer. “I think he’d stand there and say, ‘What makes you think this is good?’ And then he’d look at me and smile,” she says. “I knew his sense of humor and his eye, and I think he’d be pleased.” ■

In the living room, a Tucker & Marks sofa and a pair of John Himmel Decorative Arts armchairs are arranged around a table from Hewn. Nature is the focus on the mantel with a Mimmo Rotella clamshell, a sculpture from John Salibello in New York and fossils from Lebreton Gallery. The rug is by Beauvais Carpets.





Above: In the kitchen are Gregorius Pineo barstools with Peter Dunham outdoor fabric, Paul Ferrante pendants from Hewn, hardware by Whitechapel Ltd., backsplash tile by Tabarka Studio and vintage plates from William Laman. Wolf ovens and a Rohl pot filler complete the space. The painting is by André Brassier.

Opposite: A central passage between the combined living room and dining room and kitchen displays a vintage Moroccan rug, a coral formation from Bernd Goeckler and a Paul Ferrante ceiling light. In the dining area beyond, Tucker paired a Formations table with wicker armchairs from William Laman. The chandelier of cast-bronze kelp leaves is from Charles Paris.

The couple's main bedroom is a room with a view. The water is visible from the Formations bed and Janus et Cie lounge chair on the terrace. The nightstands are vintage, and the lamps atop them are antique vases the design team had fashioned into lamps. A Mecox bench is at the foot of the bed, and the chandelier above is from Hewn.





Above: A shared balcony off a guest room features Dunkirk seating with DeLany & Long Ltd. cushions and Peter Dunham pillows, and a Haskell Studio table. The terra-cotta floor tile is from Cooritalia.

Opposite: The marble that lines the walls of the main bathroom's shower seems to mimic the waves visible through the window. Waterworks mosaic tile covers the floor, and P.E. Guerin fittings make the area functional and beautiful.