



A PERFECT FIT

CALIFORNIA CASUAL MEETS COTSWOLD COTTAGE IN THIS
NEWLY BUILT HOME IN MANHATTAN BEACH, CALIFORNIA.
THE RESULT? A RIGHT-SIZED RESIDENCE THAT
CALLS ATTENTION TO ITSELF FOR ALL THE BEST REASONS.

It began like a game of phone tag. “I was initially hired by my clients to help them with window treatments at their former property,” Ashley Ausland shares. “Then one day she called me and told me they bought a new house. I was totally surprised! We met there, but I had to be honest with her—I hated everything about it. I told her we should just build a new home exactly to her taste.” But the client wasn’t ready for such a large endeavor—at least at that moment. Two days later, Ashley’s phone rang again. “They pulled out of escrow and bought a lot, and we began working with the architect and contractor to build their dream house.”

The family of four calls Manhattan Beach home but has a great love of the Cotswolds in England. Admittedly, an “English cottage” isn’t exactly what the coastal community is known for, but that was all part of the allure. “They wanted it to feel different than anything else in the community,” Ashley

says, adding that the primary goal was to keep the home’s size quite intimate. “It’s easy in this area to get caught up and over-build just because you can, and we made a very conscientious effort to avoid that. We aimed to have the building stand out in the right ways, via the materials and the interesting architectural elements.” She admits it was a careful balance, being thoughtful to ensure the design never felt kitschy as the inspiration and location melded.

The designer says that project manager Trinh Sapsin ran the two-year project like a tight ship, effortlessly keeping things on schedule. “She made sure that all of our details were brought to life. She didn’t cut any corners or make any excuses; she just got the job done.”

Even with a firm timeline, Ashley says it was a joyful process. “They are one of the funniest families I have ever worked with. Every weekly meeting was full of laughter.”

INTERIOR DESIGN AND STYLING BY AUSLAND INTERIORS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLIVIA PIERCE
BUILDER: RJ SMITH CONSTRUCTION
ARCHITECT: JOSEPH FOURNIER
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: FAIR STUDIO



COMFORT IS KEY

With two teenage girls and a dog, the furnishings had to be inviting and suitable for everyday life. The family room is cozy and ties into the kitchen's hushed neutral color palette, with custom dressers flanking the soapstone mantel. Another savvy detail: The heating and cooling vents are plastered in. "It's such a lovely touch to make it feel as though this is not a new-build," Ashley says.

HEART OF THE HOME

"The kitchen is one of the best rooms in the house," Ashley shares. She ticks off the beautiful blend of materials that make the space work: soapstone counters, an over-grouted brick backsplash, cabinets outfitted in Benjamin Moore's Revere Pewter, oak wood flooring, and warm plaster walls. Varied tones of brass in the plumbing, hardware, and lighting provide "the jewelry" on top.



CLASSICALLY CHARMING

In the primary bathroom, Portola Paint's Piano Room in a Roman Clay finish highlights the barrel ceiling. The wood flooring extends into this space, which Ashley would typically avoid but was done at the request of the homeowner. "She assured me she would never let water linger too long," the designer says. The bedroom opens to a beautiful deck off the back, with a built-up hedge for privacy.



CHECKMATE

The pool bathroom is one of the designer's all-time favorites. The walls feature two-tone stucco and a unique flooring installation. "They loved the black and white marble look, so I was thrilled to use it in here to create that old English feel. We used 14x14-inch pieces of marble, cut them down to 7x7, and then antiqued the edges to make it feel older."





FAUX REAL
 "Nothing feels like an 'application' in this home," Ashley says. "It feels real and structural. That's how we like to design." Reclaimed beams are minimally placed throughout the home, and each one serves with the intent of looking like it's supporting the roof above it. Ashley intentionally avoided overhead lighting here so as not to interrupt the beams' progression.

ETERNAL SUMMER
 Since California is blessed with temperate weather year-round, the exterior living and dining rooms are used as often as any area inside the home. Sliding doors open completely to create the quintessential SoCal indoor/outdoor lifestyle. When the breeze kicks up off the Pacific, built-in heaters and a fireplace are at the ready. "We changed the way they enjoy their lives," Ashley beams, "and that is what I love most about my job!"

COMPLEMENTS OF THE HOUSE
 With two custom steel arch window systems, a wood-stained tongue and groove ceiling, and the brick wall, it was important for the architectural elements to be the main feature here. The dining room furnishings are minimal but still comfortable enough for the family to enjoy unhurried meals together.