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With four sons no longer living under their roof, this empty-nester couple welcomed the next chapter of home life with fresh furnishings, bright colors, and plenty of all-American charm.

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Saying goodbye to a house full of kids can be bittersweet, but for Anne and Ted Peterson it was also the catalyst for a much-needed remodel. “Ours has always been the hangout house, and we didn’t want that to change when the kids left,” says Anne of their La Jolla, California, home. “That said, we had some lackluster finishes and posters on the wall that needed to go.” So the empty nesters sought out a design professional to undo the wear from raising four boys—and give their home an up-to-the-minute refresh in the process.

The couple didn’t tell their grown children about the project; they wanted to surprise them with a house that still felt like home, only better. Their designer of choice, Audrey Kennedy, jumped right in. “I basically kept the style—let’s call it all-American—that the Petersons already had but brought it into a new era,” she says. “We knew we wanted to honor the crisp aesthetic as well as the amazing energy of the home.”

New hardwood flooring and a bright palette of navy and green—offset with plenty of white—establish the laid-back beach cottage vibe the Petersons wanted

Double doors are well-suited to a coastal cottage where light and views take priority. Simple navy-and-white Roman shades and a Kelly green bench establish the home's cohesive color palette.





Above left: Getting a complete makeover, the dining room features host and hostess chairs on casters and a table that extends for the holidays. New light fixtures shine against the all-white backdrop. *Above right:* For a cottage feel, designer Audrey Kennedy added tongue-and-groove paneling to the kitchen peninsula. She brought in new chairs, repainted the cabinets and walls, and refinished the existing oak floor planks. *Left:* The family room previously had wall-to-wall carpeting, but this stylish rug offers the same level of comfort and sound reduction. Kennedy re-covered the couch in gray linen and purchased a handmade coffee table to complement the existing mantel.

This photo: The breakfast nook is anchored by an existing oak table that got a coat of fresh white paint. Kennedy painted the accent wall above the beaded-board paneling rich navy to give the space dimension.





Clockwise from top left: Ottomans under the dining room console coordinate with pillows on the living room couch and double as extra seating when needed. Navy, green, and white repeat throughout the home, even in the smallest accessories like this bowl of apples. Once featuring country floral wallpaper and a white cabinet, the main-level powder room got a complete redo that favors a crisp blue diamond backdrop and navy vanity. So the flow is natural, this eating area just outside the family room and breakfast nook is themed to match the interior; to accomplish this, Kennedy introduced new cushions, accessories, an umbrella, and a rug, and repainted the siding and trim. Coordinating mirrors help the master bath medicine cabinet (left) integrate seamlessly into the refreshed environment, which includes new polished-nickel hardware and a casual navy stool. A charming arbor and mature front yard give this seaside cottage major curb appeal.





without going too nautical. New furnishings mix with existing ones, updated with easy-care slipcovers and sturdy fabrics.

Anne says that when their sons first came for a visit, they completely embraced the look. “It’s always a good sign when people can come into a redone space and still feel instantly comfortable,” she says. Kennedy is equally pleased with the results. “The house had a lot of interest already—the bones were there—we just freshened it up and put some jewelry on it,” she says. “This style reflects the Petersons beautifully; it’s sunny and happy, just like they are.” Kennedy remembers fondly how Anne offered her warm homemade cookies every time she visited during the design process. It doesn’t get much more all-American than that. □

For resources, see page 95.

Above: Two boys once slept in a surfer-theme room that now is well-appointed for two visiting family members. The space is quite large, so Kennedy placed wicker trunks with leather straps at the foot of each twin bed; they stylishly house extra bedding. **Left:** A room with an ocean view, the master bedroom got a fitting update in the form of light sea-glass blue paint. Touches of green reference the bright green bench in the home’s entryway.