

ON THE WATERFRONT

A house on the edge of the Sunshine Coast finds its soul.

by **BARB SLIGL**

photographs by **EMA PETER**

Vintage Modern This home on the Sunshine Coast was built in the '80s, but post-reno, it has a striking mid-century feel—including classic chairs from Carl Hansen and Knoll—that doesn't detract from the views.

Time Pieces Many of the furniture pieces were already in the homeowners' collection, including the rug, which belonged to her grandmother. The sunburst clock over the fireplace was discovered 25 years ago in a dumpster—and it still works.



W

hen homeowners Andrew and Laura first pulled up to this waterfront home on B.C.'s Sunshine Coast, its exterior didn't do much to wow them. "This house is really, really nondescript from the outside," says Andrew, describing the home on Halfmoon Bay. But, he says, that was part of the appeal: there was a surprise inside. "You pull up to this place and it looks like nothing, and then you walk inside and see the view." And it's a stunner.

"We didn't want anything that took away from that," says Andrew of the dramatic site with views of Merry and Thormanby Islands in the foreground and Vancouver Island beyond, across the Strait of Georgia. It's what sold Andrew and his wife, Laura, on the '80s-era house. "I walked in the door and it was like I was on a boat," he says of the 180-degree views.

But the 2,200-square-foot post-and-beam structure was tired and in need of a serious reboot. And yet they never thought of tearing it down. "I almost feel like houses have a soul, and that our job is to bring out the best of what the house is," says Andrew. With great bones and an unrivalled proximity to the water (current setback rules wouldn't allow any new building to be as close to the shoreline), they decided to renovate and turn a recreational property into the primary residence for their young family.





Hot for Teak Because so much of the home is white modern, “the teak helps to take it back to that ’60s/’70s rich grain with lots of variation in colour,” says designer Chad Falkenberg. It’s particularly striking in the kitchen, where custom pulls pair with white cabinetry, and the adjacent teak cabinets are given a matte finish. The quartz counter is also in a honed, flat finish.



Halfmoon Bay, just outside, may be the star, but the inside is now a worthy match, with “that same earthy quality of Scandinavian design,” says Andrew.



Seaside Escape A vintage rosewood dresser from Fullhouse Modern is the perfect fit for the mid-century design of the home, along with a cozy low-pile shag rug from Salari. In the master ensuite (opposite), blue-green tiles from Heath “look great with the seascape that’s the inspiration for all of this,” says Falkenberg.



With a keen interest in mid-century-modern design (the couple also refurbished their Palm Springs home by themselves), Andrew and Laura knew what they wanted: a clean, simple, updated space that underscored the views outside. And, knowing what a reno involved, they decided to hire designers.

Chad Falkenberg and Kelly Reynolds of Falken Reynolds Interiors (winners in the 2016 *Western Living* Designers of the Year Awards) were wowed—first, upon revelation of the view, and, second, after scoping Andrew and Laura’s collection of mid-century furniture, including a Noguchi coffee table and a Saarinen Womb chair. Even the house itself had a vintage vibe, with its statement-making flagstone fireplace and fir-panelled ceiling.

“The view is so amazing that when you walk in, everything else is backdrop,” says Reynolds, “and we had to make sure it was quiet. We didn’t want to out-stage the setting.” So they made the picture windows even larger, added more of them, then played up the mid-century theme in as authentic a way as possible.

They stuck to a simple palette of bright-white walls and white-oak floors warmed with teak. “Because so much of it is white and really modern feeling, the teak helps to take it back to that ’60s/’70s rich grain with lots of variation in colour,” says Falkenberg. And the teak is repeated everywhere, from inside the master bedroom’s closets to custom drawer pulls in the kitchen. All the bathroom cabinetry is custom teak millwork, including a vanity designed to mimic a mid-century sideboard with sliding doors and integrated handles. “Falken Reynolds and the cabinetmakers probably put as much thought into the cabinets as many people do into a whole house,” says Andrew.

Alongside the custom work, the designers used the couple’s existing furniture—“all nubby and cozy,” describes Reynolds—providing a textural balance to the white and glass and expansive views. And he convinced them to put out a circa-1940 alpaca rug from Colombia, passed on to Laura from her grandmother, as the funky centrepiece of the main living space.

Other textural interest was added through pattern and subtle variations of hue in the kitchen and bathroom tilework, whether in herringbone or vintage-looking blue-green Heath tiles. “We wanted to bring in little bits of texture and interest so it didn’t feel too stark or severe—even grout gives a little bit of softness and casualness,” says Falkenberg.

And those teal Heath tiles are a key pop of colour. “It’s a really strong mid-century colour,” says Reynolds, adding that the hue “looks amazing with teak.” That blue-green and teak also looks great with the seascape that’s the inspiration for all of this, says Falkenberg. It’s just one of many connections to the outdoors. The kitchen (once cave-like) now has extra windows, skylights (with LED-lit wells that emit a quiet, diffused light) and no upper cabinets—one of the few things Andrew and Laura weren’t sure about initially, but now happily concede is part of what makes the kitchen their favourite space. “I get pleasure out of it every day, multiple times a day,” says Andrew.

Halfmoon Bay, just outside, may be the star, but the inside is now a worthy match, with “that same earthy quality of Scandinavian design,” says Andrew. It’s grounding and soulful, he says—and indeed, the soul they wanted to recover in this home has settled back into place here on the Sunshine Coast. *///*