

MARIN HOME

FROM TOURS AND MAKEOVERS TO DECORATIVE DETAILS AND REALTOR INSIGHTS

A Ranch for Retirement

This updated 1960s home is a serene standout with open spaces and natural elements. »



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Previous page: The new front entrance was configured to create a break between the front door and the living spaces.

This page: Removing the wall between the kitchen and dining room allowed space for a peninsula with storage and a breakfast bar.

The verdant valley view and distant mountains are what drew Margret and Brett Hunter to their 1960s ranch-style home in Novato four years ago. The floor plan, however, not so much. A major renovation was needed to make it work for their retirement lifestyle. “The dining room, living room and kitchen were three separate rooms, so it was not set up very well for entertaining,” Margret recalls. “And the style was very mishmash. I wanted a more cohesive look.”

To achieve those goals, they brought in designer Lori Henle, whose firm, Lori Henle Interiors, is based in Kentfield. “My challenge was to unify the overall flow and design of the home, design better storage solutions and create a modern yet soothing environment my clients would enjoy spending time in,” she says.

The project included remodeling the kitchen, living room and master bath while also updating flooring, moldings and recessed lighting throughout. The new design scheme was inspired by the Hunters’ love of the beach, surf and nature, with materials chosen for their longevity and timelessness.

Last remodeled in the 1970s, the galley-style kitchen bore original cabinetry and aging appliances. It was closed off from the dining room, and the pantry was inconveniently located in the hallway. Creating a more optimal traffic flow, the wall separating the kitchen and dining room was opened, and the doorway from the hallway to the kitchen was enlarged to 8 feet wide. A new U-shaped layout with a peninsula counter increases storage capacity while providing casual seating. The pantry was moved to an interior side wall. Above the cooktop, the patterned cement tile adds a dash of Old World charm. “The custom white oak Shaker-style cabinet doors with black matte hardware were selected for their ability to age nicely over time,” Henle says.

The entire living room was transformed by a do-over of the fireplace wall, where a raised hearth projected about 20 inches into the space. A sleek new flush-mount gas insert with large-screen television above is faced with porcelain tiles from Walker Zanger, and

