

CALIFORNIA HOMIES

THE MAGAZINE OF ARCHITECTURE
THE ARTS & DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

The Golden State

ARCHITECT
HOMER OATMAN
DANA POINT

DESIGNER
JOEL HENDLER
SAN FRANCISCO

ARCHITECT
MICHAEL RACHLIN
LOS ANGELES

DESIGNER
PHIL NORMAN
PALOS VERDES

ENTERTAINING IN
Napa


DISPLAY UNTIL NOVEMBER 30, 2014

\$5.99US/CAN FALL 2014

43>



0 74470 95900 7



Tradition WITH A *Twist*

ARCHITECT HOMER OATMAN CREATES A MANOR HOUSE
ANIMATED BY THE OCEAN VIEW

TEXT BY KATHY BRYANT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARYN MILLET AND RICHARD POWERS

Architect Homer Oatman designed the infinity pool on the main floor to act as a canopy for the pool beneath in the entertainment area. Water ripples above giving an artistic element.





“**Y**OU SEE THE PACIFIC OCEAN IMMEDIATELY when you enter the house,” says Homer Clifton Oatman, AIA of Oatman Architects Inc. in Newport Beach. “That was Laureen and David Demshur’s primary directive when they engaged me to design their vacation home on The Strand in Dana Point. They wanted their guests to be immediately wowed when they walked through the front door.” That turns out to be an understatement since almost every room has an unobstructed view and the indoor/outdoor elements of his design make visitors feel as one with nature.

The ten-thousand-square-foot house has references to a Provence Maison that’s been plucked from France and placed on a

hill with panoramic ocean and sky views. Oatman used limestone for the entry and interior ground flooring which gives the house a solid, traditional feeling, as do the 12-foot ceilings and graceful arches. “The series of arches describe the entry procession as the view of the ocean beyond draws you through the house,” says Oatman. “The coved plaster interior crown moldings are a traditional French detail, as is the genoise tile eaves that are typically found on roofs throughout Provence.”

He designed and detailed the wooden entry doors from antique French prototypes. The doors were then carved by craftsmen under the direction of Michael Reeves of Corbin Reeves Construction. Reeves played an important part in the design of the house, working



The graceful stairway is highlighted by a massive skylight that animates the area. **LEFT** The French limestone surround and genoise tiles help create the feeling of a Provencal manor house. The door opens to the amazing Pacific Ocean view, which was the owners' directive to Oatman.



closely with Oatman. Virtually all the interior doors in the house are antiques which gives the house the feeling that it's been there for centuries. They were sourced by Ohara Davies-Gaetano of Bliss Design in Newport Beach. Davies-Gaetano's use of a subtle palate throughout the house proves that muted colors can speak volumes. "This house was definitely a collaborative effort," says Oatman.

Although one is drawn to the ocean view and the great room beyond, Oatman has created clever design elements along the way, like the graceful curved stairway and the gigantic 17-foot-square skylight to let in light on even gloomy beach days.

Upon arriving at the great room, one can truly appreciate the architectural elements that went into his design. "There is a 30-foot opening to the ocean so you can hear the waves crashing on the shore. The room ends in a cantilevered reflecting pool/spa to give a feeling of being on infinity's edge," he says. This has got to be one of the most dramatic spas in the world since it sits out over the downstairs loggia and acts as a canopy for the bar downstairs. But there's still more. The bottom of the spa is a three-inch-thick sheet of glass which allows dappled sunlight to illuminate the round indoor/outdoor bar in the entertainment room on the level below. "I studied with architect John Lautner when I was in grad school at UCLA," remembers Oatman. "He made a huge impression on me. That particular aspect of the design attempts to incorporate in a way that is both appropriate and surprising an element of the organic free-form architecture that Lautner developed."

The coffered ceiling in the great room was detailed in French oak.



The great room has a French oak coffered ceiling and retractable steel doors that open to the 30-foot view of the ocean. **LEFT** The highlight of this room is an 18th-century Italian painted ceiling. Oatman used recessed lighting to illuminate it. Custom chairs are in Browning & Chandler fabric and Samuel & Sons trim. The chandelier is by Niermann Weeks.







LEFT The master bathroom is the perfect place to relax and enjoy the view. **ABOVE** The master bedroom has reclaimed French wood planks, a gilded four-poster bed and a Swedish 18th-century daybed in Colefax and Fowler fabric.



Continuing the thematic use of reclaimed materials throughout the house, Davies-Gaetano found an 18th-century Italian painted ceiling with soft rose tones that was reassembled and restored as the centerpiece of the dining room ceiling. The unique perimeter cove lighting that softly illuminates the ceiling is based on a detail observed by Oatman in Italy years ago.

Walking downstairs on the reclaimed French oak floors to the bar area also has a dramatic impact since you turn the corner and you are in another spacious entertaining area again facing the ocean. Rather than pocketing horizontally into the walls, the retractable steel windows descend vertically into the floor below like an elevator, allowing for another amazing wall-to-wall ocean view. The reflection of the water rippling through the glass bottom of the cantilevered spa above adds a whimsical touch. Michael Reeves was also instrumental in developing the concept and the technical design of the descending window wall.

The upstairs master bedroom suite has a relaxing environment for the Demshurs as well as three guest suites for their friends who travel with them from Houston to enjoy this beach paradise.

For all its grace on the site, this house was engineered and constructed in steel and concrete as strong as a freeway. With an emergency power generator, the house was designed to continue functioning independently like a ship at sea in the event of a power loss. In fact, it's easy to believe that this house has it all: form, function, and fun. And as Oatman says, in appreciation, "Good architecture is impossible without good clients." CH



This great room has the reflecting pool that has got to be one of the most dramatic spas in the world. The loggia ceiling is of Douglas fir. **LEFT** Oatman designed the house so that there is a view in almost every room including this upstairs guest bedroom.

A photograph of a coastal patio. In the foreground, there is a round stone table with a pedestal base, flanked by two wicker chairs. On the table, there is a small glass with a candle. To the right of the table is a small potted plant. The patio is made of stone tiles and has a low stone wall overlooking the ocean. The sky is a pale blue, and the water is a light blue. The patio is covered by a wooden structure with beams and a column visible on the right.

**“GUESTS VISITING OUR HOME
ALWAYS COMMENT ON THE
ENERGY AND SOUL OF THE HOUSE.”**

—LAUREN DEMSHUR