

# ICONIC

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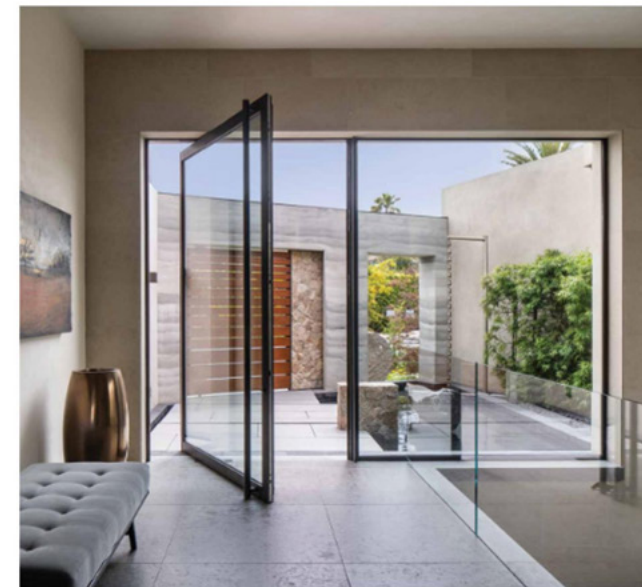


# Zen SENSE

Martha and Kozo Shimano's modern estate blends Japanese aesthetics with an organic appeal.

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Photography by  
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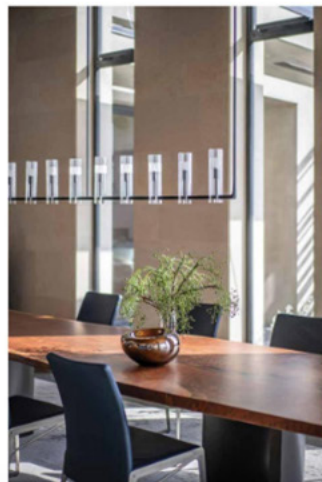
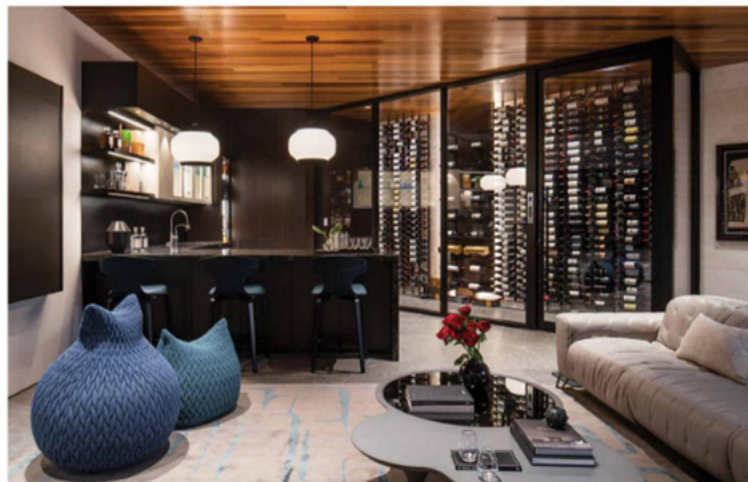


As Martha and Kozo Shimano inched toward semi-retirement and became empty nesters, they began thinking about building a home that would reflect their personalities and this new phase in their lives, as well as embody their aesthetic preferences.

"We wanted to be closer to the ocean," Martha recalls, "and we wanted something that reflected Kozo's Japanese heritage. My favorite architect is Frank Lloyd Wright, so I wanted a nod to him, too. Above all, we wanted an earthy, functional house that emphasized indoor-outdoor living."

The resulting 8,400-square-foot home in Dana Point has views of the Pacific and exudes an organic, yet modern sensibility that lives easy for the couple and flows well for family gatherings and entertaining. To achieve this vision, the Shimanos put together a design team that included interior designer Anita Dawson, landscape designer Kohei Owatari and builder Andrew Patterson.





With architecture handled by Costa Mesa's Brandon Architects, builder Patterson crafted the two-level home on the sloping site in a newly developed custom home community. The main level includes the great room, kitchen, dining area and master suite, while the lower level has a TV lounge, bar, wine cellar and gym that access an open-air courtyard. Glass and metal give the home its modern edge, while rammed earth walls and rubble stone accents add an organic touch.

"The rammed earth walls run along almost every exterior wall of the house," Patterson says. "The walls are made up of a mixture of sand, gravel, clay and a stabilizer that is compressed into layers. We contrasted the rammed earth walls with brass windows and doors that are designed to patina and weather over time."

San Diego-based interior designer Dawson was challenged to reflect the couple's personalities and to marry it to the architecture.

"The house has many massive organic forms and shapes," Dawson says, "and there are a lot of non-90-degree angles. I wanted to give a nod to Kozo's heritage without being heavy-handed and to incorporate Martha's love of color and playful personality."

Against a backdrop that includes wood floors and Venetian plaster walls, Dawson took her palette from the rammed earth walls.

"I went for sludgy tones," she explains, "colors that are reminiscent of water, moss and stones, with black accents. We wanted the interior to have a wabi-sabi aesthetic, where nothing is exactly perfect and permanent."



In the living room, which opens up onto a view-grabbing patio, Dawson floated two rust-hued Roche Bobois leather sofas on a watery-hued custom area rug, while the adjacent dining area features a large-scale walnut slab table set on a steel base. The kitchen, which Martha calls the heart of the home, includes natural walnut cabinets contrasted with hand-troweled concrete surfaces.

The master suite, however, takes much of its inspiration from Japan. “Martha and Kozo were inspired by a trip to Kyoto,” explains Dawson. “They loved the look of the Four Seasons Hotel where they stayed.” The designer incorporated panels of a hand-painted, cherry tree-patterned wall covering, contrasted with a leather headboard, behind the bed. In the master bath, a deep Japanese soaking tub, reached by a teak step, has views of the ocean.

Dawson also incorporated playful touches, including a Dedon swing on the master suite patio and cat-shaped bean bag chairs in the lounge, as an homage to the couple’s pets.







Outdoors, Owatari played up the home's earthy materials and Japanese influences through hardscape and plantings. The landscape designer, whose firm, Modern Zen Garden, is based in San Diego County, used random-cut floating granite pavers set contrasted by black beach pebbles to lead visitors from the street to the front door, where a hand-chiseled stone wall and a 400-year-old millstone add a sense of gravitas to the setting.

For the pool patio, with its impressive ocean vistas, Owatari created two fire pits, one carved into a natural boulder and the other made of black quartz. A large stone Japanese lantern and a water basin fountain add to the landscape's serene appeal. Plant materials were chosen to withstand Southern California's salt air, dry climate and alkaline soil, and include ginkgos, acacias and Japanese cherry blossom trees, as well as gardenias, star jasmine, azaleas, Indian hawthorn and lantana to add fragrance and color.

Now complete, Martha and Koto have a house that reflects their tastes and lifestyle.

"It's a very relaxing place," Martha says, "and there's always a wonderful sense of surprise when you walk through the house." ❶