



Deep in the Heart

A Texas family combines elegance and southern comfort to transform a Spanish villa into a coastal retreat

BY ROWENA KELLEY | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL BODY

IT'S USUALLY BETTER to have a blank canvas when creating a work of art. A clear parcel of land where windows can be oriented to frame views. Or an empty room where walls can be moved to create an entirely new space. But if you must work within the confines of an existing structure, you hope for an inspiring design, a history to guide you and a homeowner willing to take creative risks.

Then magic can happen, as it did inside this 1920s Spanish villa. With a design that wraps around inviting courtyards and rooms with majestic ocean views, the home comfortably embraces coastal living. Romance and history abound, creating a canvas both inspiring and welcoming. It's the kind of place we expect in Southern California—but when you come from Texas in search of a retreat, it is paradise found.

“We searched for two years until we found this perfect home,” says Barry Andrews, president of a beer distribution company in Dallas. “We chose La Jolla for its fantastic weather, the quaint, cozy feel of the community and for amenities such as restaurants and [nearby] sports teams. When we saw this house, we were instantly hooked by its size, location and spectacular views.”

At home in Texas, Barry and his wife, Lana, are busy with business and philanthropy, and so they came looking for an escape not just for themselves but also for their grown children and grandkids. Entertaining is a regular part of life, requiring a vacation home that could be easily transformed—from a comfy spot for a casual family barbecue to the site of an evening soirée attended by high-profile friends like Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys.

Having fallen in love with the home's existing architecture, the couple turned to interior designer Lori Gentile to enhance its best features and make it livable for a modern family with traditional values. The goal: Blend high design with comfort.

“My inspiration came from Lana,” Gentile says. “She is one of those rare women who is as beautiful inside as she is outside. She radiates warmth, kindness, generosity and an amazing sense of style. And she's not afraid of color.”

In fact, Lana prefers exciting, vibrant colors, so Gentile used tangerine, chartreuse and amber hues on a cream background. She combined these colors with classic Spanish furniture from Ebanista and one-of-a-kind antiques. Slabs of jewel-like onyx in green and other striking colors add even more interest throughout the home.

“The biggest challenge was in working with the natural shapes and design of the house to maximize the views and give each room its own personality,” Gentile explains. “I also wanted to incorporate all of the beautiful art and artifacts they’ve collected through the years.”

Today, her favorite room is the living room, where she placed two cocktail tables from Paul Ferrante as well as a small carved Vincentino side table from Colibri. The sofa is her own design, as is the ottoman, upholstered in a Gaufrage embossed leather from Townsend Leather.

“The room makes you feel alive and in awe of the incredible beauty of La Jolla,” she says.

Of course, the project had other challenges. Striking a balance between Barry’s passion for Western art and Lana’s preference for romantic style was one of them. Fortunately, Gentile discovered a series of works by painter Robin Hall at Art Expressions Gallery. Hall’s plein-air scenes of Mexico complement the architecture of the home and provide a harmonious balance between Barry’s Western aesthetics and the coastal themes his wife adores. Like everything else in the house, it represents the spirit and soul of the Texas couple—the finishing touch to creating a home away from home.

“Having this home is like having our own resort,” Barry says. “It’s a wonderful, comfortable place to entertain, and we enjoy sharing it, the views, the fantastic weather and the wonderful food with all of our old and new friends.”

Interior design by Lori Gentile, Encinitas, 760-635-1105; lorigentile.com.





