

RUSTIC EDGE

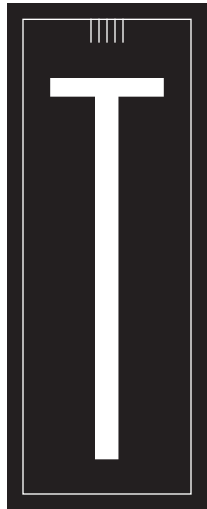


THE RANCH HOUSE RIDES AGAIN—THIS TIME WITH A DASH OF OLD WORLD CHARACTER.

BY PAIGE PORTER FISCHER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY | STYLING BY MICHAEL WALTERS



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The ranch house is as quintessentially Californian as Yosemite and artichokes. So when Eric Olsen, an architect who grew up surrounded by the iconic style in Newport Beach, saw a textbook ranch house in Corona del Mar, he fell fast for its modern but modest style—and knew it was just the place for him and his wife, Adriana, to raise their three daughters. “We bought into this neighborhood because it still feels like old Southern California,” says Eric. “It hasn’t been filled with monster houses.”

Though the ranch style appealed to Eric, Adriana, who grew up on the East Coast with her Italian American family, wasn’t sure what to make of it. She had always envisioned life in a character-filled farmhouse, much like the ones in Italy. “Eric has a much more modern aesthetic than I do,” she says. “What I knew of contemporary architecture seemed cold and sterile—the exact opposite of what I wanted in my house.” So the couple met in the middle with a sort of modern Italian farmhouse in the shell of a ranch—“the perfect blank canvas,” Eric says.

First, though, Eric made a few tweaks to the structure. “A typical ranch house has exposed ceilings and light coming into the public spaces, but ours didn’t have that.” He added new windows for a flood of natural light and incorporated as many French doors as he could to bolster the indoor-outdoor connection. He also made room for a new master suite—not part of the typical ranch configuration—by relocating the garage to the front of the house.

Of all the changes Eric made, it’s the great room that best combines his and Adriana’s visions. Eric elongated the space, lifted the 8-foot ceilings, and opened up the kitchen to create a place where everyone could be together. “If you were to walk into this house on any given evening, you’d probably find us all hanging out in this big open space,” Adriana says. The older girls, Siena, 6, and Ella, 4, like to sit at the island to help prepare dinner, or color at their art table in the middle of the room, while Eric plays with 1-year-old Dempsey.

To add character to the house, the architect chose four materials: custom gray-painted slab and white quartz for a modern touch; over-grouted brick and reclaimed wood for rustic texture. “We basically changed the skin of the house,” he says. Not only do these materials bring the warmth that Adriana longed for, but they also welcome the wear and tear of “little people,” as Eric puts it. “The very character of a ranch house is relaxed, so

to create anything else within these walls would have been a mistake,” he says.

Their blended style paid off. “We regularly have people over, and when all the kids are ripping through the house, our friends often comment on how warm our place feels,” says Eric. “That’s the greatest compliment: I created a modern house that feels cool to me, but not cold to anyone else.”

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN Eric Olsen, Orange, CA; ericolsendesign.com.

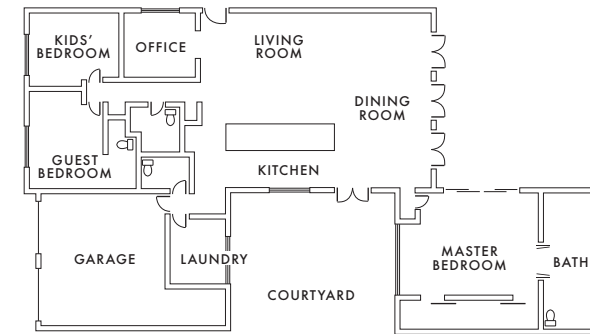


“I didn’t want our **HOME** to feel like a showroom. I wanted it to be a place **WHERE PEOPLE** would come and want to stay for a while, where they’d **FEEL COMFORTABLE** and relaxed.”

—ADRIANA OLSEN—

KITCHEN The Olsens always envisioned an over-size island in their kitchen. “We wanted a place that would draw everyone together,” says Eric, who juxtaposed white quartz with rustic wood strips left over from the floor. “That was an instance where we saved money, and people comment the most on it.”

GREAT ROOM Adriana’s one big request was to have a brick wall somewhere inside the house. Eric added it to the great room. He chose four paint colors for the bricks and then over-grouted them by adding excess mortar between the joints and smearing it over the top.



MASTER BEDROOM Just off the great room, this room looks bigger than it is, thanks to vaulted ceilings and a brick wall (dividing the bedroom from the closet) that doesn't extend to the ceiling. The bedroom borrows a good bit of the attached bathroom's natural light through the wide doorway. The gray color scheme repeats here too. "I love a very serene neutral palette in a bedroom," says Eric.

MASTER BATH Eric likes to get as much natural light into a bathroom as possible. To that end, he added skylights and a generous window behind the vanity. Vertical wooden beams mask the pipes and make room for a mirror above each sink. He placed the faucets on the sides of the sinks to make the vanity feel unique.

GIRLS' ROOM Gray walls make a sophisticated backdrop for Ella and Siena's room. "They'll thank me for it one day when they realize their room has grown up with them," Eric says, laughing. A grid of modern animal prints keeps the room playful.



"**SIMPLE** is good—repetition is too. In all my stuff, I try to **PICK A PALETTE** of materials and keep it consistent."

—ERIC OLSEN—

FOR YOUR INSPIRATION FILE

HEADBOARD

In the guest room, a decal takes the place of a typical headboard. "It was mostly a budget decision to do a decal, but it looks cool too," Eric says.



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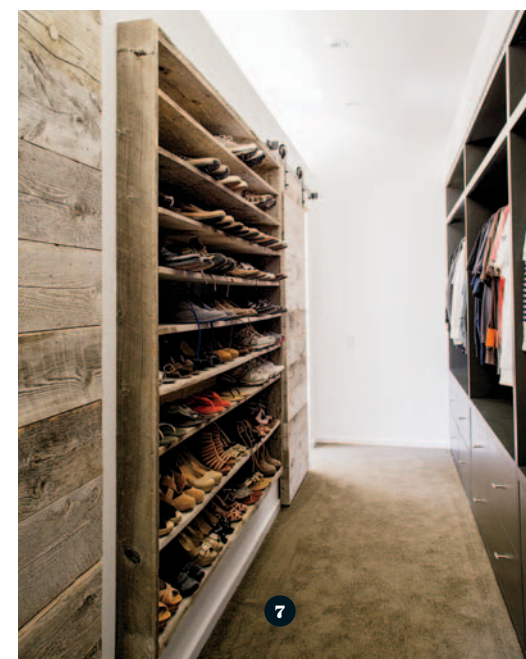
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- 1. SCREEN** This sliding shutter panel made of reclaimed wood controls light and provides privacy for the guest and the girls' bedrooms.
- 2. COURTYARD** Eric designed concrete pavers to mimic the herringbone pattern of the kitchen floor.
- 3. OFFICE** Three built-in shelves make a strong visual statement. The charcoal cabinetry and quartz countertops match the kitchen for continuity.
- 4. WINE STORAGE** Circular "cubbies" next to the pantry answer the question of where to store wine.
- 5. MAILBOX** Reclaimed wood and a vibrant red mailbox announce the home's contemporary rustic style.
- 6. ENTRY** A sidewalk flanked with rosemary and succulents leads to the home's front door, actually on the side of the house. Eric framed the door, which opens right into the great room, with rusted steel.
- 7. CLOSET** A wall of shelves provides enviable storage and display for the couple's shoes. Sliding barn doors lead to the bedroom.
- 8. GREAT ROOM** The couple wanted to give their sofa more character, so they upholstered the seat and the frame in different colors.