

| DWELLING

ROOM WITH



A VIEW

BY ZARA KHAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID LALUSH



Vicki and Lee Wilkerson had been tempted by the Central Coast for quite some time. They integrated seamlessly into the SLO lifestyle on all their trips—wine tasting, hiking, biking, and playing tennis before deciding it was finally time to find a home of their own on the Central Coast. It didn't take long for them to fall for a house in Avila Beach.

The original homeowners and their architect took advantage of and captured the views in every room of the house whether it was

through window or patio placement—it was perfect. Well, close.

The Wilkersons knew the value of an interior designer from previous projects they worked on in Colorado. After interviewing a few designers in the area, they decided Michelle Pelech of MPI (Michelle Pelech Interiors) was the designer for them. They appreciated her extensive experience designing in Chicago and were drawn to her Midwest, down to earth personality. Most importantly, they sensed that she would >>



work in their best interest and not be afraid to voice her professional opinion even if, and when, it conflicted with theirs.

From a design perspective, Pelech's task was to take a Mediterranean style home and integrate the Contemporary Coastal influence that the Wilkersons were attracted to. Though the client only wanted to change out the paint and flooring when they first approached Pelech, she knew that even with these changes, it wasn't going to feel like the space she heard them asking for. The

Wilkersons realized Pelech was probably right, and their new mindset was to follow her lead and complete the project in full so they could start enjoying their life in their new home. They started with a new furniture layout to maximize the view and accommodate entertaining. The furnishings were sourced at the design center in LA or custom-made locally. After all of that was decided, they embarked on the massive renovation. Sounds backward, but it catered to Pelech's preferred "end in mind" process. There is wisdom in knowing how >>



the furniture and decor will play with the construction materials.

Pelech brought a lot of value to the project aside from her interior design services. The Wilkersons were still living in Colorado part-time, so Pelech was their eyes and ears and communicated with them as often as needed—at least once a week and during important weeks, almost every day. She knew the industry and was able to pull together the dream team to execute. Gabriel Telling from Allen Construction was another key

player. Telling and Pelech worked closely to manage the project. The Wilkersons appreciated their approach. Pelech and Telling would collaborate with each other, be on the same page, and then loop the clients in with the decisions to be made and their professional guidance.

The views are the star of this home. The main windows in the living room had mullions which obstructed the views so changing the windows to clear panels was high on the new priority list. While the clients were



hesitant to block any of the views, Pelech felt strongly about adding drapes to soften and frame the windows. Even the sheer panels that she specified made a difference. There are countless bespoke design features throughout the home. On the fireplace, Pelech specified foam panels and the installers were able to make it look seamless (I couldn't even tell they were individual pieces and I looked for the seams). On the stairs, they opted for a dark wood riser to add contrast, and to prevent a tripping hazard, as well as to bridge the gap between

the marble floors and dark wood.

Ironically, one of Lee's favorite spaces ended up being the extra room they were going to leave as-is. A leak in the master bathroom above required them to re-imagine this space, too. Pelech converted their extra room into a cozy media room. On one wall they added built-in cabinetry and the other is upholstered in grey linen with metal dividing each section. It adds interest and acoustics to the small cozy space and because of the size, it naturally feels >>



intimate. The Wilkersons find themselves in this room almost every night and say it is the perfect way to wind down. Vicki's favorite space is the kitchen. She loves how open it is, easy to entertain, but also when cooking the layout is very functional. Pelech had a vision for the island and designed the rest of the kitchen around it. She knew they would appreciate a large countertop and opted to break it up and introduce wood to add warmth and visual interest.

The master bedroom feels just like a master bedroom should—relaxing and luxurious. On the walls, they installed hand-painted

wallpaper and layered in velvet fabrics. My favorite solution in the home was the TV placement in the master bedroom. The suite shares the same view as the living room upstairs and having a TV on display didn't seem right. Pelech designed a custom furniture piece that is placed at the foot of the bed with a TV hidden inside, which can be brought up at the touch of a button when needed.

Pelech could not thank all the local talent that helped her bring this project to life. Sheryl Chestnut, owner of the art gallery Edna Contemporary, was another key player. >>



The scale of the home needed large pieces and she was able to curate a collection that complimented Pelech's design and that the clients loved. Barnick Wood Design was instrumental with all the cabinetry throughout the home. All of the tile was sourced locally from Tile Co.

Though the Wilkersons came into the project with experience, they were soon reminded how important it was to not only hire an interior designer, but to make sure the team collaborates well together.

When making decisions, the Wilkersons always defaulted to the rule that one of them had to love it for them to move forward with a decision. Pelech encourages anyone taking on a home project to not have tunnel vision on the construction materials. Sometimes it is a piece of fabric or art that serves as the inspiration and can be the start of the concept. Pelech strongly believes that every inch of your home should make you happy. Even the laundry room. You matter most and spend the most time in your home. **SLO LIFE**

