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SAN DIEGO HOMES

**RESTORED
AND UPDATED**

**RANCHO SANTA FE ADOBE
TAKES ON MODERN FEEL, YET
RETAINS TRADITIONAL LOOK**

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REMODEL ADDS MODERN TOUCHES, SAVES SENSE OF HISTORY

BY SOPHY CHAFFEE

The most dramatic example of the new-old feel that drove the Cary family's remodel of their Spanish ranch home in Rancho Santa Fe is in the least public area: the master bathroom.

"I saw these old 16th-century Portuguese tiles in a magazine. I have a friend who is an artist and I gave them to her and asked, 'Can you re-create that on my wall?'" said homeowner Fred Cary, describing the rectangular blue-and-white painted tiles behind the freestanding tub.

On each tile, artist Edita Semiginovska re-created a section of the tiles from the magazine photo - hands grasping a rope on one, a face on another, architectural details on others - but arranged them in almost cubist way.

"It just makes it a lot more interesting, and it puts a modern edge to a very old look," Cary said, standing in the Carrara marble bathroom that mixes contemporary finishes with traditional elements such as woodworker Dan Dresher's alder vanity. "One of the things I wanted to accomplish



Artist Edita Semiginovska's adaptation of 16th-century tiles sets the mood for the remodel of this Rancho Santa Fe home, bringing a modern twist to traditional style. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

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The new kitchen features Mexican tiles saved from the old home, woodworker Dan Dresher's ash cabinets, unfinished granite counters and LED and low-wattage lighting selected to reduce energy use. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T photos

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in this house was to have it look historical in a sense, but have a modern feel to it."

One small rat necessitated the massive remodel, which took two-and-a-half years and was completed in January.

"We had a fire in 2012," Cary said. "There was a rat up in the attic chewing through the electrical wires, and it started a fire up there. Since the whole house was adobe, the house part didn't burn down, but there was so much black smoke through everything, it got into the adobe and there was no way to salvage all the adobe."

Cary chose residential designer Dena Gillespie and builder Covington Construction to restore what they could of the original 1970 Weir Brothers house and surrounding courtyards, but mod-



The refurbished wrought-iron gate leads through the "living room" patio to the great room, with its four doors opening to the outside. Originally, there were three doors flanked with blue tiles that served as the front entry.

ernize it and improve the flow.

"We wanted to preserve the aesthetic features of the original home, improve the room volumes and relationships to each other,

include the latest green standards and technology while maintaining the original footprint," Gillespie said.

Gillespie added a little more

than 1,000 square feet to the original 3,750-square-foot house by pushing out the round wall of the living room six feet to where the old overhang ended; enclosing the old patio dining area within the new great room; and walling in the old breezeway from the garage.

One of the biggest floor-plan improvements Gillespie made was moving the kitchen, which was narrow and closed-off, into a space that was originally a bedroom. The new kitchen and dining area are now open to the living room area in the great room.

The move allowed Gillespie to bring southern light into the formerly dark living area and better define the two main courtyards. The courtyard off the dining room now contains the outdoor dining area, barbecue and outdoor kitchen. The courtyard at the front of the house, which used to house the barbecue, is now an extension

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The design team was able to restore the adobe fireplace in the outdoor living room. The monkey chandelier homeowner Fred Cary found under a tarp in an antique store in 2004 adds a whimsical touch. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

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of the living room.

"We really wanted to extend the indoor-outdoors aspects of the house and create a lot of private areas," Cary said.

Cary selected more contemporary furniture for the great room but added an eclectic mix of antique and reproduction accents and lighting. To keep the old feel, he selected reclaimed wood from Vintage Timberworks in Temecula for the great room ceilings as well as for the master bedroom and entryway ceilings.

An office and an entryway now take the place of the old kitchen. "Before, there was no entry," Gillespie said. "You walked through this archway and ended up in this quote, unquote 'barbecue patio' and there was no front door."

The entry opens to the new office. "This was a little adobe fireplace (in

the old breakfast nook) and we were able to save it, which was kind of cool," Gillespie said.

"We also preserved this whole tower, and inside it is a powder room and it's just a delightful, crazy room," she said.

The team was also able to preserve the living room and master bedroom adobe fireplaces. They added a slurry coat of stucco to the saved adobe as a transition to the new white stucco walls.

In the back of the home, Gillespie replaced the rec room with a bedroom; tripled the size of the master closets; and created an angled hallway to the master bedroom. Originally, the only access to the master bedroom was through the rec room. The team also improved the flow in the lower-level guest apartment of the four-bed, four-bath home.

The team added a Juliet balcony to the master suite, which overlooks one of the home's seven patios. The bedroom also opens to a patio. "That's something we



The 2012 electrical fire destroyed all the family's furniture. The Carys were able to use some furniture they had kept in storage, such as the leather chair in the master bedroom, which has sentimental value. CHARLIE NEUMAN • U-T

wanted to make sure to do as well: All the different bedrooms and virtually every room has an exterior door," Cary said.

"It's funny," he said, standing in the master bedroom. "You can take people from (the front) end of

the house to this end of the house, and they're lost. It's really pretty straight, but because there are so many nooks and crannies and separate feelings, people are like, 'Wait, how do I get back?'"

"So it works to make the house

feel bigger than it is because there are so many unique areas you can end up in."

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