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ISSN 2409 - 9643
9 772409 964009
BHD 3 KWD 2.5 OMR 3 AED 30 LBP 20,000

JOYFUL ROOMS IN PARIS, DUBAI, TUSCANY, NEW YORK & RIYADH



Words Karine Monié
Photography Douglas Friedman

INSIDE OUT

In Baja California, this family getaway combines courtyard-style architecture with vibrant Mexico-inspired decor, for the perfect mix and match



The southern tip of Baja California Sur – in Mexico’s San Jose del Cabo region – offers spectacular panoramas. Its beauty, however, comes with a demanding climate. “It’s a landscape of extremes: hot and cold; wet and dry; calm and windy,” explains Greg Warner, principal at Walker Warner Architects, who experimented with the design of this holiday retreat for a San Francisco-based couple with teenagers.

“When I first visited, the site had already been prepared for development, including the introduction of a sea wall to protect the property from storm surges,” continues Warner. “The challenge became figuring out how to position the house in relation to the sea wall as well as other site constraints, and reconnect it to nature.”

Counterintuitively, instead of opting for the easy solution of focusing the house exclusively on the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez, the architects took the opposite

approach. “We tapped into ideas we found in nearby historic San Jose del Cabo, where courtyard buildings possess a rich mix of spatial experiences,” says Warner. “The courtyard concept gave us the opportunity to control all of the variables – access to the ocean, views, neighbours, the road, sun, wind, and so on.”

At the entrance to the property, behind a handsome bronze and teak gate, lies a tinkling water feature with floating stone pavers. They lead the way to the main courtyard and the majestic courtyard beyond. It’s a wow moment with real emotional resonance. “When you arrive in the courtyard, the concerns of the outside world disappear,” says Warner. “We want visitors to have an experience that offers a deep connection to the region.”

Punctured by angled openings, the structure is made of rugged textured concrete with granite sand in the mix. “We picked finishes that worked with the natural setting rather than fighting against it,” he explains. “What I like most about this home is its connectivity to the surroundings – it feels a part of its place. The house is a balance



In the open-plan kitchen and dining room, a custom table by SL Westwood Designs is flanked by Casamidy dining and side chairs, and capped with woven pendant lamps from Roost. Crafted in Brazil, the sisal and suede rug is from Merida.



ABOVE FROM LEFT: One of the guest bathrooms features built-in stucco cabinetry. Waterworks basins and taps, and hand-painted terracotta tiles of Fulk's design; a guest room is filled with bright details sourced from local artisans.

between the pursuit of precision and the willing embrace of imperfection”

The property features as many outdoor spaces as indoor, which alternate in a seamless flow thanks to transitional areas such as a traditional woven pergola in Mexican Palo de Arco wood. Ron Lutsko from Lutsko Associates worked closely with Walker Warner Architects on the landscaping to create a visually cohesive flow.

“This project was collaborative and many years in the making, but the goal was for it to feel like it organically sprouted from the earth,” says Ken Fulk, who worked on the interiors, taking design cues from nearby Tulum and the serenity of Aman Resorts. “Everything began with a quiet palette of natural, sandy tones.”

Crisp, off-white plaster walls, niwala limestone floors, woven reed ceiling panels and weathered teak woodwork create a neutral backdrop, enlivened with bold decorative flourishes. Playful elements were custom-designed and commissioned from local Mexican artisans, including an awe-inspiring outdoor fireplace, geometric encaustic

tiles, natural twig railings, and whimsical pendant lighting. “We wanted to capture a spirit of beachy, effortless style,” says Fulk. “At the edge of the property, we built a *palapa* [traditional Mexican shelter] to frame a ‘shipwrecked’ old boat, which was retrofitted with refrigeration and all the necessities for a hardworking bar.”

Perfect either for intimate gatherings or big parties, this home has everything to be restorative yet fun. The covered outdoor kitchen acts as an extension of the indoor version, featuring the same plasterwork and tiles, while the infinity pool has been finished in dark plaster to reflect the sky and the ocean.

Four guest bedrooms are arranged around a light-filled central staircase adorned with local tiles, and a capacious main suite sits above the living space. As well as a bedroom, it has its own lounge, dressing room and bathroom with indoor and outdoor showers with ocean views. “This house is informal and casual – a place in which to relax,” says Warner. “But above all, it is respectful of the region’s history, culture and landscape.” [kenfulk.com](https://www.kenfulk.com)



The outdoor shower off the main suite is perched on the second floor. Louvers enable privacy without obstructing the ocean view.



The dark plaster infinity pool was designed to reflect the colour of the sky.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The playful outdoor fireplace was made by Mexican artisans. Custom-built plaster seating has been combined with teak furniture from Restoration Hardware.

