



PHOTOS: TOBY PONNAY

A curved black staircase adds to the drama of the entrance, accenting the black and white checkerboard flooring.

FRESH START

A home on Corona del Mar tour is the essence of a blended family.



The home has an East Coast-inspired vibe, suiting the Port Streets enclave of Newport Beach.

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 Browman said. "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.

Browman, 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 said. "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 square feet — that attracted the Browmans, but it was the lot's unconventional shape that became catalyst for an uncommon floor plan that will be on view as part of Corona del Mar's home tour on Oct. 25.

"Most homes in the Port Streets are built on perfectly rectangular lots, which dictate the footprint of the home," Browman said. "We did not have this restriction. We envisioned a house that flowed well from indoor living to outdoor liv-



With five children between them, the homeowners had to keep their home casual and kid-friendly, but they also wanted grown-up spaces, such as this formal living room.



The pool and adjacent shaded patio have the best views of the back yard.

Corona del Mar Home Tour

What: Corona del Mar 38th Annual Home Tour

When: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 25

Price: \$65, which includes a light breakfast at Cafe Beau Soleil & Daily Grill, lunch by Pascal at Cafe Jardin at Sherman Gardens, reception at Bliss Home & Design

More information: cdmhousetour.com

Fresh start

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ing. 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.)

"The main goal was to build a comfortable house, an outdoor living space and a pool, while keeping the open grassy feel," she said. "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 was spacious and casual enough for their five children, now ages 11 to 26, and that was "appropriate for the neighborhood, yet was uniquely us," Browman said. To build their dream home, they turned to Andrew Patterson, president of Patterson Construction Corp., a firm known locally for its portfolio of bespoke Newport Beach residences with an East Coast look. "Andrew had built several homes in the Port Streets that we admired," Julie said. "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

More fall home tours

What: Art & Architecture Home Tour in Newport and Laguna Beach. The tour includes five homes built by renowned 20th century architects.

When: 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sunday, with a wrap party at the Orange County Museum of Art until 7 p.m. Including taco bar and beer tasting.

Price: \$60 per person or \$110 for two.

More information: ocma.net or 949-759-1122, ext. 203

What: Old Town Orange Preservation Association Historic Home Tour of six historic homes.

When: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 5-6

Price: \$20 includes trolley
More information: otpa.org/hometour

What: Jack & Jill Guild/CHOC Children's Tour of Homes, including holiday boutique.

When: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Nov. 18

Price: \$45 includes lunch by Corner Bakery

Where: Boutique held at Tustin Community Center, 300 Centennial Way

More information: choc.org/events

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 facade that artfully conceals that which lies behind the black doors. The Rivera Bronze steel doors and foyer windows are the most important part of the house, Patterson said. "Julie had concept photos and we achieved the look spot on. Taylor (Browman) 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 back yard and connects the two wings of the house. To the left on the first floor are the living room and dining room, 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 Browman, 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 said.

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



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The kids' lounge is designed with a laid-back approach so that the five children can entertain their friends at home. Julie Browman covered pillows and ottomans with Missoni beach towels to keep the furniture water-friendly.

put some very personal touches in our décor," Browman said. "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 said. "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 is the Calacatta gold marble kitchen island. "Pri-



One of the daughters' bedrooms retains the white and black basic color scheme of the house but gets a dose of youthful energy with a splash of orange.

or to being married or ever considering building a home, Taylor and I were in San Francisco and visited the Ferry Building," Browman said. "We saw a bakery that had an amazing marble service island, imported in-tact 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 other thoughtful-

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

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