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HOME+DESIGN

the **10** kitchen + bath *commandments*

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A Design Lover's
Guide to London

a diplomatic desire

A jet-setting couple comes to rest within the internationally inspired walls of their Southern California home.

by kira coplin photography by john ellis styling by sunday hendrickson

simple lines

"We wanted all of our kitchen appliances to be hidden away," says homeowner Colin Cormac, who grew up in South Africa and was inspired by the clean, modern structures found there. The pantry, refrigerator and ovens are concealed within cabinets to provide the sleek surfaces he desired.

seamless transition

The open kitchen, living and dining areas are intrinsically linked to the outdoors.

"When all the sliders are open, it feels like one space," says Colin. In order to make the exterior feel like a continuation of the interior, the same stone flooring was used inside and on the pool deck (opposite).



Colin and Carolina Cormac have traveled the globe, exploring historic châteaux, royal palaces and modern masterpieces. But when it came time for the family—which includes daughter Ana and son Dylan—to unpack their bags for a more extended stay, they unexpectedly opted for a crumbling tract house in Corona del Mar.

Colin grew up in Durban, South Africa, where he was fascinated by the town's handful of modern buildings. As a boy, he would sketch the streamlined structures, studying their dramatic angles and unfussy designs. Eventually, he and wife Carolina—also a devotee of modernism—settled in Southern California. They were taking the tourist approach to house hunting—curiously wandering open houses but not seriously looking—when Colin chanced upon a property in a neighborhood he had never visited before. "It was a total teardown, but the lot just felt right," he says. He brought Carolina to the uninhabited house the very next day. "She didn't even go inside but took one look at the view and decided this was it," he says.

Because the neighborhood has strict design guidelines, the couple thought it best to use an architect who had worked successfully within the rules of the area. Their goal was to capture the dreamy feeling of the homes they had admired around the world without causing a bureaucratic nightmare. The couple embarked on a self-guided architectural tour of their future neighborhood, looking for inspiration closer to home. When they came upon a house in the style they liked, they wrote a letter and popped it into the home's mailbox, hoping they would find their architect in the reply.



point of entry

A sliding panel made from woven stainless steel serves as the home's gateway and allows a partial view of the interior courtyard and private realm. "It conveys strength and solidity, yet is open at the same time," says architect Craig Schultz.

best part of waking up

In the master bedroom, a back-lit wall of painted brick serves as an architectural headboard. A wall of sliding doors opens onto a balcony with breathtaking views, and a Canasta lounge by Patricia Urquiola provides the perfect perch for basking in the sun.

And they did: The house was designed by Craig Schultz of Laidlaw Schultz Architects. The Cormacs hired him immediately, and soon learned they shared with Schultz not only a love of modernism, but also a philosophy on how a home should interact with the land it sits on: embracing the outdoors and leading its inhabitants from wide-open public spaces into deeper, more intimate private areas. "After meeting Craig, we never looked back," says Colin.

But as soon as the Cormacs were confident they had found an architect who understood their vision, they realized that their own visions were not singularly aligned. Colin tended toward a stark version of modernism (white walls, sleek lacquered cabinetry and sparse ornamentation) while Carolina wanted a warmer interpretation (richly grained woods, hand-blown glass pendants and pops of color in the furnishings). In the end, the dual views made the project better. "I think that those varied perspectives worked well with my own thoughts and allowed us to creatively bring together opposing materials and ideas," Schultz says.

Colin wholeheartedly agrees. "With Craig's input, we arrived at something that took the best parts of our different visions and combined them into one," he says.

The result is an airy, resort-like dwelling protected from the street and nearby neighbors by a mix of wood, plaster and stone walls. "This walled-city approach not only offered privacy," says Schultz, who appreciated the globe-trotting family's desire to secure a secluded piece of paradise, "but it also allowed us to create an entirely new world for them just beyond the gate."



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stealth spa

The floor-to-ceiling lacquered cabinets in the master bathroom allow the Cormacs to stylishly conceal personal clutter and emphasize the room's clean lines.

easy come, easy go

The entry draws a line down the center of the house, with personal spaces on one side and an interior courtyard and public spaces on the other. A path connects both halves to the ocean. This approach allows the home to feel unified with no differentiation between interior and exterior.



path to enlightenment

The main hall is lit from above by skylights, and floor-to-ceiling wood cabinetry provides storage for the family. A glass sliding door can be closed for privacy or tucked into the wall to preserve unobstructed views.



a place in the sun

With its built-in fireplace and Paola Lenti outdoor furniture, the sun-drenched backyard is the perfect setting for Dylan and Ana Cormac to enjoy Corona del Mar's idyllic weather.