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Coastal Cottage Surprise

A designer adds unexpected elements to the classic style.

Most designers will say that the ultimate project to be tasked with is a new-build home in which they have free rein over the design decisions from the ground up.

Hillary Stamm, founder of HMS Interiors, set out to build the perfect coastal-modern cottage. With its location only a few blocks from the Pacific Ocean, Hillary knew this Manhattan Beach, California, cottage's surroundings would play a major role in the interior design, but she also wanted to take it to the next level.

STYLISH COMFORT. Hillary wanted the living room to be a space for the family that was formal but also relaxing. Some of the elements she used to achieve the desired look were pillows and a coffee table (both custom made). The cool color palette enhances the coastal feel by bringing the outdoor colors inside. Bifold doors open to the ocean breezes.

CURB APPEAL. For the front exterior, Hillary collaborated with builder RJ Smith Construction on the custom-textured brick and shingles that were done in custom colors. Gas lamps provide a warm aesthetic on a cold beach night. Hillary hired Laney Landscape Architects to ensure the space was well utilized. The downstairs doors open to the “beach bar”/“yacht club” room inside the home.



“We set out to build and design a coastal-modern home that would evoke a Hamptons/ East Coast feel with elements of the Southern California beach vibe,” she explains. “The home is a classic coastal cottage, but we wanted to imbue it with some modern elements. From the lighting fixtures to the bifold windows to the hidden doors and cigar room, I think we did that.”

“We wanted it to be a throwback to coastal modern spaces but extended with spaces such as the powder room and the beach bar room. We wanted the house to feel as if you’re walking into a beach bungalow hotel at sunset. With the ocean breezes and inside-outside feel of the home’s view, this was achieved.”

“The process involved endless swatches, samples and tables of color. This brought to fruition our vision of a ‘small hotel at the beach’ with many beautiful spaces that somehow come together to create a textured and curated, yet warm and classic, coastal space.”



WARM WELCOME. Hillary wanted to create a welcoming entrance from the foyer to the living room with art by photographer Mark Leibowitz, custom millwork and a series of windows by Sierra Pacific that bring the “magic hour” light into the room. Custom plants by Taylor Jones (LA Plant Girl) and rattan furniture add to the outdoors-indoors ambience.



“Because the house spills out onto the walk street, we wanted to create a space on the basement floor that had all the elements of a casual, fun place to watch football and have a pizza party. To give it a unique ambience, we crafted a full beach bar with a yacht club vibe, which almost feels like its own little inside-outside restaurant—complete with wine cellar and full bar.”

“The kitchen is one of the showstoppers of the home,” she says. “With its double custom slab islands, custom lighting, and all the bells and whistles of a curated kitchen, this is really the *anchor of the home.*”



[TOP] CURATED KITCHEN. Hillary wanted the kitchen to feel clean, with an elevated modern vibe, so she designed two islands and anchored the room with custom lighting fixtures that look like art installations. To create texture and depth, she used Portola Paint on the range hood and custom-woven shades for a modern beach vibe. “The countertops are a manmade Silestone to be ‘bulletproof’ during family gatherings,” Hillary says. Fine crystal shines through the custom-made cabinets.

[ABOVE, LEFT] To give the room character, Hillary visited local art shows to curate local vintage oil paintings. She also brought in vintage brass hardware by Newport Brass that would patina over time.

[ABOVE, RIGHT] Extra space for china storage and organization was a welcome addition.

Creating the proper floor plan would be the foundation for executing the team’s vision.

“We wanted to make certain the floor plan maximized the views and the natural light,” Hillary explains. “Both the architect, Joseph Fournier, and the builder, RJ Smith Construction, aided in getting this exactly right. By designing a reverse floor plan—with the kitchen and dining room on the top floor—we were able to take advantage of the amazing ocean breezes by creating inside-outside living with full decks that spill out from the living room and custom light fixtures to capture the magic of ‘magic hour’ with its evening glow.”

The house is in a prime location on one of the highly desirable “flat-walk” streets of Manhattan Beach through which no cars are permitted to drive. As a result, people can gather to socialize, and children can play safely.



NOOK LOOK. (Top) Hillary created a custom nook where the family can enjoy casual meals. She designed the space with Palecek woven chairs to add another layer of texture to the space. Custom fixtures created by lighting designer Windy Chien comprise the jewelry for the room.



ALL ABOARD. For the “yacht club” room, Hillary curated pieces from the British Virgin Islands, Hawaii and Maine. The vintage buoys from Maine were gifts from the builder. Bold colors give the family space a fun departure from the rest of the home.



RAISING THE BEACH BAR. This view of the “yacht club” room features custom draperies against limestone floors that evoke a beach bar. Hillary brought in coffee table books of beach hotels around the world. Cream and gold chairs create a comfy space for family movie nights.

“We wanted the house to feel as if you’re walking into a *beach bungalow hotel* at sunset.”

Creative Coastal Design

Hillary Stamm explains why thinking out of the box yields unique results.

Hillary Stamm, founder of HMS Interiors, designed each room and outdoor space with a distinct décor rather than following one overall look and feel throughout the home. This gave each area a special meaning and purpose for the family.

“All the departures from the classic beach house—from the butler’s pantry to the cigar room to the powder bath—still remain true to the core vision of the house to be the perfect bungalow beach hotel,” Hillary says. “The departures from classic white elevate it to a modern, yet still classic, home with that ‘wow’ factor.”

- The yacht club space reflects the homeowners’ love of travel and water sports.
- The cigar room reminds the family of European travel and a moody, glamorous hotel bar, complete with all the curated custom pieces of a magical night that you’ll always remember.

“These special spaces truly make the house a home,” Hillary says.

BRING YOUR FLIP-FLOPS. For the full “beach club” experience, the “beach room” is equipped with LED lighting to create an evening ambience. It also includes a dishwasher and a wine cellar.



ABOVE | SECRET SPACE. Hidden behind a secret panel off the kitchen is the “cigar room,” designed as a fun, after-dinner space. Vintage family heirlooms make it cozy and warm.

RIGHT | The pantry off the kitchen is a gorgeous prep space that features Calacatta marble. Wallpaper in a gold floral print makes the pantry a bold departure from the rest of the house.

STYLING THE ROOMS

While every room design achieved the designer’s goal, Hillary says the kitchen’s outcome is her favorite. “The kitchen is one of the showstoppers of the home,” she says. “With its double custom slab islands, custom lighting, and all the bells and whistles of a curated kitchen, this is really the anchor of the home.”

By creating an eating nook, pantry, special lighting and a farmhouse sink that looks out to the ocean, there’s plenty of space to lounge, laugh, cook and clean.

The addition of six fireplaces creates a cozy ambience in the large home. Bifold doors that open to a breathtaking view of the ocean add a special touch to the living room,

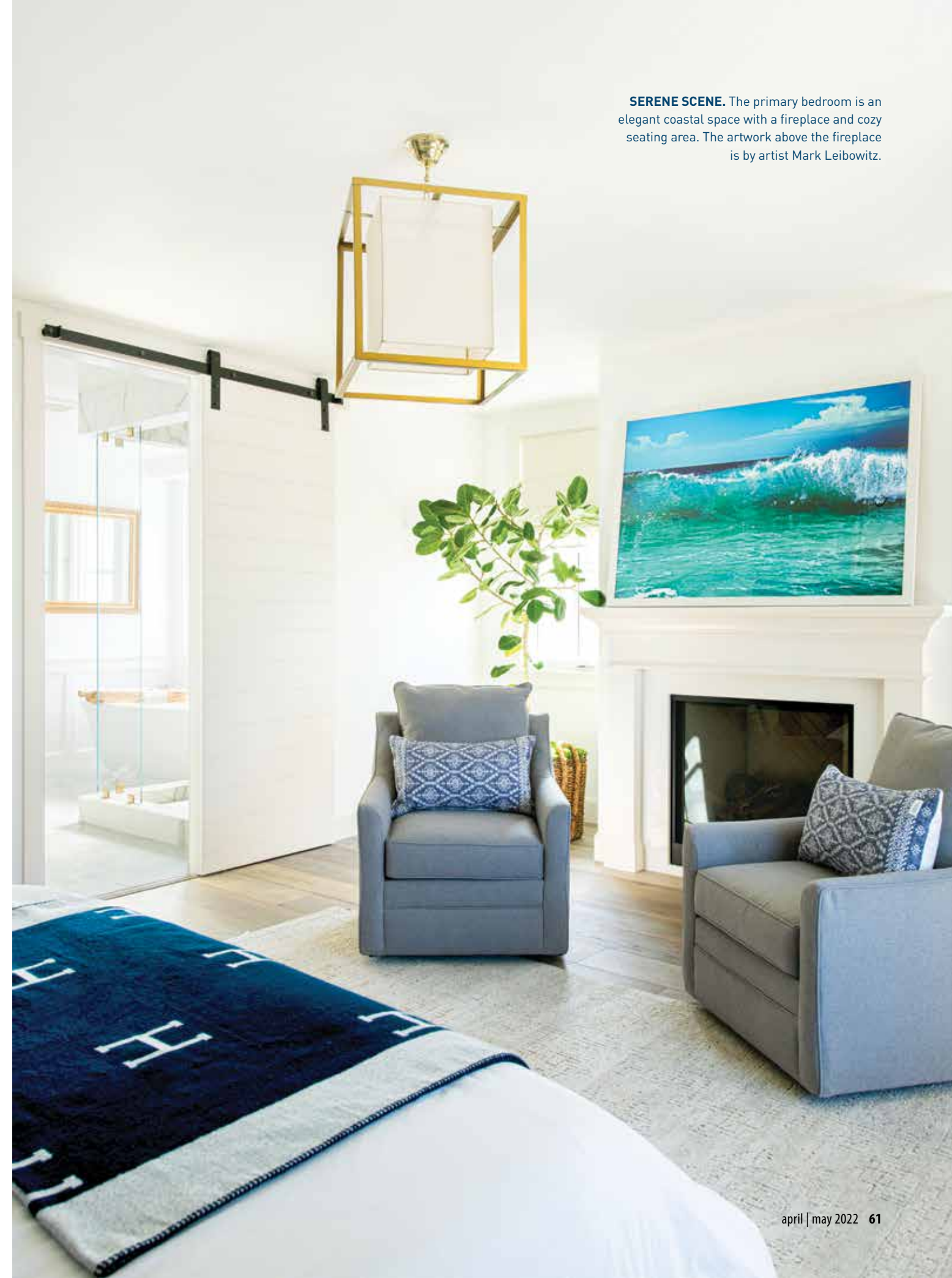
The front exterior’s gas lamps, coupled with the textured, white brick, textured limestone and custom shingle color, give it spectacular curb appeal.

The primary bedroom’s details, including sliding doors that look out to the walk street to see the activity, as well as a custom barn door from the bedroom to the bath, create a primary suite that feels like its own beach suite.





|TOP| SWEET DREAMS. The bunk room includes custom lighting for nighttime reading and is great for sleepovers.
|ABOVE, LEFT| SMALL, BUT STYLISH. The powder room sports a dresser from Wayfair that was repurposed as a vanity.
|ABOVE, RIGHT| BATHING BEAUTY. The primary bath features custom lighting and Calacatta marble slabs in the shower.
 Gold hardware contrasts with the white and marble elements.



SERENE SCENE. The primary bedroom is an elegant coastal space with a fireplace and cozy seating area. The artwork above the fireplace is by artist Mark Leibowitz.

“This cottage is such a special space. We ended up designing more than a home; we designed an *experience*.”



ROOM TO GROW. The girl's bedroom has warm, but glam, textured wallpaper and mirrored side tables that are not the least bit childish. Wallpaper gives the illusion of wood paneling. A tufted headboard on a custom bed adds vintage elegance that's perfect for a young girl to grow into.



|ABOVE, LEFT| MAKING A SPLASH. Hillary developed a custom color for the girl's bathroom.

|ABOVE, RIGHT| The master bath was anchored with oversized Sierra Pacific windows, a custom tub and custom millwork.

|RIGHT| The foyer is bold and inviting. A vintage family mirror, as well as paintings from local artists, decorates the space. The large mirror opens the small space, while a rattan basket adds a beachy vibe.

Hillary explains, “We used custom slab throughout the primary bath, including a fully mirrored slab in the oversized steam shower adjacent to a large, freestanding tub, to make it extra luxurious. The custom work includes mixed metals. We wanted to bring the brass and silver together and tied it in with the silver and gold, creating our custom lighting by pulling two pieces apart and making our own,” she explains. “I love these extra touches that elevate the home.”

“This cottage is such a special space,” Hillary says. “We ended up designing more than a home; we designed an experience!” **CB**

