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The gazebo has the best views of the entire backyard and the U shape of the house.

A FRESH START

A HOME
TO BE
SHOWCASED
IN THE
CORONA
DEL MAR
HOME TOUR
REFLECTS
A FAMILY'S
NEW
BEGINNING.

BY LISA LIDDANE
PHOTOS BY
TOBY PONNAY

Five years ago, Julie Seacrist Browman and her then-fiancé, Taylor Browman had planned to expand their home in the Port streets enclave of Newport Beach to accommodate their blended brood of five children. "We went through the entire planning process, including obtaining city permits," Julie says. "But for some reason, we were both a little hesitant."

It may have been because of a subliminal desire to begin a life together in a new place – though not too far from where they lived.

Julie, a Realtor, knew about a property in the neighborhood that was for sale. "I had seen it and knew it had tremendous potential, but never thought of it for us, as we were not in the market to build," she says. "My husband and I stopped by the house one day and I took him through it. He took one look at the yard and knew the property would make for an incredible home."

The Browmans decided to buy the property and have a new house built on it – one that would reflect the genesis of their combined family.

It may have been the generous size of the lot – 12,000 sq. ft. – that attracted the Browmans, but it was the lot's unconventional shape that became catalyst for an uncommon floorplan.

"Most homes in the Port Streets are built on perfectly rectangular lots, which dictate the footprint of the home," Julie

The kids' lounge serves as a pool house, which features ottomans that Julie Browman reupholstered in Missoni beach towels to make them ready for drenched swimsuits. Although white is the predominant color in the house, one of the children's bedrooms gets a burst of happy color.





says. "We did not have this restriction. We envisioned a house that flowed well from indoor living to outdoor living. We wanted maximum light exposure and privacy, which we felt this lot afforded. The U-shaped layout of the house allows most rooms to have windows on both sides, thus bringing the garden into focus. The existing home on the property had a huge grass area and we loved the feeling of open grassy space where everyone could play (we have been known to get into some fairly spirited and competitive badminton matches). So the main goal was to build a comfortable house, an outdoor living space and a pool, while keeping the open grassy feel. Bill Guidero, who provided the architectural design, truly understood our vision and delivered a nearly perfect layout on the first meeting."

Among other things, the Browmans wanted a house that addressed the needs of their five children, now ages 11 to 26, and that was "appropriate for the neighborhood, yet was uniquely us," Julie adds.

To build their dream home, they turned to Andrew Patterson, president of Patterson Construction Corporation, a firm known locally for its dedication to craftsmanship and quality and for its portfolio of bespoke Newport Beach residences with an east

coastal look. "Andrew had built several homes in the Port Streets that we admired," Julie says. "Once Andrew and my husband met, our destiny was set. Andrew appealed to my husband's business sense. I, on the other hand, was mostly concerned with the design, the craftsmanship, the quality of finish work and the uniqueness of the product — as opposed to the budget (I know... typical). Andrew was able to provide both of us what we wanted."

Viewed from the street, the house has classic architecture, with a mostly white façade that artfully conceals what lies behind the black doors. The Riviera Bronze steel doors and foyer windows are the most important part of the house, Patterson says. "Julie had concept photos and we achieved the look spot on. Taylor hated paying for that door and two windows — the cost was more than half of all of the windows and doors in the entire house. But the door and the windows truly made the home and once they were installed and Taylor saw the quality, he never mentioned the cost again."

The dramatic, conservatory-inspired black and white foyer provides an instant view of the backyard and connects the two wings of the house. To the left on the first floor are the living room and dining room,



The living room and the adjacent dining room are among the few formal spaces in the mostly informal, family-friendly Browman house.

Julie's office and the kids' lounge and pool room. To the right are the kitchen and great room. Upstairs, the master suite and Taylor's office are in one wing, while the kids' bedrooms and study room are in the other.

For Julie, a decorating aficionado, the challenge was how to reconcile the elegant with the playful. With the help of two friends who are interior designers, she aimed for what she calls a "predominantly Old Pasadena traditional style with a little bit of Manhattan and some Hollywood glam thrown in."

"The most fun part of decorating the house was working with Leslie Shannon, who advised me in the areas of construction, hard surfaces and overall design, and Brooke Wagner, who oversaw the furnishings," she says.

After using white as a unifying color and keeping the materials for the counters, millwork and floors consistent, Julie strove to imbue each room with meaningful elements.

"While I truly believe it is the people who inhabit a house that make it a home, we thought we would stack the cards in our favor and put some very personal touches in our décor," Julie says. "For example, I felt that one of the framed subway signs that is currently very popular would look great in my son's room. We custom ordered one, replacing some of the local street names with Port Bristol (our street), Ford Road (Ford is my son's name) and Leeward Lane

(his father's street) to make it personal for him. I also found a great oil painting at a consignment store depicting a Ford truck on the Balboa Ferry – not only special because of the name, but a spot the kids frequent as Junior Guards.

Her favorite decorative item is the accent pillow in the master bed. "We took my wedding dress and had it made into a pillow," she says. "The pillow puts a smile on my face each time I walk into the room. Perhaps that smile comes from knowing that I will never have to fit into the dress again!"

The most unexpectedly personalized element of the house, however, is the Calacatta gold marble kitchen island. "Prior to being married or ever considering building a home, Taylor and I were in San Francisco and visited the Ferry Building," she says. "We saw a bakery that had an amazing marble

service island, imported intact from Europe. We took a picture of it and saved it because we both thought it was so beautiful, not knowing that years later, it would become the model for our kitchen island. Ultimately, we designed the kitchen around this marble island."

Throughout the home, there are more thoughtfully chosen objects, like the framed Louis Vuitton scarf that Julie's late grandmother gave to her shortly before she passed away. When viewed together, the home and its personal elements represent a blended family that respects each member's personal history. By the same token, the sum of all these parts also embodies the idea of the family moving forward – as one, as a whole.

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■ **TOUR** :: Corona del Mar 38th Annual Home Tour, October 25, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
:: cdmhousetour.com

■ **CONSTRUCTION** :: Patterson Construction Corporation
949.723.1800 :: pattersonconstructioncorp.com

■ **ARCHITECTURAL PLAN** :: William Belden Guidero Planning and Design
:: 949.675.2626

■ **MORE DETAILS** :: Q&A with Andrew Patterson and more photos
:: coastmagazine.com