

Deep storage units make effective use of space in the kitchen, while the various natural textures of backsplash, counter, cabinets, floors and adjoining living-room wall add visual interest to the connected spaces.



# MAKING ROOM

TRANSFORMING A  
CORONA DEL MAR  
BACHELOR PAD INTO  
A FAMILY HOME

STORY BY JENNY PETERS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAD MELLON

Looking out at the expansive view of the Corona del Mar channel, the Newport Beach peninsula and the Pacific Ocean from Kevin and Stephanie Kaberna's top-floor condominium, it's easy to see why Kevin chose it for what Stephanie calls "his bachelor pad."

That was in 2013, when the couple, who are now married with a young daughter and another child on the way, were dating. He lived on the peninsula; she in Santa Monica.

"It took probably four to six months before it was complete," Kevin recalls. "I started working with Anders (Lasater, a Laguna Beach-based architect) pretty much right away."

Kevin had a specific reason for purchasing the 1,232-square-foot, two-bedroom condo in the waterfront Channel Reef development.

"This is a really unique place where you had a boat dock, a marina, you have the pool and the hot tub and access to a small beach. It feels very private here," he says about the complex, which was built in 1964. "I grew up on a lake and I really like the water and I had a boat, and I wanted to keep that up."

He also had a vision of how he wanted to update the space, which Lasater was instrumental in bringing to fruition.

"Kevin had some pretty strong ideas about what he wanted and had some clear vision about what his expectation was for the house to perform," Lasater muses, looking out floor-to-ceiling windows that stretch the length of the exterior northwest-facing wall. "What I kept going back to is, the reason you're here is because of the views. It's all about the views. So the question was, how do we have the views from as much square footage as we can?"

Kaberna, who works for a multifamily housing company on the "investment leadership side," knew that both he and his wife-to-be agreed on the need to open up the unit, which meant starting over, by taking everything down to the studs, changing the configuration of the rooms and raising the ceiling.



“We wanted a larger master bedroom suite,” Stephanie says. “Our relationship was serious at that point. We knew I was going to be coming down and moving in, so I was still part of the decisions. But he’s the creative one of the two of us. He can visualize it.”

The reality of his vision is now a place where the large, open kitchen greets you as you enter the unit and flows directly into the living room and to the views. They got rid of the dining room, instead using elegant Sapele wood, glass cabinets and other natural materials to make the kitchen the center for entertaining. Tall and deep built-in storage cabinets make use of every bit of space. The floating stainless-steel wine wall visually moves the party from the kitchen into the living room, where similar stone surrounds a long porcelain tile wall that is home to the open fireplace and a large television.



Kevin and Stephanie Kaberna

They even removed most of the wall that separates the master bedroom from the living area, putting in a sliding door between the rooms.

“I said, ‘Let’s create more of like a New York loft-style living, where the place you sleep is part of your everyday experience,’” Lasater remembers. “That really resonated with Kevin. So we created this sliding door that for purposes of privacy when it’s needed, you can close this bedroom off, but 99 days out of 100, this now can stay open and you’ve got the sense of spaciousness. Especially from the

back part of the unit, you don’t see the bed, but you do see that ocean horizon.”

The master bathroom has a view, too.

“We wanted to have the views from as much square footage as we could. That led to the ‘let’s open up the shower with glass’ idea,” Kevin says. “So now and when you’re in the bathroom, we are able to see straight out, see through to the views.”

The second bedroom and bath both lost square footage. Tucked away near the front door of the unit, they are perfect for the couple’s toddler. Meanwhile, the rest of the space definitely achieves the New York loft-living feel with a Californian twist. While the home does not have an outdoor patio, the exterior glass walls open in a variety of configurations, bringing in the breeze and salt air on beautiful beach days. There are even two outdoor heaters built into the ceiling over those doors, which warm things up as the family watches the sunset.

It’s quite a transformation, from dated 1960s condo to bachelor pad to toddler hangout, and one that both the Kabernas continue to love as the years go by.

“We’ve turned it into a family home, and it’s been really nice,” Stephanie says. ■



Keeping the open-front, off-center fireplace meant designing a visual wall treatment (including extra storage space) that balances out the big-screen television that dominates the wall.



The kitchen welcomes visitors immediately upon entering the condo’s front door.



The creatively designed “indoor” patio area, with glass that opens wide and heaters in the ceiling.



The “floating bed” design gives the view-filled master bedroom an airy feel.



The master bath features views through glass walls from the shower and vanity.

