

A flagstone terrace maximizes this home's view of Laguna Beach.

OPPOSITE Local artist Jim Olarte made the installation over the fireplace of found boat bottom shards that have softened with natural patina.



Coastal COMEBACK

DESIGNER JOHN WOODEN INTERIORS REIMAGINES
A LAGUNA COTTAGE WITH PLENTY OF SEASIDE CHARM

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Benjamin Moore China White graces the living room, where original walls and ceilings were mimicked in new areas of the home's expansion.



WHEN A LAGUNA COUPLE wanted to move back into their seaside cottage, they seized the opportunity to expand and create space for their grown kids to visit. But like many remodels, the

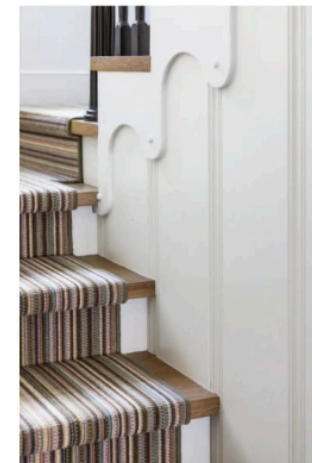
scope creep was major, requiring the team to build a near-new home with one catch: they wanted it to look old.

"We wanted to rebuild it in a way that felt more restored, so it felt like an old cottage," says designer John Wooden. Born and bred in California, Wooden (also the grandson of UCLA basketball coach legend John Wooden), knows a thing about coastal style. "If everything looks too fresh and new, it's too easy to go back in and redo it—then it's like you're creating more of a set than a home."

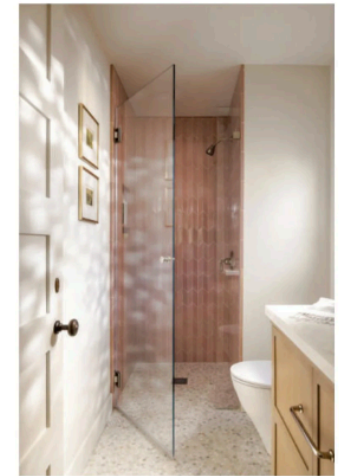
While this may sound like a bad strategy for an interior designer, it's exactly the philosophy Wooden is known for. He's not keen on fast flips, the ever-present modern farmhouse trend, or anything too cookie cutter. He'd rather help one family with seven different homes (true story, he's done it) than have to revisit the same project. So being distinctive is key. In dismantling this 1936 home, Wooden and builder David Gabay had to first rip the house to the foundation and then build it back up, using many of the same materials, yet nearly doubling the size.

"The house was falling down," Gabay says, adding that the structure was sitting on pure basalt. In replacing the foundation, he first took the siding down piece by piece, numbered each one, and then put the walls back in place. Original ceilings were salvaged and mimicked in new areas of the home. "John does an amazing job at taking what's already there and relating it to the new," he says. When it came to tile and stone, Gabay recalls how Wooden would bypass the popular packages up front and go to the back to get what nobody wanted. "He can take trash or disregarded design and make it look good. He's a rare individual in that he cares a lot. And that's why that house looks the way it does."

In getting the house looking so good, there was no mistaking it's prime Pacific locale, but the designer was distinct in his direction. "We wanted fresh and coastal without having it feel trite," Wooden says, adding he always steers away from going to thematic on interiors, especially on the California coast. While this home certainly sports stripes and shades of blue, they're soft and subtle and accented with more nuanced nods to the sea. The blues run more turquoise and are offset by hits of lavender as seen on the Dutch door—a staple that's become somewhat of his calling card. The stairwell has a striped runner in moody tones and scalloped wavelike detail on the wood along with newel posts inspired by Marc Jacobs's penthouse on the East Coast.



LEFT TO RIGHT A twist on coastal shades includes plums and grays, which grace the kitchen, complementing the cool marble surfaces. Also playing off the sea, a wave-like pattern makes its way up the stairway. Rustic sconces outside and vintage lighting inside add to the timeless décor. Pierre Frey Jour de Fete wallpaper makes a playful splash in the powder room. **OPPOSITE** Designer John Wooden often puts in a Dutch Door as seen on the lavender entrance of this cottage.



ABOVE/LEFT In the primary shower, dusty rose tile by Ann Sacks makes a floor-to-ceiling statement seen from the bedroom. A custom bed and nightstand by John Wooden Interiors meld with vintage lamps, dressers, and artwork.

A window bench in the landing offers a “place to perch” with a roman shade echoing that wave shape. Vintage sconces and leaded glass add a sense of history among the new furniture. “The key is to mix in pieces to make it look evolved over time—when you mix it up, you can’t put a time stamp on it,” says Wooden, adding that the collected look fits perfectly into its town.

“Laguna has always been an arts community and drawn an eclectic crowd,” Wooden says. True to the spirit, he made sure to add artistic elements throughout, including an installation over the fireplace made of boat bottom shards by local artist Jim Olarte. Like the home itself, the age of this found art is unknown to the eye who bestows it. Adds Wooden: “the best projects are eclectic, they age gracefully.” **CH**