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Tucked within San Diego's coveted Santaluz community, this Santa Barbara-style home marries California charm with European stylings thanks to the vision of interior designer Christopher Boutlier.

BY ALLISON MITCHELL // PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICHARD POWERS



A custom Agnes light fixture by Roll & Hill illuminates the living room, which is outfitted with a Minotti sectional sofa and lounge chair.

A project two years in the making, this sprawling estate is the second home for a bicoastal couple from Washington, D.C. Custom-built by Mulvey Builders, with architecture by Frieauf Architects and landscaping by Theresa Clark Landscape Architect, the house was made into a home thanks to the vision of interior designer Christopher Boutlier. “The home is a modernized version of the Santa Barbara style, derived from Mediterranean and Spanish Revival architecture and interior design,” says Boutlier, principal interior designer at Christopher Boutlier Interior Design & Art Consulting. “Santa Barbara designs often feature courtyards, red tile roofs, stone floors, black iron railings and lighting, wood beam ceilings, and white plaster or stucco walls.”

Tucked within San Diego’s tony Santaluz neighborhood, the home is surrounded by lush green fairways, mountains, grassy hills and sightlines of the Pacific Ocean. Naturally, Boutlier looked to the home’s exterior as a starting point. “Working in tandem with the architect, our intent was to take the colors and materials of the Santa Barbara style of architecture and modernize it. I was also inspired by Italian and Mediterranean modern design, in particular, the way that modern furniture producers have integrated their products into older, more traditional structures,” he explains. “Especially in Venice and the Italian countryside, it’s not uncommon to see an old farmhouse or palazzo restored to its original condition but decorated in the modern style. This juxtaposition of old and new allows the viewer to see and understand the compositions of both more clearly.”

To marry the past and present, Boutlier incorporated beloved Italian brands, including Boffi, Minotti and Zanotta, paired with American and French furnishings. He adds, “In terms of materials, we tried to stick to traditional finishes, using rough-hewn oaks with cerused or distressed finishes, honed limestone and marbles, terra-



cotta tiles and black iron. Like with the architecture of the house, the idea was to take those materials and present them in a more pared-down, modern way. For instance, the lighting is mostly black iron or bronze, but they are all very contemporary takes on a classic fixture,” says Boutlier, who heavily relied on pieces from Roll & Hill. “The Agnes chandelier is a great example: The black structure and tapered white glass rods are sort of a modernized version of the medieval nonelectric iron ring chandelier that you would find in a great hall. I think it’s this attention to the historic representation of materials that ultimately made this project successful.”

Art was also a key component of bringing the couple’s personality into the space. “We were lucky enough to have clients who really understood the importance of art to the overall design and allowed us the freedom to cast a wide net in our search for the perfect pieces. In the main bedroom, we placed a photograph by the contemporary German American artist Uta Barth, entitled ‘to draw a bright white line

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with light,” he shares. “To me, it’s important that art not simply ‘work’ as a part of the interior visually, but also contain an internal complexity that spurs thought and contemplation.”

That well-appointed attention to detail is also shown in the immaculate dining room. “The series of Donald Judd wood cuts located in the dining room not only echo a modernized geometric patterning reminiscent of decorative ironwork, they also convey the visual shifts in geometric structures as solids become voids,” says Boutlier, who outfitted the space with an oak dining table from Gregorius Pineo, custom chairs from Bright Chair Company and a black chandelier from Roll & Hill. “These works are particularly interesting to me because the handmade woodblocks soften the geometric structures and give a rough and uneven texture. This contrast between rigid geometry and the imprecise qualities of the handmade object are a perfect reflection of what we were trying to accomplish in this home.”

In the end, both Boutlier and the owners were able to create an oasis that will be loved for years to come. ◉



DESIGN DETAILS

INTERIOR DESIGN

Christopher Boutlier,
Christopher Boutlier Interior
Design & Art Consulting
boutlier.com

ARCHITECT

Friehauf Architects
frieaufarchitects.com

BUILDER

Mulvey Custom Builders
mulveybuilders.com

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Theresa Clark
Landscape Architect
tclastudio.com

RESOURCES

PARIS CERAMICS

Limestone and
hardwood flooring
parisceramicsusa.com

ANNE DECKER ARCHITECTS

Kitchen design
annedeckerarchitects.com

MINOTTI

Living room sectional sofa and
lounge chair, kitchen counter
stools, beds, dining chairs,
office lounge chairs
minotti.com

ROLL & HILL

Living room light fixture;
dining room, breakfast room
and home office chandeliers;
kitchen pendant lights
rollandhill.com

HOLLY HUNT

Living room rug; primary
bedroom nightstands, dresser,
side table, mirror and lighting;
guest bedroom rug and
nightstands; home office desk,
side table and console table
hollyhunt.com

BOFFI GEORGETOWN

Primary bathroom tub
boffigeorgetown.com

From top: Minotti counter stools give guests a place to sit in the kitchen, where Roll & Hill pendants light up the space; the beautiful backyard features McKinnon & Harris outdoor furniture, Tucci umbrellas, and a pool and fire pit by Del Mar's Mulvey Custom Builders.

