

A variety of blue fabrics play in the room just off the entry, where a gallery of family photos hang. There's also a secret cabinet hideaway for the kids.



# casual chic in San Marcos

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT BRADFORD AND MARTIN MANN

Two designers team up to give one family of five a refined home with a kid-friendly, **relaxed vibe**

When Jeff and Shannon Berg decided to move two years ago, they knew they didn't want to go far. The family of five, who relocated from Indio in 2011, loved their San Marcos neighborhood but longed for a home in a cul-de-sac with a pool and lots more outdoor space for their three kids—Hannah, 12, Isaac, 8, and Emily, 4—and for themselves. “We debated about buying land or building a home,” Shannon says. But then the ideal house went on the market—a five-bedroom, five-bathroom, 3,400-plus-square-foot abode with a beach-entry pool and views on a dead-end street.

They purchased the property in May 2016 but didn't move for almost a year because Shannon and Jeff decided to start with a nearly clean slate. The couple hired designers Lauren Valletta and Kitchy Crouse and general contractor Nate Bruno to give them a casual modern house that felt homey and livable and incorporated only a few of their existing furnishings—a table that ended up in the foyer and the couple's bed. “Ninety-nine percent of what's here now is new,” Jeff says.

The couple gave Lauren and Kitchy a budget, told them they liked shades of blue, loved the idea of indoor/outdoor living and needed lots of storage.

Left: Designers Lauren Valletta and Kitchy Crouse chose pieces by local San Diego artist Karina Bania, whose mixed-media art combines subtle textures and layering.

Right: Lauren says that the best-styled shelves seamlessly mix vintage finds with new items.

ROBERT BRADFORD

The blue, white and brass motif from the kitchen carries into the wet bar opposite the round dining table too. The wallpaper is by abstract artist Lindsay Cowles.

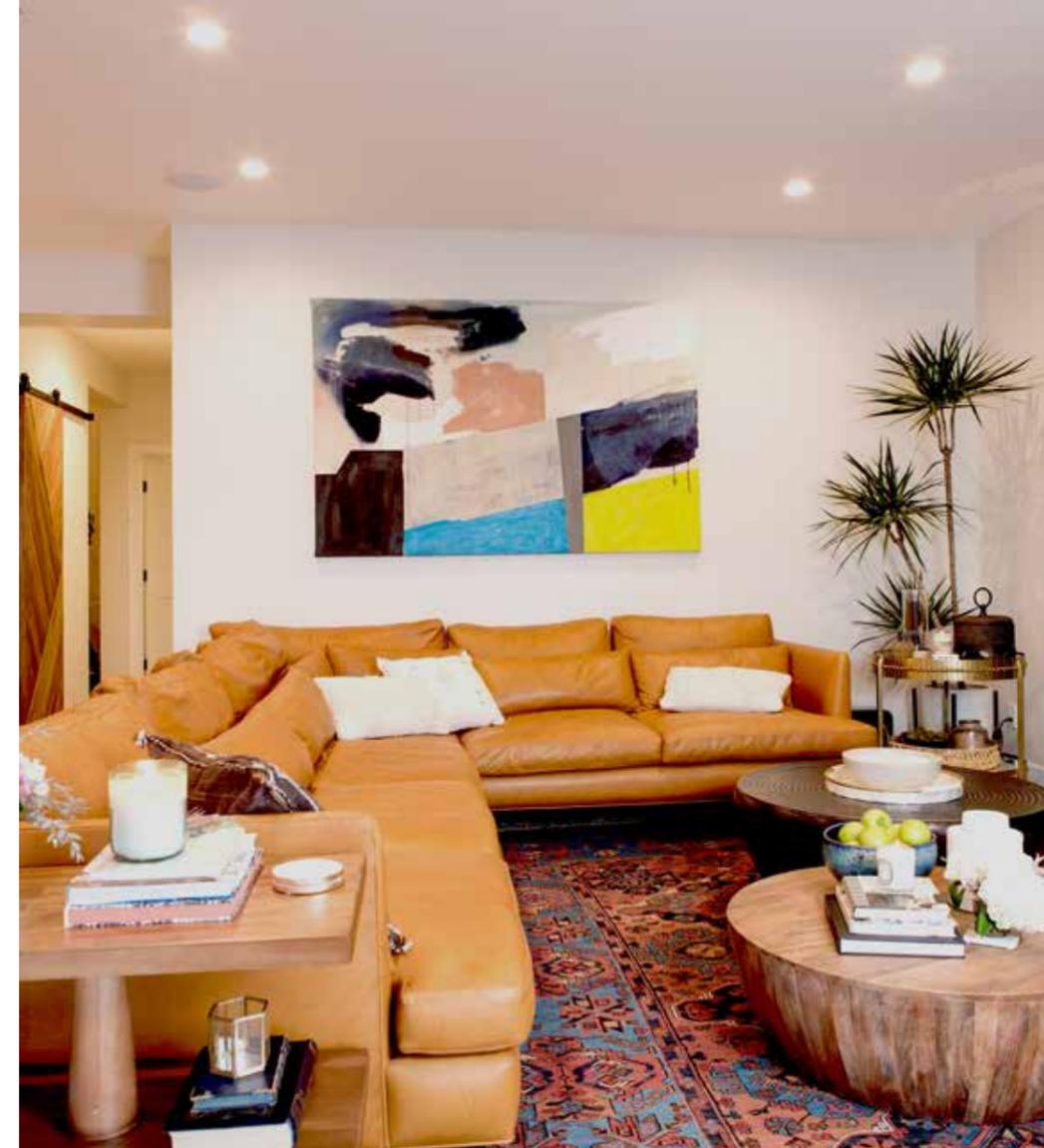


The finished space features loads of custom cabinets with clever additions: The deep drawers in the kitchen open to reveal two levels so space isn't wasted. One level is deep enough for Dutch ovens and casserole dishes; the second pulls out to keep flatware and utensils organized and easily accessible. And taller cabinets opposite the sink hide whole stations for making coffee or smoothies.

The Bergs like to entertain, so aside from the countertop seating around the wood table with the waterfall edge, there's a round table with upholstered chairs next to the wet bar and a table on the patio with bench and chair seating.

Jeff wanted an indoor/outdoor living concept, so the designers replaced one wall in the living room with doors that open onto the patio and yard, which besides the pool, also includes a bocce ball court, a fire pit and outdoor kitchen and bar. To maximize the view and the useable real estate around the doors, Lauren and Kitchy opted for glass doors that slide into the wall and out of sight rather than folding doors. "The doors stay open spring, summer and into fall," Jeff says.

Clockwise from top left: The paneling in the entry was actually a last-minute addition to give the walls some visual interest. • The brass, blue and white palette creep into the family room—in the vintage rug, the Karina Bania artwork, and this metal-and-glass, two-tiered table, where an AURA candle (a local company) burns.



ROBERT BRADFORD (THIS PAGE); MARTIN MANN (FACING PAGE)



Clockwise from top left: Garapa wood juxtaposed with concrete makes for a very inviting outdoor kitchen-and-bar. • Indoor-and-outdoor living was the catalyst for the new home—and the renovation. • The Berg family often dines outside.

And the family really lives in this space. “So it was important that furnishings look good but also be comfortable,” Lauren says. Just inside, a custom-made, extra-long sectional (it’s 10 feet long on one side and 12 on the other), fashioned from the softest Italian leather, commands the room. Across from it, the mantel, a solid piece of very heavy eucalyptus wood tops a fireplace of hand-glazed tiles. “Each one is a little different and brings a bit of blue into the room,” Lauren explains. The designers invited more color into the living area with an abstract painting above the sofa from local artist Karina Bania, whose work is peppered throughout the home—in the entry, the master bedroom and hallway—and a vintage rug, a find from the Rose Bowl Flea Market.

Most of the rugs and some of the textiles in the home are vintage, but for the most part, everything’s new, including an addition to the upstairs. The home had vaulted ceilings in the entry, “which made for a lot of wasted space,” Kitchy says. So the designers created a 16-by-12-foot playroom/homework space for the kids that still maintains a 9-foot ceiling above the front door.



Clockwise from top: With space for dining, lounging and playing, the Berg family lives outside. • Shannon passes the kids a snack before dinner. • Hannah, Isaac and Emily play a game of bocce ball.



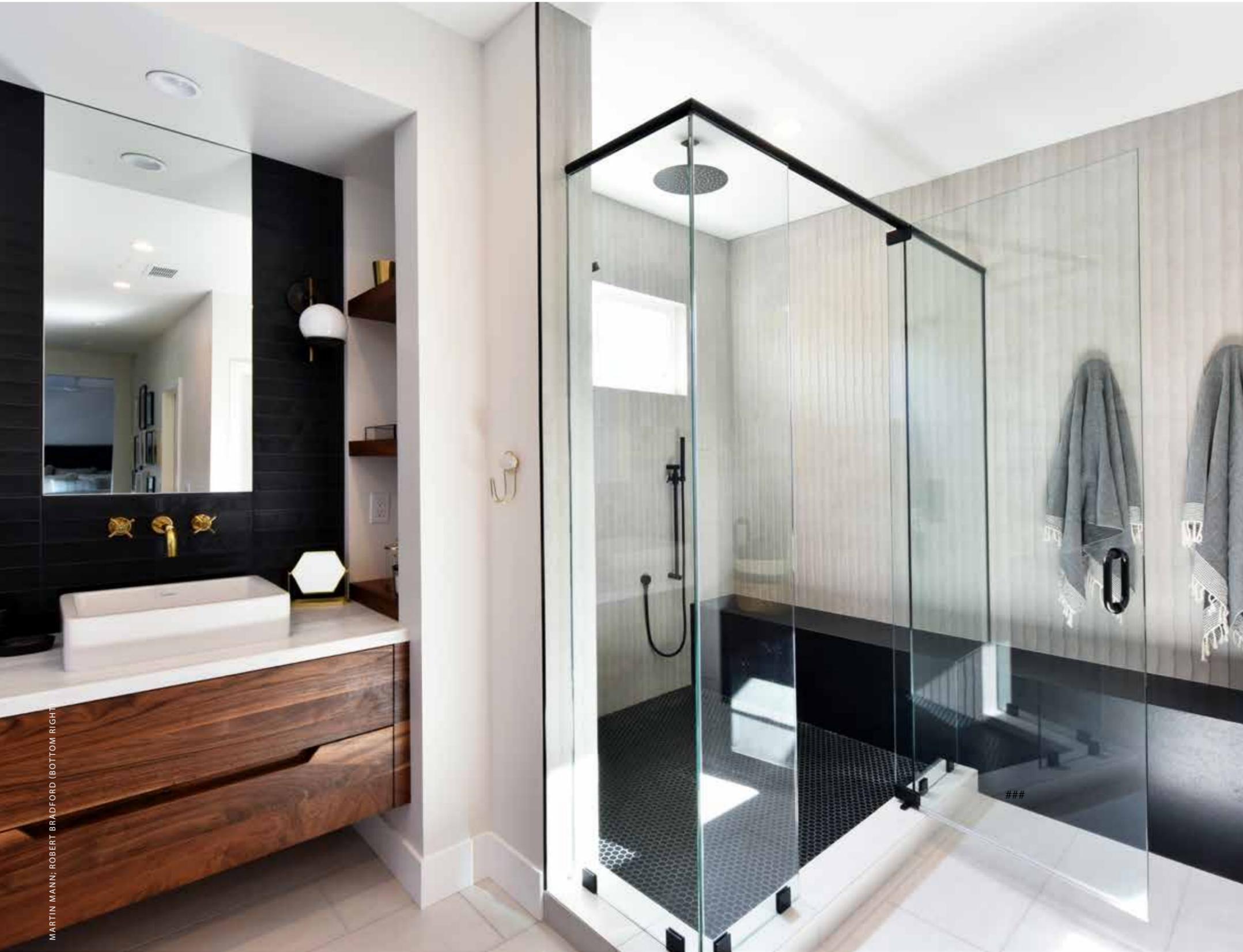


This page: Lauren and Kitchy aimed to give Emily and Hannah rooms that would grow with them. Emily's (pictured far left) features fun geometry and nubby fabrics. Hannah's (left and below) is simple and neutral with pops of the pink and turquoise she wanted. Facing page: This was the bonus room, the space created from really tall ceilings in the entry. The three-toned green wall and modular sofa invite the kids to play (this is where the videogame console lives), study or just lounge. • Isaac's room features a climbing wall to his lofted bed and a place to read underneath.

"And there were already three windows near the ceiling so we didn't have to do anything structural to get natural light in the playroom," Lauren explains. A built-in desk occupies one wall and oversize custom cubes that can be rearranged for sleeping, lounging and gaming take up a good portion of another wall.

While the kids didn't have any huge demands for their homework area, they each played a big role in the designs of their individual rooms. Each sent inspiration images to the designers and explained what they wanted. Hannah liked pink and turquoise and definitely wanted a hanging chair; Isaac craved something fun and fort-like and Emily asked for lots of pink.

ROBERT BRADFORD



MARTIN MANN, ROBERT BRADFORD (BOTTOM RIGHT)



Modern lighting, rustic materials, black tile and soft touches create a master bath that's both masculine and feminine.



In terms of their parents, Shannon's big wishlist unfolded in the kitchen gut and expansion with the addition of two ovens and two dishwashers. Jeff's took shape in the remodel of the master bath. The designers eliminated a workout space in the master suite to give the couple his-and-hers closets and then updated the room with a stand-alone tub, a floating walnut vanity, sleek black tiles (Jeff didn't want any

marble) and another vintage rug. "It's rustic and masculine but feels really luxurious and feminine," Lauren says. That's actually how the whole home feels: a little rustic, a lot modern with an overall feel of livable luxury. "I'm a big fan of trusting the people you hire to do a job," Jeff says. "And Lauren and Kitchy gave us exactly what we wanted." ❖