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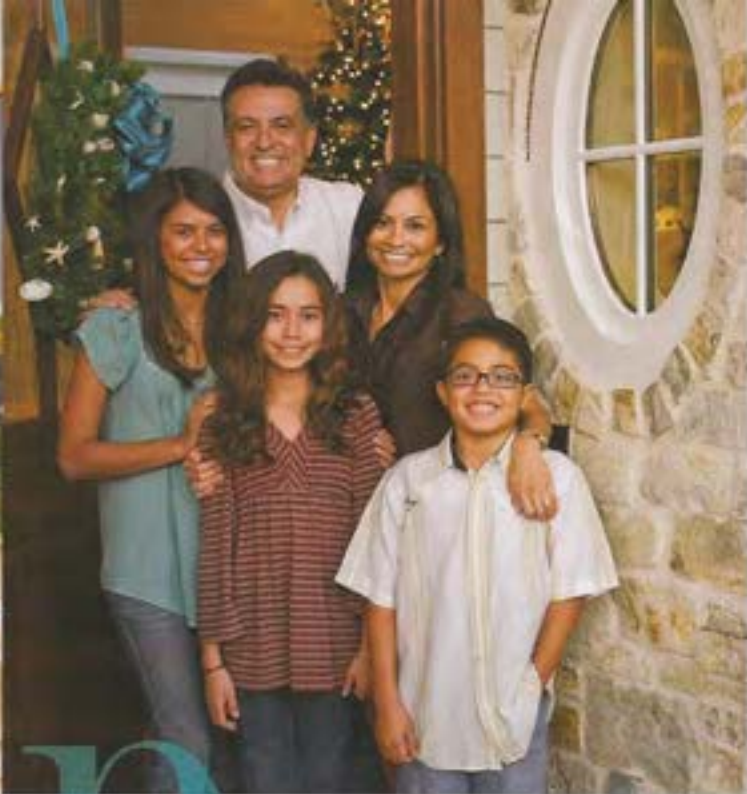


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Blue holiday decorations in the living room are in keeping with the house's color palette. Wood floors and a mahogany barrel arch leading to the kitchen contrast with the white ceilings and trim. **Top right:** Tony and Tricia Sanchez with children: Samantha, 14; Sabrina, 12; and Tony G., 10. **Preceding pages:** Colors of the raffia-upholstered side chair and slipcovered wing chairs were inspired by sand and water.



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Powdered-sugar smiles are a Christmas Eve tradition at Tricia and Tony Sanchez's California home. While their three children—Samantha, Sabrina, and Tony G.—shake packages under the tree and struggle to stay awake for midnight Mass, Tony cooks up a batch of *buñuelos*, a Mexican treat of phyllo dough topped with maple syrup and powdered sugar.

Another Christmas Eve tradition is taking an evening boat ride to see the glittering lights on the fancy watercraft and homes lining the bay at Newport Beach. "We all bundle up—it might be a freezing 62 or 63 degrees!—we get our hot chocolate and hot toddies, and walk to the beach," Tricia relates. "The water is so calm; no one else is out. We may not have snow, but it's magical here this time of year."

Tricia and Tony seem to have plenty of magic in their lives. With three young children, the family was outgrowing its previous Newport Beach home. It was then that an elderly neighbor knocked on the door and said he was selling his house. "He told Tony, 'You've always been so nice, putting up my Christmas lights every year. Do you want to buy my house?'" says Tricia. That was on her birthday in 2004.

The Sanchezes bought the property, which was closer to the beach, and began planning a new home for the site. (The original house was about 60 years old and required too much work to make renovation possible, Tricia explains.) To oversee the project, they chose Cynthia Childs, who brought not only technical expertise (she's a licensed architect and civil engineer) but also valuable mom know-how (she's raised two children while balancing a career). "Cynthia asked all the right questions," says Tricia, "like where do the kids put their backpacks when they walk in. She totally gets it. She understands that a home has to be beautiful, but also functional."





because they love living close to the water, Tricia and Tony Childs for a home with a beach style. "She wanted something that was happy and light," says Childs. "He wanted a home that made him feel like he was on vacation." Childs pleased both, designing a Key West- and Caribbean-inspired level, nearly 4,000-square-foot home, with walls of windows and an inner courtyard that brings the outdoors in.

The house feels quite spacious even though it's on a tight lot, Childs says. Ten-foot-high ceilings and an open floor plan on the main level contribute to the roomy feeling. Rather than architectural detailing on the ceilings to define the spaces, Childs used architectural detailing on the ceilings to define the spaces. Two X-motif transoms bordering a coffered ceiling create an entry corridor that visually separates the living and dining rooms, which have board-and-beam ceilings.

The spacious feeling is further enhanced by two 12-foot-wide bifold glass doors—one in the kitchen and another in the living room—that open to an interior courtyard complete with a fireplace. "The walls just go away, so that the outdoor space becomes part of the home," Childs says.

Bifold glass doors open the kitchen to the courtyard. These "disappearing walls" in both the kitchen and the living room welcome California breezes and are ideal when entertaining. The large kitchen island has an alder-wood base and a marble top with a chunky 4-inch edge. Cabinet doors with wide, flat louvers are Caribbean inspired. **Opposite, top left:** The Texas shellstone fireplace surround is imbedded with hundreds of fossilized shells. Built-in shelves next to the fireplace repeat the arched niches above the cabinets in the dining room. **Opposite, bottom right:** A banquette curves around a round table at one end of the kitchen. To the left of the banquette is a nearly invisible door that leads to a small pantry and home office.

The couple's collection of contemporary art—much of it with water and beach themes—provides blasts of bright color and drives the house's blue-and-green color palette. "The colors in the interiors relate to the artwork," says Brenda Eastman, a Newport Beach interior designer who worked with the Sanchezes. Golden taupe armchairs in the living room repeat colors in a painting of California's Crystal Cove beach hanging above the limestone fireplace. Turquoise blue glassware in the dining room cabinets echoes the blues in *Pool at Noon*, a painting by Glen Ness commissioned by the Sanchezes, which hangs in the dining room.

Walls are painted silver-sage, a color Tricia spotted at a Restoration Hardware store. "I used the color on all the walls except the kids' rooms. It's so soothing," Tricia says. She even had an exterior paint mixed to match.

Eastman focused on scale and simplicity, introducing carefully edited furnishings and accessories to complement but not compete with artwork. "This was a house that needed not a lot of items but significant pieces," she notes. Four large glass



Tucked under the stairs is a narrow space that Tony calls his "tequila room." Only about 4x8 feet, the room has lighted glass shelves and wood storage racks for displaying choice tequilas, tequila glasses, and serveware. Walls and a barrel ceiling are lined with small slate tiles so the room feels like an old cellar, says architect Cynthia Childs. Tricia prefers wine, so Childs included a wine chiller and wine racks.





bottles sit in niches above cabinets in the dining room, and a barrel light fixture hangs above the table. "Tricia didn't want a typical chandelier that was too fussy," says the designer, "so we went with something more handsome and a bit contemporary."

While many of the stained wood architectural details are mahogany, the floors are a slightly distressed-looking walnut. "We wanted the warmer, homier look that you get with the walnut," Childs says. Plus the distressed surfaces help hide the sand the family tracks in during the summer, adds Tricia.

In the kitchen, a large island with prep sink and under-counter refrigerator drawers allows the family to prepare meals together. Snuggled against the stair wall at one end of the kitchen is a cozy curved banquette plumped with blue and gold pillows where family members eat most of their meals.

Furniture, fabrics, and finishes are all easy-care and kid friendly. "I'm a neat person, and I wanted a house that would be easy to keep clean but still look pretty," Tricia says. "People walk in our house and say it feels comfortable."

Just a two-minute walk from the beach, it's the everyday vacation home Tony and Tricia hoped for. "Tony said he wanted to be able to pour a cup of coffee at home, walk to the beach, and have his coffee still be warm," she says. Now he can. ■

Architect: Cynthia Childs

Interior designer: Brenda Eastman

For more information, see sources on page 112



Opposite: A white vaulted ceiling in the master bedroom is accented by mahogany wood beams. The room opens to a second-level balcony on the front of the house. "When I walk out, I look out on the tops of the palm trees," Tricia says. **Top left:** The same richly patterned marble that was used on the kitchen island was used in the master bath. The brown veining complements the dark wood floors. **Top right:** Tony G. wanted a "surfer dude" bedroom, complete with a surfboard above the bed. The built-in bed features a drawer for holding his toys.

Above: Mahogany shutters on the windows and a fixed horizontal shutter shading the front porch reflect Caribbean and Key West house styles.