

Beach Dwelling



Corrugated metal, clean stucco, and barn wood combine the old and new in designer Jon Starr's newest project in Hermosa Beach.



The back of house opens up with floor-to-ceiling windows, creating transparency between the indoors and out.

— Photos by Tom Sanders

something old something new

by Jennifer Capo

You are standing in the middle of a new home, on an oak floor, looking at an oversized front door, a stairwell surrounded by wood next to a fireplace. You wonder why you get a sense of the familiar.

You look again. You look closer, under your feet. You see the splitting creases around the wise eyes of the oak wood flooring. You see two holes, eye level, in reclaimed barn wood, watching you as you climb the stairs and round the bend to the second level. Boat and dock cleats anchor the steps. You press your face against the front door porthole and get a fisheye view of the passing sun. Feel the weight as you push the 10 ft. vaulted front door

timeworn warmth.

"I wanted to have a house that had history before it had history," Starr says. "Something old, something new, something found."

The "old" is wood salvaged from an Idaho barn and reclaimed corrugated metal on the exterior. Starr also used old throwaway wide planks of quarter-sawn oak to platform the floor.

"All this, to me, is character and makes it kind of more timeless and less perfect," Starr says. "I don't like the perfection of what it could be. I like it to be sort of perfect, but old."

The "new" is the clean stucco, skylights, and floor-to-ceiling windows that give the home a glowing transparency, exposing materials inside and out. A disappearing rear wall opens the home to the outdoors, further blending the home with its surroundings.

The "borrowed" comes out of ideas from the designer's own childhood.

"There is a raised wood deck outside," Starr says, looking past the exaggerated butcher-block table in the kitchen. "My dad's house had a wood deck and I always loved that - sitting outside."

And the blue? Italian-blue colored tiles in one of the bathrooms - the only color in the home.

"Kind of a funny analogy, like when you get married," Starr says. "Something borrowed, something new, something old, something blue....A lot of these things,

these choices in materials, I always try to find references, or analogies, or steal something from nature."

The 5,600 square foot home is rooted on an unusual, trapezoid-shaped lot near 25th Street and Hermosa Avenue. Starr says that people thought it would be difficult to build on. Instead of taking the entire lot and building a 7,000 square ft. structure - the more obvious choice - Starr did something different. He looked at the space, and he saw an "L" shape. Many of his subsequent design decisions were based on repeating this "L" over and over again.

Starr says the recurring shapes help create a sense of harmony.

"Maybe, in a sense, if things are kind of the same, it creates order," the designer says.

Multiple decks, an outdoor eating area, a fireplace, and a hot tub mesh in with the green landscape of the backyard. Exposed fireplace flutes stand tall and proud like a stack on a ship.

Every inch of the home was created with intention, thought, and has a back-story - whether from a country barn, a grounded ship, or Starr's own past.

"It's about decision making," Starr says. "And creating a place where I would want to live...It's modern, clean, and simple. But I wanted it to feel like a home." B

For more about this home and other Starr projects visit www.starr-design.com. B



Designer Jon Starr

behind you into safety.

This is the depth and the character that designer Jon Starr has given his newly completed Hermosa Beach project. Starr has melded the old and new: a clean, modern design aesthetic inventively infused with



The kitchen opens to the outdoor lounge and fireplace, providing a "clean and serve" window space.



The oversized front door includes a porthole.



A stairwell surrounded by reclaimed barn wood gives a timeworn character to the home.