

COAST



REFLECTING ORANGE COUNTY'S FINER LIFESTYLE | JULY 2008



A Modern Mood

A Newport Beach house gets a fresh attitude

BY LISA LIDDANE • PHOTOS BY MICHAEL KITADA

Bridget and Blaine Skinner raised the ceiling in the great room and dining room for an airier feeling. The graffiti art on the wall was commissioned.



Sally greets visitors at the Dutch door painted with a color known as "pirate's gold."



Great grandpa Skinner's portrait hangs above an Ikea table. A Philippe Starck-designed Mademoiselle chairs upholstered in Missoni fabric

The story begins at the entrance of a crisp, all-white, wood-and-brick house with cocoa-hued shingled roof. The eye-catching door is not covered in classic black or red, or some other predictably safe color.

Then again, Bridget and Blain Skinner's home in Newport Beach is anything but common.

The homeowners painted the door with pirate's gold, a romantic name for a darkened version of Dijon mustard with olive undertones.

"Someone actually said, 'Is that primer?'" says Bridget, laughing. "People either get the house or they don't."

Apparently, people do, as the house was a crowd favorite at the Newport Harbor High School Home and Garden tour last spring, a mere nine months after construction was completed.

The Skinners had lived in a 1,550-square-foot ranch-style house for 18 years. But things were getting cramped with two elementary school-age boys, Sam and Joe. "We tried and tried to see how we could make an addition work or just remodel," Bridget says. In the end, she and Blain decided they had to start from scratch and build a 2,670-square-foot solar-powered house on the



Design Details

1. The Skinners arranged their books by color for visual impact in the great room; 2. The circles in the Foscarini chandelier are a theme repeated subtly throughout the house; 3. Kumquats and vases of moss give beach sand-hued formal place settings a relaxed look; 4. The fruit hues of the dinnerware complement the colors of the outdoor cushions.



same site that shines with style.

The entry is a promise of fun things to come. Beyond it is a fearless and uncontrived study in design juxtapositions and color.

Using a background of white on the walls and cabinets of the living and dining spaces, Bridget's long-time friend and interior designer Karen Wight mixed traditional with contemporary.

"It's grandma meets mod," Wight says.

Case in point: the foyer. There, a pair of transparent Philippe Starck Ghost chairs with crushed velvet cushions in pirate's gold flank the Skinners' heirloom sideboard and hutch.

In the "game" corner of the living room, great-grandpa Skinner's gilded portrait sits above a simple white banquette with striped cushions. Facing the painting are a pair of Starck Mademoiselle see-through chairs upholstered in a Missoni floral fabric and a Saarinen-inspired Ikea table.

Bridget says the Missoni fabric inspired her to be adventurous with color in other rooms of the home, but not without a gentle nudge from Wight. "As much as I love color, sometimes it takes a little courage to do it," Bridget says. "It helps to work with a designer that I trust."

When Bridget embraced color, she went all-out. She and Blain commissioned a local high school artist to paint street art in bright colors. The graffiti work on

corrugated aluminum now hangs over the sectional and is the focal point of the great room. Pillows covered in tomato, tangerine and avocado hues pick up colors from the painting as do stacks of books arranged by color in a bookshelf nearby.

The happy colors continue into outdoor rooms, which Bridget, a landscape designer and project manager at Molly Wood Design Group, conceptualized and collaborated on with Molly Wood herself. "I tried to be my own best client," Bridget says.

There's a solar-heated saline pool and spa, water closet and outdoor shower surrounded by a lush wall of bamboo and succulents. Adjacent are two dining areas and an outdoor living room, all decorated with citrus-colored pillows and cushions.

In this new house, the Skinners didn't completely abandon what Bridget calls the old home's comfortable "granny" look. They brought back its essence, electrified it with color and gave it a new groove. ◊

Interior design

by Wight House Design, Newport Beach

Tabletop settings

by Bloomingdale's, Fashion Island

Living arrangements

by Molly Wood Design Group

OPPOSITE TOP Gold throw pillows echo the hue of the stools in the living room and the cushions on Ghost chairs by Philippe Starck in the foyer; OPPOSITE BOTTOM Sam and Joe Skinner play in the solar-heated saltwater pool; BELOW The Skinners, from left, Blain, Sam, Bridget, and Joe relax in the outdoor living room equipped with a fireplace, overhead heater, water closet, shower, and television.

