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SAN DIEGO

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CLEAN SLATE

By painting the property white and incorporating natural materials, KitchenLab Interiors brought an airy vacation vibe to this 1980s Encinitas oasis.

BY JASMIN ROSEMBERG // PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES FURMAN



From top: A casual living room features an asymmetrical Four Hands sofa and original stone fireplace; KitchenLab Interiors painted the exterior of the three-bedroom home white with black accents.

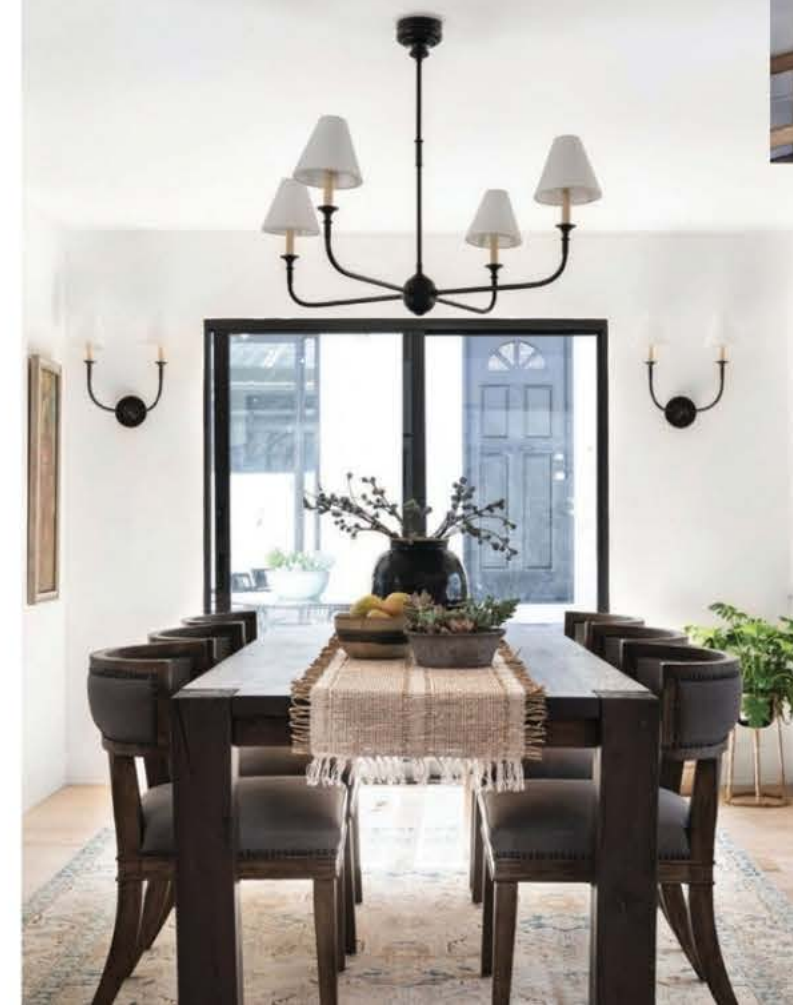
After previously helping a couple with a home remodel in a suburb outside of Chicago, Rebekah Zaveloff—co-founder and principal designer of KitchenLab Interiors (kitchenlabinteriors.com)—received a text from the wife one Saturday in 2021, when her husband was looking at San Diego properties while on a work trip. “He’s nuts; he wants to buy this awful house!” she wrote. “Tell me what you think.” “I took one look at the property and said, ‘Buy it!’” Zaveloff says of this Encinitas

home built in 1985. “It was terribly ugly—bad floors, awful color scheme—but the husband and I could see the potential and the wife was like, ‘OK, I trust you!’” Zaveloff thought the three-bedroom home in the “old boho” neighborhood and original surfing community was perfect for the clients—an educator and a social worker in their 50s, whose daughters are now in college in California. “[It was] a terrific smaller home with just enough space for empty nesters whose kids come home on occasion, a pool

and a guesthouse, and a garage big enough to house another family,” Zaveloff says. She had her work cut out for her: The budget and timeline were tight, and the dated property had ‘70s and ‘80s hallmarks. “The house was a bad interpretation of arts and crafts. Green stucco exterior with brown trim; interior was all dark Autumn slate floors that had so much polish on them it was like a reflecting pool,” she recalls. “The overall project was to gut all the finishes—rip out the floors and paint everything white, and replace the bizarre angled island in the kitchen with a more classic kitchen layout.” Slicking everything with a coat of Benjamin Moore Simply White paint, she also renovated the bathrooms, painted the exterior white with black accents, and

carved out two offices in the large garage. But the client’s goals were pretty simple: “Make it not ugly,” Zaveloff jokes. “Get rid of all the green and brown, and make it serene and comfortable.” Perched on a hill at the end of a dead-end road, the L-shaped property features a view of the ocean as well as lush greenery, a private courtyard backyard, a grotto-style pool, an adjoining casita, an outdoor kitchen and a bocce ball court. “It’s

From top: The light and airy white kitchen boasts Carrara stone and Worley’s Lighting pendants and sconces; new dining room chairs help bridge the new home’s lighter color palette with the clients’ existing dining room table from their Chicago home.



“I WANTED TO NEUTRALIZE EVERYTHING AND BRING IN A TULUM VIBE: WARM WHITES AND NATURAL MATERIALS LIKE SISAL, RATTAN.”

—REBEKAH ZAVELLOFF, CO-FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL DESIGNER, KITCHENLAB INTERIORS

truly a little compound, an oasis,” says Zaveloff. “Tons of windows and doors open to the gardens and pool—you literally feel like you’re living on vacation all year round!” Zaveloff aspired for the interior to feel equally peaceful, organic and unfussy. “I wanted to

neutralize everything and bring in a Tulum vibe: warm whites and natural materials like sisal, rattan. Black and bronze lighting to create high contrast against that neutral palette—with bits of mineral blue and green in the pillows and rugs.” Step inside the first floor

to find a casual living room with an asymmetrical Four Hands sofa and original stone fireplace. A light and airy white kitchen boasts Carrara stone and Worley's Lighting pendants and sconces, and opens to a dining area with new sliding doors. "We reused their existing dining table and specified new chairs to bridge the new lighter palette with some of the darker pieces from their Chicago home," notes Zaveloff, who also incorporated their prior living room rug in a more approachable way. An adjacent lounge and bar area with shelving gives the clients



From top: Adjacent to the dining room is a bar area and lounge; plush seating gives the clients a place to retire after dinner, read a book or have a drink, while large windows create the feeling of being outside.

a place to retire after dinner, read a book or have a drink. "The huge windows make you feel like you're outside," Zaveloff says.

The first level also houses two kids' bedrooms and a comfy family room, which is furnished with the clients' existing leather sofa and a banquette from their old kitchen. Upstairs, Zaveloff only partially renovated the primary suite. "But I love that we were able to use their existing living room sofa in here, and how the black and white rug from Surya makes the room feel organic and Zen," she says.



Zaveloff completed the renovation she'd started in September 2021 three months later, by Christmas. "The clients were besides themselves—they are so amazing and grateful and really appreciate the life and space they occupy," she says. One of their daughters, who'd interned for KitchenLab Interiors in Chicago, was impressed as well—and changed her major to interior design after helping with the project. "I think she'll do very well indeed," Zaveloff says. "I caught the design bug as a kid and haven't shaken it since!"



From top: A comfy family room is furnished with the clients' existing leather sofa and a banquette from their old kitchen; the L-shaped property flaunts a view of the ocean as well as lush greenery, a private courtyard backyard, a grotto-style pool, an adjoining casita, an outdoor kitchen and a bocce ball court.