

RANCH HOUSE GETS ELEGANT

By: Martina Schimitschek



Two black industrial lamps from Ikea and a charcoal gray accent wall contrast with the white cabinets and light countertops in this remodeled 1950s ranch home in Point Loma. The countertops have the look of marble but are made of quartz. (Silke Laqua photos)

When interior designer Kelly Smiar-Gallegos came on board to renovate a 1950s Point Loma ranch house, the home was already stripped down to the studs.

Working with contractor Robert Jertberg of Vanberg Construction, the homeowners, who wish to stay anonymous, had a vision of what they wanted: transform the dowdy interior, which still had original pink Formica countertops in the kitchen, into a comfortable space with an open floor plan. But they soon realized they needed help with the vast amount of decisions required for the extensive renovation.

"It was the first time I worked with a designer," the homeowner said. "I didn't know what to expect. It was really helpful. She helped me go through my pile of decisions. I call her my marriage saver."

The result is a modern farmhouse style that's both comfortable and elegant in its simplicity. The color palette throughout the entire 3,200-square-foot, four-bedroom, three-bathroom home is the same: white, gray and black combined with the rich color of dark French oak floors in most of the rooms. The wide wood planks are carbonized to bring out the color. The house will be one of 11 open for viewing at the San Diego Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers Kitchen, Baths & More Tour on Oct. 24.

"The tour shows how designers can take dark, cramped, outdated spaces and transform them into open, light-filled spaces with a connection to other living areas and the outdoors," Smiar-Gallegos said.

To create an open, flowing floor plan in both the public areas and the private wing of the L-shaped house, 600 square feet were added to the original home, which the couple bought in November 2014 to accommodate a growing family.

By straightening out the exterior walls in the private area, a hallway was created for the bedrooms, which were originally connected room by room. A covered patio was incorporated into the main living area to add depth to the space. A wall of French doors now floods the area with natural light, and a fireplace wall serves as a divider between the living room and the family area, which was originally a formal dining room.



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"We are not formal people," the homeowner said. A rustic dining table adjoins the family room space, which is open to the kitchen, the hub of the home.

"The party is here," the homeowner said of the expanded kitchen. "I cook a lot and entertain a lot. The kitchen was closed up, so I wanted it open to be a part of everything."

And with two boys, ages 18 months and 4 years, the space had to be clean, simple and durable, Smiar-Gallegos said.

Storage was a key element in designing the kitchen: A small half bath was converted into a second pantry; every inch of wall space—even the narrow area above the doorway—opens for storage; an appliance garage frees up the counters; and cabinets are hidden underneath the seating area of the large island. Even spices are stacked into a drawer.

Two black industrial lamps from Ikea and a charcoal gray accent wall contrast the white cabinets and light countertops, which have the look of marble but are made of quartz, because "it's almost bulletproof," Smiar-Gallegos said.

Marble was used for the floor of the new master bathroom. The original plan was to tile the floor with thin strips of marble in a herringbone pattern. That idea was scrapped because of labor costs. The bathroom now has large rectangular marble tiles, gray cabinets and a large soaking tub for a spa-like feel.

"In the end, it turned out beautiful," the homeowner said.

The master bedroom continues the same look and feel, as do the rooms of the two children, which are playful, yet subdued.

"She's very minimal," Smiar-Gallegos said of the homeowner. "There's no clutter. It calms your mind."

The homeowner took her time furnishing the home, which was completed last November.

With an emphasis on cozy, the house is still true to its ranch roots.

"The house still feels the same," Smiar-Gallegos said, "but it's better—and updated."



The bathroom has large rectangular marble tiles and a large soaking tub for a spa-like feel. (Silke Laqua)