

PARADISE found

An interior designer's quaint cottage combines West Coast relaxation with hardworking design to make the most of every inch.

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Pillows adorned in playful ocean-theme covers complement this home's recurring coastal blues, whites, and browns. Weathered wood and rustic brick lend texture and warmth to whitewashed architecture.



Left: Painted blue, a tongue-and-groove ceiling references the home's coastal setting. Paneled appliances keep the kitchen feeling like a living area.

Above: Designer and builder duo Susan and Mark Hunt gather with their family on the outdoor patio. *Opposite:* Susan opted out of taking up space with a formal dining room. Instead, a custom-made dining table tucks perfectly into the small banquette area. For larger gatherings, California's temperate climate allows the Hunts to dine on the back patio with family and friends.

A typical balmy day in Coronado, California, begins and ends with Susan Hunt on her front porch, sipping a cup of tea. She's just come out to take in the bustle of her Mayberry-like town—people walking home from work and children riding their bikes back from friends' houses. In the distance, she can hear the hushed din of waves crashing on the peninsula's shore and music from the ice cream parlor down the street. But the real sanctuary lies just inside her porch's Dutch door—a home quaint in size but big in heart.

After razing the original 75-year-old cottage situated on their 2,000-square-foot corner lot, interior designer Susan and her husband, Mark—a builder—wanted to design a home that fostered a relationship with the outdoors and maximized interior space. “It was important to me that we feel as connected as possible to the outdoors, so we don't feel cramped inside,” Susan says. To create that continuous flow, she incorporated a bifold window and a door between the first floor's kitchen and dining area and the outdoor fireplace and patio. The window folds open over a surfboard bar, custom-made with different types of wood and fibreglassed for vintage flare. “It's the best seat in the house,” Susan says. “People love sitting there, because you can be a part of conversations going on both inside and outside.”

Being by the water is as much a priority for Susan indoors as it is out. Rather than use upstairs space for an elaborate master bedroom, she put the square footage toward a spacious master bath, complete with a soaking tub. “The tub is my place for relaxation,” Susan says. “It was worth every penny.” Down the hall, an upstairs deck houses a sofa, where the Hunts and their two children can lounge in fresh ocean breezes, reading or playing board games on warm summer nights.

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Above: Opening the door and bifold window unifies the outdoor lounging area and the interior kitchen space—great for entertaining in a small footprint.

Left: Fit snugly into a corner lot, the Hunts' home appears as warm and inviting as its owners. Susan and Mark wanted their home to live beautifully and sustainably, so they installed solar panels on the roof.

Opposite, top left: Hidden storage inside the banquette benches holds extra dishware that is easily accessible when the Hunts have guests. *Opposite, top right:* Everyone in the family is an avid board game player—they are often found by the outdoor fireplace, playing games including this quirky coastal-inspired version of checkers.

Opposite, bottom left: While the stucco was still wet, Susan and Mark quickly personalized the fireplace by pressing seashells into the surface. *Opposite, bottom right:* The couple 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.



SPACE- SAVING TIPS

Designer Susan Hunt swears by these tactics to keep a small home feeling breathable.

INFORMAL SEATING

Mix in seating throughout the kitchen and living areas instead of wasting space on a rarely used dining room.

SNEAKY STORAGE

Use spare wall space for laundry or utility drawers. Banquette or bench seating can cleverly hide items in a hollow base.

OPEN AIR

The fewer walls and the more windows, the better. Incorporate a bifold window and a door to seamlessly connect indoors and out.



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—homeowner and designer Susan Hunt





Because Susan's mother also lives with the family, architect Christian Rice suggested expanding the home vertically, building in a basement suite outfitted with private living and bedroom areas, a kitchenette, and a bath. "We really wanted her to have her own special space, where she could have friends over and cook and everything," Susan says.

The key to building in enough room and privacy for everyone, Susan says, was smart storage. Bedroom floor space is maximized in the kids' rooms with built-in drawers below bed frames and mirrored closets that visually expand the cozy footprints. A pullout trio of laundry containers conceals fresh and used towels, capitalizing on spare wall space along one hallway. Whites, blues, and browns appear consistently throughout the home, keeping the interiors visually streamlined and uncluttered. "The expansive windows and white walls keep everything feeling fresh, bright, and airy," Susan says. "It's our little piece of paradise, in a town set back in time." □



Opposite: In the master bedroom, a linen duvet with white and tan stripes adds a layer of romance to the home's coastal theme. *Top left:* Daughter Zoe's room is decorated in oceanic blues as an ode to her love of lifeguarding. Built-in storage drawers below the bed frame maximize floor space. *Top right:* Susan sacrificed a larger master bedroom in favor of her dream bath, complete with a soaking tub. *Above:* Empty wall space upstairs became hidden laundry drawers.