

THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

Coastal

SAN DIEGO HOMES

SOPHISTICATED AND SIMPLE

ARCHITECTS ADAPT HOME TO FIT FAMILY'S NEEDS

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2011

MODERN TOUCHES

EXOTIC WOOD, NEUTRAL COLORS CARRY OLIVENHAIN HOME FORWARD IN TIME

SOPHY CHAFFEE
SPECIAL TO THE U-T

Karen Hummel found the inspiration to bring her family's very '80s Olivenhain house into this century in a stack of wood.

At an exotic-wood lumberyard, she found a piece of macassar ebony that would become the showstopper in her powder room. "That was it, when I found that wood," she said, pointing to the free-standing black-and-chocolate-brown wood counter that holds the bowl sink in the Asian-inspired powder room.

The piece prompted her to use exotic woods throughout the interior remodel and helped set the color palette for the eclectic

4,100-square-foot, four-bedroom, four-bath home. Hummel chose a burlap-colored paint for most walls and black slate flooring - neutrals that feel more traditional in rooms such as the kitchen and modern in rooms such as the family room. Most of all, they are decades away from the old color palette.

"Everything in the house was pink," she said. Variations of the '80s favorite were used everywhere, from the salmon-colored tiles and sponge-painted brick in the kitchen to the floral carpeting on the staircase.

"There were five types of flooring on the first floor before," said Hummel, who shares the house with her



Craftsman Jim Bell had to carefully layer the zebra-wood used on the staircase to curve up the stairs. The planter box on the left is made from medium-density fiberboard and zebra-wood to look like copper. CHERESKIN ARCHITECTURE

SEE OLIVENHAIN • 16

Olivenhain

CONTINUED FROM 15

husband, Greg, and two teenage sons. She replaced all the flooring with black slate throughout the first floor because, "part of what sold us on the house was its continuous feel," she said.

At the center of the house, a curved staircase, which also had floral carpeting, was redone in zebra-wood and wrought iron by woodworker Jim Bell. Architect Sam Chereskin shaved three feet off the width of the staircase at the entryway and, to improve the flow, he simplified sightlines from the entry to the family room in the back of the house. The family room features a television above a zebra-wood mantle and a double-wide black leather chaise.

Off the family room is the kitchen with white cabinetry, soapstone countertops and a backsplash with white and taupe glass tile. "I like the kitchen, because it



Karen Hummel climbed a stack of exotic woods to find the black palm for the banquette table in her Olivenhain home. "I've had 12 bunco women at that table," Hummel said. Black slate flooring and a neutral color palette unify the area with the rest of the public space on the first floor. CHERESKIN ARCHITECTURE

SEE OLIVENHAIN • 17

Olivenhain

CONTINUED FROM 16

is open and light and a good family space that is designed for convenient cooking and interaction,” Chereskin said.

Hummel is a fan of the kitchen nook, with a large banquette and a football-shaped table made of black palm wood. “Everybody wants to sit in the booth,” she said.

To open up the kitchen and make room for the booth and a Dutch door to the backyard, Chereskin eliminated two support beams and bumped the room out two feet. He also eliminated the wet bar and replaced huge sliders with French doors to streamline the space in the 2004 remodel.

The dining room and adjacent living room at the front of the house are more formal. The airy feeling of the two-story living room is accentuated by the three tall mirrors made of walnut burl with zebrawood, inspired by similar mirrors



The kitchen is now open, light and family-friendly. A low-placed microwave, a warming drawer and a glass-front refrigerator are among the practical features. “There’s always someone coming or going,” Karen Hummel said of her family of four.
CHERESKIN ARCHITECTURE

SEE OLIVENHAIN • 18

Olivenhain

CONTINUED FROM 17

in the Mercer Hotel's Mercer Kitchen cafe in New York.

"The restaurant looked so big (because of the mirrors)," Hummel said, "but it was tiny."

Upstairs in the master suite, the featured wood is leopardwood. Its lacelike pattern is shown off in the cabinetry (which also uses walnut burl) that hides the TV in the bedroom and on the vanities in the master bath.

The slate-tiled wall and black-sanded pebbles in the shower and around the bathtub give the room a serene feel, making it another of Hummel's favorites. Off the suite is a small porch with a view of the pool and surrounding 1-acre rural plot and the sounds that go with it. "All the frogs come out at night," Hummel said.

The rest of the second floor is decidedly functional.

"For Karen, functionality was just as important as the look. So the house

SEE OLIVENHAIN • 19

Soapstone kitchen counters, right, are durable and easy to maintain. Butcher block from the old kitchen was cut to make a custom chopping board. Below, the dining area is a bit more formal than the rest of the home. **CHERSKIN ARCHITECTURE PHOTOS**



Olivenhain

CONTINUED FROM 18

could not feel stuffy, pretentious or uninviting, which I think was accomplished," Chereskin said. "A 'real' laundry room was a priority, one that accommodated all laundry functions from cleaning and folding clothes to ironing and sewing. A separate room that the kids could hang out in, play music in and feel comfortable leaving their stuff out was also in the program."

To fulfill Hummel's wish list, Chereskin split what was a large playroom into a well-equipped laundry room (extensive cabinetry, large project table and gift-wrapping area) and a music/hangout room (rubber matting, double-thick walls and a fire door).

Hummel said she wanted the kind of home that her sons and their friends could make noise in.

"It's everybody's house," she said. "I want them to use it."

Sophy Chaffee is an Encinitas-based writer.



Black pebbles and a dark slate-tiled wall give the master bathroom a serene feel. It's one of Karen Hummel's favorite rooms. "The woods selected and the elements created promote an Oriental flair to the look and feel of the house," said architect Sam Chereskin. "As a result, the house exhibits a good feng shui." CHERESKIN ARCHITECTURE