

A LARGER

scope

A South Bay designer sees the opening of a massive Manhattan Beach lot as an opportunity to design her family's ideal home.

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There are many things to boast about when it comes to living in the South Bay, but space typically isn't one of them. So when an opportunity to purchase a 9,500-square-foot lot presented itself, Rebecca Foster of Rebecca Foster Designs jumped on it.

"We lived on 18th Street when we moved to Manhattan Beach in 2010. We bought this lot around April of 2014," Rebecca says. "We had a house we loved in the same neighborhood, but as a designer this gave me the chance to really build my own home."

The project took two years from the time the lot was purchased till the Fosters moved in. Louie Tomaro was the architect, and Ron Slavens led construction. "Both were awesome," Rebecca notes.

Of the lot's 9,500 square feet, the house takes up nearly 5,600—leaving ample space for landscape architect Julia Schuurt to help Rebecca realize her vision for the yard. With four children ranging from age 11 to 16, the outdoor space was designed to meet the needs of every Foster (and their friends).

"That's what I wanted, for all the neighborhood kids to come by," Rebecca says. "It really has become a place where the kids know they can just show up."

There's a lower-level sports court—a space that eventually will

be converted into a pool. The fire pit area, pizza oven and grill make it perfect for laid-back family nights or entertaining guests. Added perks like the outdoor ice maker, drink fridge and bar sink make it "a great place for parties," Rebecca adds.

The tree-line views from the wraparound porch pair perfectly with how Rebecca describes the home. "It's supposed to feel like a modern farmhouse," she says. The floors are French oak—"not too dark and not too brown," she points out. "It took me a long time to find the right floors."

French doors separate the indoor and outdoor living areas. "The big thing now is those big sliding doors, but I wanted it to feel more traditional," Rebecca explains.

When it came to the kitchen, she wanted to make a statement: "I didn't want it to be standard." To assist her in that goal, Rebecca enlisted the help of Steven Cooper, the principal designer of Cooper Pacific Kitchens.

"I think sometimes kitchen and bath design is the least understood [as far as] importance. The kitchen is the most useful component of your home. I may be consulting on countertops and tile, but Steven's really the wise sage on what we need to do to make it more functional," Rebecca says.

"A 10-minute conversation can transform a space," Steven adds.



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There are hints of blue sprinkled throughout—some that pop, like the knobs on her stove or the exterior of her double oven. The walls and countertops showcase a subtle hue. The richness of the dark walnut butcher block contrasts beautifully with the large, white and fully functional island with its own sink, dishwasher, cabinetry and drawers.

The kitchen as a whole has three sinks (including one outside the walk-in pantry) and three dishwashers, making it ideal for hosting large gatherings. The combined wine storage/freezer/refrigerator could easily be mistaken as a prized piece of furniture.

A long, elegant table in the formal dining room leads your





eye to a beautiful yet functional built-in. "We wanted to create a more relaxed atmosphere but something that still was in keeping with Rebecca's sense of style," Steven says. "So we brought in the uppers with the mesh inserts. Aesthetics were obviously really important, but functionally this needed [to serve] as a proper storage area for things that weren't going to be in the kitchen."

Again Rebecca played with color, opting for a soft pink wallpaper. "The fabric choices that she made are fun, they're whimsical, they're lighthearted," Steven says. And this is clear throughout the house.

But there's one particular piece of fabric that she attributes as her source of inspiration for the entire home. "It just had all

the right colors," Rebecca says. "It doesn't look beachy, and yet it has all of the beach colors. I carried it with me everywhere I went. When you start to look at all the fabrics I chose, they all go with this."

Of home's six bedrooms and six-and-a-half baths, two of the bedrooms and two of the bathrooms are in the basement. Designed to specifically cater to long-term house guests, there is also an apartment kitchen with a sink, refrigerator and stove.

The mudroom on the main level of the home has a washer and dryer, another refrigerator for grab-and-go drinks and direct access to the outdoor showers, as well as the garage. In order to avoid having to move their cars to make way for the kid's bikes (or any potential dings and scratches to their cars), the Fosters



added a mini side garage door.

The highest ceilings in the home are in the living room, just off the entrance of the house. The loft above has sliding barn doors, and the reclaimed wood above the fireplace adds a touch of rustic appeal.

In addition to the loft, the remaining bedrooms and Rebecca's work space are all upstairs. The master suite boasts a coffee nook as well as a cleverly concealed dry sauna. "We use it all the time," Rebecca says. The massive tub and steam shower only add to the spa-like feel of the space.

The house is one-of-a-kind, built specifically with the Foster's needs in mind. Rebecca's creative vision is showcased in every corner, as is Steven's invaluable expertise on the kitchen and bath design. But Rebecca wouldn't necessarily describe the house as her dream home.

"In Manhattan Beach, even though this is a large lot, there are a lot of constraints," she explains. "There are a lot of things I would do differently with more space. You always have to make some compromises."

Of course, you'd never know any compromises were made walking through the home. Every detail is absolutely stunning. ■

