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spots

Dig in to banana
blueberry pancakes at
The Cottage, p. 62



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16
PAGES
of Local
Performing
Arts



By Rowena Kelley
Photographs by James Brady

PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

Designed by not one but two leaders of the house,
this Bankers Hill condo is well suited to its VIP guests



Perched above Balboa Park, Deni Carpenter sits at a round table contemplating her next move. Nearby, a piano sits idle, quiet after a recent soirée. “Now that was a good hand,” she says as she scoops up the deck of cards and glides to the bar to pour her bridge-mates some wine.

“We love living here,” she says of the expansive condo she shares with husband Ken. “It’s not as noisy as downtown, yet we can easily walk to our favorite spots. And of course I love being near Balboa Park. We can actually see the Museum of Man tower from every window.”

That wasn’t the case in their old condo in the opposite tower of the Park Laurel building. The Carpenters lived there for two years before deciding to purchase two adjacent units in the new tower. The developer hadn’t even broken construction when the couple wandered into the salesroom and asked if they could buy half of the 11th floor.

“We wanted a California-style New York townhouse. Formal but not stuffy,” Ken says. “We like to entertain a lot, so we wanted a home that would be suitable.”

Creating a home from a space with nothing more than poured concrete wasn’t as easy as scribbling on a blank slate. The couple turned to two presidents for help.

“Robert handed me a small piece of sample tile and told me to build the design around it,” says Kellie McCormick, senior designer at Bast/Wright Interiors and current president of the American Society of Interior Designers’ San Diego chapter. Along with Robert Wright, who recently served as president of the nationwide design organization, McCormick transformed that one piece of tile into a 5,800-square-foot domicile worthy of royalty.

The transformation took 14 months. The design duo worked with Sweig General Contracting to join the two units in a way that made sense. Just installing the tile required seven months. By the end, 163 light fixtures had been installed and 34 paint colors applied.

“We worked very hard at making it feel symmetrical,” says McCormick, who had to work around existing vertical chases for plumb-





ing and electrical, as well as elevator and stairwell locations. “It was a feat in mechanical engineering. Even the museum tower is centered in the dining room window.”

McCormick designed an art galley spanning both wings. The main elevator opens onto the wide, long corridor lined in luxurious beige marble, distinct arches and programmable lighting ideal for the couple’s art collection. Among the works are an original Peter Max; *Arlequin* by Argentinian artist Alberto M. Rossi; and *Sophie and Bella*, a pastel by local artist G. Maxion. Walls throughout the home are subdued, allowing art and views to shine. Furnishings are understatedly elegant and comfortable. Pops of color, however, do appear throughout the home—including the library, clad in warm sapele cabinetry with black reveals, and the powder room, with bronze detailing on the floor and handpainted wallpaper by David Goldberg.

In the private wing, the master bedroom features Venetian plastered walls, an expansive wood-lined closet and a bathroom that feels more like a spa, with burled walnut cabinetry and a deep soaking tub surrounded by Just Ducky tiles. “Would you believe I actually found tiles made with pieces of duck eggs glazed into them?” McCormick says. “Again, it’s all about blending formal and modern in this home.”

“When we first moved here, we felt a little odd because it felt pretty grand,” Ken says. “But we’ve gotten quite accustomed to it now. We’ve had 75 people sit comfortably for a recital. And we even had 100 people here for the Old Globe cast party. They played piano and had a singalong.” ■

Design details are at sandiegomagazine.com.

Opening spread: The views are grand in every room, including the sitting room, which features a Century sofa upholstered in a Clarence House Ottoman fabric. Page 84, from top: Contemporary wallpaper from Osborne & Little gives the guest suite a distinctive feeling, complemented by Carrera marble and dark wood in the bath. In the living room, seating from Baker and a bridge table from Century allow for comfortable entertaining. Page 86, from top: Ken’s favorite room is the kitchen, where design is happily married with functionality—for him and for occasional caterers. The formal dining room is even more grand with a majestic view of Balboa Park. The powder room is anything but ordinary, with stunning David Goldberg wallpaper and a Lacava cabinet.

