

# California Dreaming



*An interior designer  
opens up her West Coast  
kitchen to the outdoors,  
making plenty of room  
for family and friends.*

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THIS PHOTO: Painted blue, the tongue-and-groove ceiling references the home's coastal setting. Open shelving shares wall space with small windows. Pretty detailing at the end of the island adds pleasing texture. OPPOSITE: Fresh ranunculus amp up the kitchen's charm.





## “IF YOU WANT SOMETHING

done right, do it yourself” is an easy motto to adopt—but not always easy to execute. It wasn’t a problem for Susan Hunt, however, as she mapped out plans for her new Coronado, California, kitchen. An interior designer and builder, Susan knew exactly what she wanted—and how to achieve it.

Inspired by the challenge of her home’s small footprint, Susan set to work creating a plan that would maximize function while also delivering the breezy, coastal look she loves. She wanted the kitchen to be first and foremost a place to relax with her family—husband Mark, their two children, and her mother. Creating a connection to the home’s beach environment was also important.

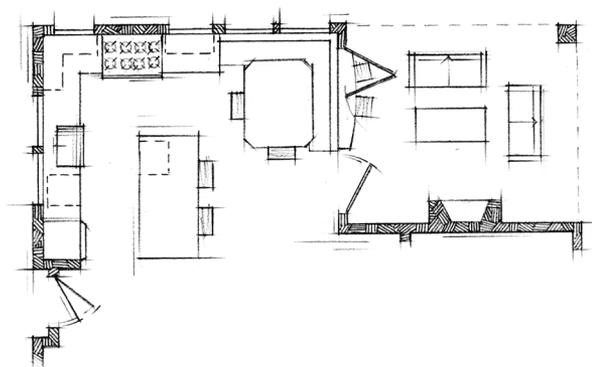
“Since we have a coastal home, I wanted lots of windows and white walls to keep everything feeling fresh and bright and airy,” Susan says. “The blue tongue-and-groove ceiling is a reminder of the ocean, while the tan backsplash tile is a reminder of the sand.”

The interior doesn’t just mimic the outdoor surroundings—it throws itself wide open to them. The conception of the space started with what Susan calls the “best seat in the house”: a bar built in the style of a surfboard. The bar sits below a bifold window outside the kitchen proper, and provides a transition area from the interior to a covered porch and outdoor patio. The bifold window opens across the top of the bar, and a door is located to the side. “People love sitting there, because you can be a part of conversations going on both inside and outside,” Susan says.

OPPOSITE: A window above the kitchen’s apron-front sink was a must for homeowner and designer Susan Hunt. “There’s nothing more boring than doing dishes and just staring at a wall,” she says. “This way, we can watch what’s going on outside while we work.” ABOVE RIGHT: Open shelving reveals ceramic backsplash tiles in a soft driftwood tone.



## *the plan*



The Hunts’ kitchen is just inside the front door, so it was important that the space feel as inviting and nonutilitarian as possible. An island with bar seating creates an easy-to-navigate L-shape kitchen that leads to an informal seating area. The open floor plan continues into an outdoor living area with additional seating.

“It was important to me that we feel as connected as possible to the outdoors.”

—SUSAN HUNT,  
HOMEOWNER  
AND DESIGNER



Inside, Susan worked with architect Christian Rice to create an open floor plan with plenty of storage. A banquette, which Susan preferred over formal seating, backs up to the surfboard bar; flipping up the seat of the banquette reveals hidden storage. Paneled appliances and open shelving reinforce the sense of a living area. A marble-topped island fits a couple of stools underneath for extra seating. “The kids always want to be where the action is,” Susan says. “That’s where they’ll do their homework and have snacks after school, and tell me about how their day was.”

The kitchen’s success lies in its ability to fit not just the family, but also their lifestyle. Having designed many homes in the area, Susan drew on them for inspiration, taking liberties with her own kitchen that she may not have otherwise taken. The result is a place with timeless charm that embraces the sun-drenched coastal landscape while maintaining the privacy of the indoors. “It’s so fun to just open the bifolding window on a beautiful day and hang out at the bar while talking to family and friends,” she says. “It was important to me that we feel as connected as possible to the outdoors.”

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## DESIGNER INSIGHTS: SPACE-SAVING DESIGN

Working within a 700-square-foot house footprint, designer Susan Hunt focused on conserving space wherever possible. She relied on these tactics to keep her kitchen feeling breathable.

- *Informal Seating.* Rather than waste space on a dining room that would rarely be used, Susan mixed in seating throughout the kitchen and living area—by the island, on a corner banquette, and at the surfboard bar.
- *Sneaky Storage.* The cushioned seats of the banquette open to store extra pitchers, plates, and place mats. A walk-in pantry and paneled appliances shroud food and utility clutter.
- *Whitewashing.* Simplifying the color palette helped create a soothing white backdrop with soft accents of blues and browns. “Even my dishes on the kitchen shelves mimic the blues found on the ceiling,” Susan says.

THIS PHOTO: A custom-made dining table tucks perfectly into the small banquette area. OPPOSITE: Hidden storage inside the banquette benches holds extra dishware that is easily accessible when the Hunts have guests.





**THIS PAGE:** Susan loves the capiz shell chandelier above the dining table, which chimes softly in the California breeze when the kitchen's bifold window and door are open. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Opening the door and bifold window unifies the outdoor lounging area and the interior kitchen space, great for entertaining in a small footprint. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT:** Susan and her husband, Mark, made the surfboard bar themselves, collecting different types of wood for a vintage look. They then took the board to a surfboard shop to have it finished with fiberglass. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT:** While the stucco was still wet, Susan and Mark quickly personalized the fireplace by pressing seashells into the surface.

