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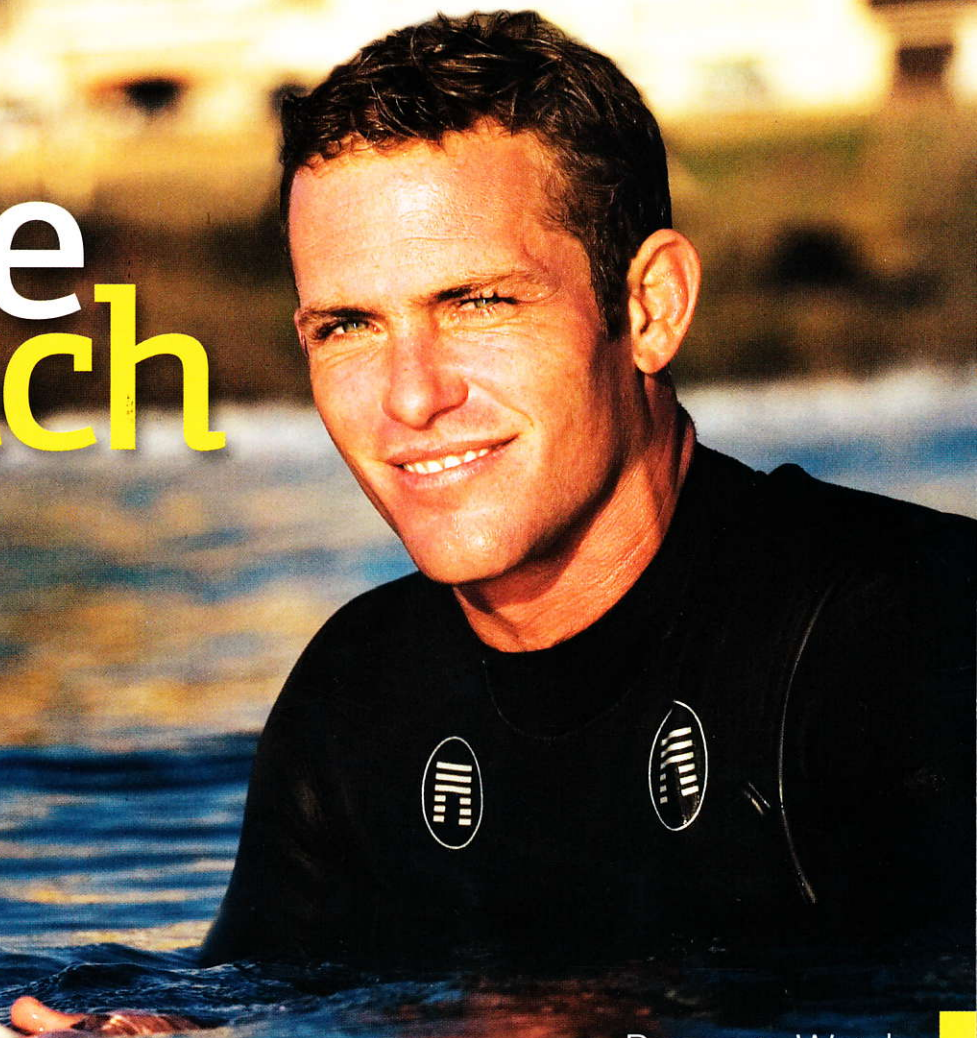
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JANUARY 2010 \$4.95



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Weekend Update



At home in
O.B. with former
news anchor
Laura Buxton



By Rowena Kelley
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM BRADY

It's a gorgeous November afternoon, and I'm sitting in Laura Buxton's bedroom, watching the sun dip closer to the horizon and laughing about the dishes we wish we could cook, zany antics during a recent trip to Italy and a prank involving duct tape and a former coworker. Not that I was part of any of that. But I sure wish I had been there. After all, I feel like I've known Buxton a long time.

One of San Diego's first ladies of local news, Buxton arrived on the scene in 1980 as a news coanchor for KNSD (formerly KCST). From there she became host, writer and producer of the station's *Weekend Magazine*, then joined KGTV as cohost and segment producer of *Inside San Diego* until 1994, when she helped launch the *KUSI Morning News*.

"I've had people come up to me and say, 'I grew up watching you,'" says the woman who for 20 years was one of the more recognizable personalities on local TV. She spent decades engaging audiences with her infectious laugh and candid approach to news reporting. While she prides herself on her work as a writer and producer more so than her on-air broadcasting, Buxton admits that some of the most gratifying moments were the quiet ones. The highlights of her career weren't the awards, she says, but rather the friendships she made.

"When you are coanchoring the news with someone, interacting with him every day and witnessing great emotional and social upheaval—man's inhumanity to man, things that make you laugh, things that make you cry—you build a friendship that's as pure as you can get," she says.

Those friends include other former on-air fixtures such as Stan Miller, Bill Griffith, Dennis Morgigno and Cathy Clark, the latter a longtime confidante who's equally to blame for any embarrassing moments during the Italy trip. Today Buxton is no longer a fixture on local news but makes guest appearances on Channel 4 San Diego's *Forefront*. It took two years for her to adjust from waking up at 3:30 a.m. to rising at a "normal" hour, so you'd better believe she relishes the sunrise, quality time with her dogs Carmelita and Maggie and spur-of-the-moment trips with husband Tim Cohelan.

"I'm writing the great American novel," she quickly replies when I ask what a day in her new life is like. And with barely a pause, adds, "No, I'm not. But I wish I could say that!"

And just like that, we're off on another tangent or two—chatting about her desire to get

more involved in the community, her love for Borrego Springs (where she has a second home) and how she met her husband during an interview in which she butchered his name. It's as if we've picked up on an old conversation. Buxton is smart, funny, unpretentious and "surprisingly not the loudest gal in the group"—the kind of hostess who makes you feel immediately at home, even if it's your first time meeting her, let alone stepping foot in her house.

The recently constructed Ocean Beach residence fits the news maven like an old sweater. Contemporary yet understated, the minimal design lets the ocean take center stage, while a little bit of clutter here and there lets you know this is a home where you can put your feet up.

"I wanted someone warm, who didn't like a lot of foo-foo," Buxton says about her quest for a suitable interior designer. "And the right person had to have a great sense of humor."

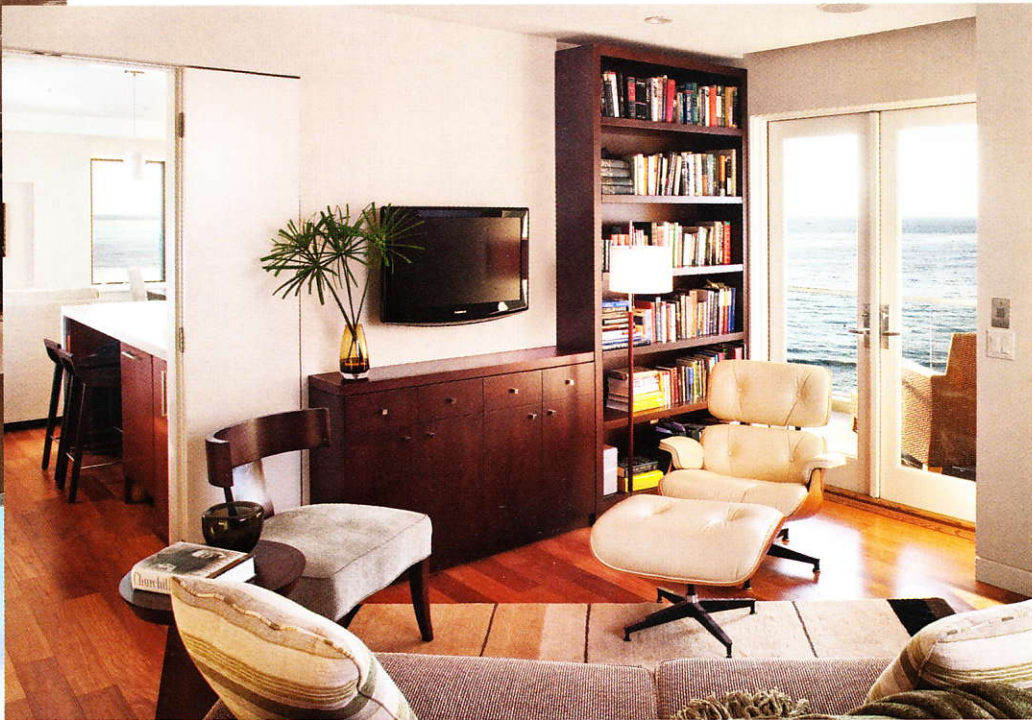
She found the perfect blend of design savvy





Landscaper Gavin Warlaumont helped turn the yard into an ocean-view retreat—a perfect setting for longtime friends to catch the sunset. Standing, from left: Tim Cohelan, Ed Blitz and Roel Robles. Sitting, from left, Laura Buxton, Maggie, Cathy Clark and Sue Strom.





and sarcasm in Robert Wright, principal of Bast-Wright Interiors in Hillcrest and former national president of the American Society of Interior Designers. His Texas drawl was an immediate attraction for Buxton, who grew up in Louisiana and attended college in Tennessee.

Tim Martin of Martin Architecture in Carlsbad and contractor Victor Lund were the other forces in Buxton's dream team, tasked with transforming two apartment complexes into a private residence with ocean views. To comply with coastal building codes, Martin had to design the home as two units, requiring two separate entries and three sets of stairs. The 40-foot setback necessitated a vertical design to maximize space and views.

"This wasn't a remodel, it was a tear-down," Buxton says of the two-and-a-half-year process. Today, however, she and Cohelan have a clean, contemporary home complete with an elevator and fully outfitted guest suite. "We're the least stand-up-ceremony type of couple," she says. "In fact, it's a joke to our friends that this house is so well thought-out."

"Tim and Laura wanted a home that was casual and comfortable," Wright says. "I also wanted the interiors to be harmonious with the architecture, therefore we went with fairly straightforward and simple lines. A more contemporary approach—selecting lightly scaled furniture—also helped with our minimal-space challenge."

He chose furnishings that add individual interest and style, selecting different upholstery for each piece and using a variety of ta-

bles. Comfort was a priority, so Wright went for dining chairs, barstools and a lounge chair from A. Rudin. Texture comes in the form of a bronze accessory table, a woven leather chair and a concrete fireplace.

"I like to nestle, so I wanted intimate spaces," says Buxton, who claims that her best attribute is "boundless curiosity, bordering on nosy." She does make a mean gumbo, though, so the kitchen, albeit small, has become a favorite spot.

"As you ascend the stairs to this open living space, the kitchen is the first thing you see," Wright says. "I wanted it to recede and for your eye to continue around the entire room. The materials used at eye level were light and monotone in color. The countertops are light composite stone with minimal pattern, the backsplash is a smooth back-painted glass, and the cabinets are a combination of medium-tone wood and glass."

It is indeed a feat of neutrality and minimalism in design—the perfect backdrop for a typical Buxton-Cohelan soiree. We've barely wrapped up our conversation when, like kids coming home from school, Clark and husband Roel Robles, producer Sue Strom and husband Ed Blitz all arrive in the kitchen. Instantly, the space is filled with laughter and activity. Martini glasses are lined up, the shaker is filled, and appetizers are set on a tray. Cohelan is already engaged in a joke not suitable for print.

"A lot of times we feel like we're on a cruise ship," Buxton says as she and the gang rush down to the backyard to catch the sunset. "Only here, we have good food." ■