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CALIFORNIA COOL!

A three-woman firm keeps SoCal design O.C.-chic and palette appropriate in Emerald Bay.

| *By Andrew Myers* |
| *Photography by Karyn Millett* |

Once upon a time, three little girls grew up along the Southern California coast. They didn't go to the police academy or have a visage-less mentor named Charlie, but they did have plenty of SoCal kick, sensitivity to coastline color, an appreciation of how a chill vibe can leaven busy-beaver industriousness, and instant rapport. "We all grew up together," says Heidi Bonesteel of Michele Trout and Jill Hall, explaining that she and Hall met when they were 14 and she and Trout went to UCLA design school together. That points to the passion the three women share: design, the professional pursuit of which has made them not only BFFs but business partners in the Orange County- and L.A.-based design firm Bonesteel Trout Hall.

Although all three have 20 years' experience in the textured world of interior design and have been working as a trio since 2002, their signature style was not articulated—at least explicitly and on their website—until last year. In 2010, the triptych descended on the Design Leadership Summit, an annual powwow of design bigwigs held in Venice, Italy. "We realized the power of design firms really branding themselves," says Bonesteel.

Their imaginations had always been flooded with

The living room section of the Emerald Bay home's great room is awash in the coastal colors (blues, greens, ivories and whites) favored by O.C./L.A. design firm Bonesteel Trout Hall. The cool hues are reflected in the sofa from Poliform, the capiz shell pendant light, the Eames lounge chair, and even the ocean painting by MaryBeth Thielhelm. It's owner Andy Peykoff's favorite room, partly because he and wife Jaime can be cooking or watching TV and still keep eyes and ears on their three little girls.









Opposite page: The light stripes of the chairs echo the strong lines of artist Ana Maria Hernando's *Nelumbo Nucifera II* and *Tulipa Madalyn*, acrylic and oil on printed antique embroidery paper. Above from left: The strong geometry of the staircase is contrasted with the ocean-like undulations of Marcy Freedman's *Honey Sworkey Mollypants*. The landscape design, conceived by Molly Woods, keeps outdoor spaces spare and sculptural, uniting indoors and out via form and color.

waves of inspiration wash in ever-optimistic, ever-jolly and sun-drenched coastal colors—the many blues of sea and sky throughout the day and under different weather conditions; the spectacular hues of reds, magentas and oranges at sunset; the tan of sand and skin; and the ivories and whites of bleached woods and shells. Not to forget “the vibrant pinks and green of bougainvillea,” Bonesteel adds. What had before been assumed was now made explicit: a company creed with keywords California coastal casual chic, easy and familial.

A primo product of their approach and process is the Emerald Bay home of Andy and Jaime Peykoff and their three little girls (very little: ages 4, 2 and less than one year). The Peykoffs, Bonesteel explains, had learned of her and her partners through an article in *House Beautiful* and a plant maintenance person. “All the stars were in alignment,” Bonesteel says.

“Michele, Jill and I all have some age on us [they’re early 40-somethings, born within 16 months of one another], all with kids and dogs, all living minutes from the water, so a young family like the Peykoffs were perfect clients for us.”

Not so perfect was the house. Bonesteel estimates it was built well over 30 years ago, and emphasizes that “it was in dire need of renovation.” The prime appeal was the spectacular ocean view from every room, and the proximity to the Pacific. The mission, then, of Newport Beach-based architect Eric Olsen and the designers was to lighten the place up, literally, and translate ocean and motion to the interiors.

Shades of white swept through the house—walls, ceiling, baseboards and moldings, then to bathroom tile, built-in cabinetry and windowsills. It’s the perfect background for accent colors, such as the sea-foam blue of the master bedroom’s upholstered chaise and



tile tracing the master bath's ceiling, and the deeper blues of the media room's sofa and the cushions on the Saarinen chairs in the breakfast area. The range of light greens (celadon to chartreuse) on the kitchen backsplash and in bathrooms and on bolsters, the stripes on rugs and chairs (both indoors and out) and the pops of orange in the playroom help balance and ground the aqua shade throughout.

Bonesteel, Trout and Hall use the neutral whites to provide a platform to highlight sculptural (but comfortable, Bonesteel stresses) examples of midcentury modern furniture, including the aforementioned Saarinen Tulip chairs and table, the Bertoia Bird chairs and an Eames lounge. It also supplies a neutral backdrop for the contemporary art proposed by art consultant Anne Mennealy. These pieces, such as the acrylic ink and watercolor on paper by Marcy Freedman in the stairwell and the oil on panel by MaryBeth Thielhelm above the fireplace

in the free-flowing central room, also sport coastal colors. "It's always best if art, architecture, landscape and design are all considered at the start of a project, and here they were," says Bonesteel, whose favorite area of the house is the enormous multipurpose space containing kitchen, dining, breakfasting and living areas. Her happiest surprise was the downstairs media room, which started as a "man cave but became, with its amazing bar and wine storage, a great mecca for design," she says. It was a late-in-the-project development that evidenced the Peykoffs' enthusiasm and trust.

"Confidence can be casual," declares Bonesteel, adding that the firm's approach and style translates well beyond the Golden State, even circumnavigating the globe to include clients in Saudi Arabia. "For so many years design was focused just on New York, London and Paris. But no matter what people say, California is really cool." **R**

Above from left: A vignette in a corner of the great room combines a large wooden globe-shaped sculpture, a modern metal side table, and a pendant light designed by Bonesteel Trout Hall, the shade of which shows owners Andy and Jaime Peykoff walking on the beach with their eldest daughter. The artfully arranged wine storage in the downstairs media room makes the space a standout for designer Heidi Bonesteel. Opposite page: Della Robbia chairs outfit a terrace carpeted with AstroTurf.

