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ROOMS WITH A VIEW

East meets West and Strand meets structure when KAA architect Grant Kirkpatrick collaborates with longtime friends, the Viklunds, on their Manhattan Beach home.





COASTAL CALLING

SERENDIPITY SWOOPS IN TO CREATE A BALINESE MASTERPIECE
IN MANHATTAN BEACH.

WRITTEN BY SUZANNA CULLEN HAMILTON • PHOTOGRAPHED BY MANOLO LANGIS AND SIRI BERTING





A pre-existing relationship frequently prohibits professional collaboration. However, Lars and Kelly Viklund found that building their dream home was a serendipitous occasion during which a sequence of events and a close group of friends conspired professionally to create perfection in Manhattan Beach.

As lifelong Californians, Lars and Kelly gravitated toward the ocean. In a series of moves from Redondo Beach to the Tree Section of Manhattan Beach, each re-location brought them slightly closer to the coast. While the Viklunds enjoyed their traditional home in the Tree Section, Kelly kept pages of ideas torn from magazines for the beach house she dreamed of building one day. The couple was unsuccessful many years ago in their effort to purchase a building near the beach that had once been subdivided into apartments.

Headed to Hawaii for a vacation, they received the call that a teardown was for sale with great ocean views. They committed to the purchase and subsequently found out it was the apartment building they had tried to purchase

years before. Serendipity intervened.

The Viklunds have been longtime friends with Grant Kirkpatrick of KAA Architects and well understand the caliber of his work. Grant's design aesthetic and his use of sophisticated materials were the level of architecture to which the Viklunds aspired.

Additionally, Kelly Viklund and Suzanne Ascher of Waterleaf Interiors bonded many years ago as first-time mothers. Although they were initially concerned about forging a business relationship due to their friendship, their concerns were alleviated one morning when both women walked in with the same issue of *ELLE Décor* featuring Cindy Crawford's Malibu home—noting it was the perfect design for Kelly's new home. They were literally and figuratively on the same page.

Rarely is a house created on paper in the first draft; most take several iterations to achieve the end result. However, the Viklunds sat down with Grant and Suzanne at the first meeting, and an almost perfect plan evolved. Grant Kirkpatrick maintains very high standards of

collaboration and only accepts projects when the client "understands the vision process of how to incorporate the major components of a house to fit the lifestyle of the owners."

Fortunately, the Viklunds had spent several weekends living in the empty apartment building, and they became familiar with the views, the shifts in light and how they wanted to live. Having vacationed frequently in Hawaii and Bali, the Viklunds knew they desired a tropical feel to their home, and it is evidenced in the use of beamed ceilings, shutters and the "juxtaposition of large open spaces with smaller, more intimate spaces," says Grant.

With small lot sizes, beach homes in the South Bay require creativity. The Viklunds literally pushed their creativity into the ground: they excavated below street level to create a fourth floor, where a huge media room and craft room are the ultimate entertaining space for the children. The street level has a kitchen and family room that open to the walk-street patio for casual family outdoor entertaining. With the bedrooms on the third floor, the fourth floor remains one large open space for living, dining and cooking.



Grant was given the challenge that there were not to be any upper cabinets to obstruct views. With that dictate, a massive grey island with storage underneath anchors the sedate kitchen. Had it been a bold color, the island would have consumed the room. However, because the color palate resembles the ocean, it segues beautifully between the sea and sky. The result is a space that is great for entertaining but not overly formal and with preserved views of the ocean.

On the rear of the upper floor, the doors slide completely open to reveal an outdoor room. At first glance, it appears to be a proper room with a ceiling and shuttered windows that open to the elements. However, with a Jacuzzi strategically hidden under lounge mats and window seats that line the room, it's actually an outdoor living space ingeniously disguised as another interior living room.

Suzanne Ascher describes decorating the house as a "great collaboration" with Lars and Kelly. "We were able to incorporate elements from their previous house, such as the master bedroom furniture,

as well as create new spaces with new pieces in the living room and media room," she says.

"THE FAMILY IS AS INVITING, FRIENDLY AND AUTHENTIC AS THEIR HOME."

Fourteen-year-old Noah Viklund's passion is music, and his collection of Fender and Gibson acoustic and electric guitars that line his room and the craft room are testament to his interest. Nine-year-old daughter Laila was once a fan of Miss Kitty and the color pink, so Noah got a Miss Kitty monogrammed guitar to play for her. Laila has become a budding actress and is drifting away from the color pink, but the Miss Kitty guitar still hangs on the craft room wall as a reminder of a young girl's love of pink and an older brother's devotion to both his sister and his music.

With a background in the fashion industry, Lars Viklund claims that he did not have an interest in architecture or interior design. However, his

innate ability to create clothing transcends into the realm of homes and buildings. Concurrent with building their home in Manhattan Beach, Lars purchased the renowned Del Marcos hotel in Palm Springs created by William Cody in 1947. It was in a state of disrepair when he acquired it, but the hotel is undergoing an extensive renovation that will place it on the list of National Historic Landmarks in California.

When asked if moving changed their life, Lars remarks, "It's been an entire lifestyle change. Now we wake up and head to the beach, where we surf, paddle board, bike and play volleyball." From the views of the ocean visible from each of the top three floors to the beach lifestyle, the Viklunds have embraced seaside living. Grant remarks that the Viklunds are as "inviting, friendly and authentic as their home."

From the ultimate purchase of a frequently considered location to the close friends who collaborated professionally, serendipity swooped in to make a family's dream come true. ●