

THE HOUSE OF DREAMS



Casa de Sueños is a private residence that was completed in July 2017, which was designed using handmade ceramic tile from Native Tile & Ceramics in Torrance, CA. *Photos courtesy of Jeri Koegel*

A Mediterranean-style oceanfront home in La Jolla, CA, was designed using a range of decorative, handcrafted ceramic tiles

by Heather Fiore





Different designs from the Malibu series were used for the front door surround, as well as various other interior spaces. The staircase risers feature 6- x 6-inch tiles with the “Medieval Creatures,” “Curci Greek Border” and “Curci 8’s Border” designs.

fastidious attention to detail, we were enthusiastic about creating all of the custom details in tile that would make this project special,” Mausser went on to say. “The owners were involved in the process, and together with the designer, we selected a color palette and patterns that satisfied their tastes and were consistent with a historically inspired Mediterranean-style home.”

An array of different designs from Native Tile’s Malibu series was used in almost every room throughout the oceanfront residence, as well as the exterior facade. Inspired by tiles produced at the Malibu-based ceramic tile manufacturer, Malibu Potteries, which suffered a business-ending fire in 1931, the series incorporates the historic Cuerda Seca technique. Translating to “dry cord” in Spanish, this 15th century tile-making technique uses a silk screen process to apply the pattern outline in an oil and glaze mixture, and then the glazes are hand-applied within the guide lines to create a colorful intricate pattern. “The clay is a light red, mid-range fired tile and the glazes used were custom-made and varied depending on the room and pattern,” Mausser said. “The client was attracted to a more saturated earthy color palette, as opposed to brighter colors. For some patterns, we even simplified the pattern with a two-tone palette.”

A range of sizes from the Malibu series were utilized — 6 x 6, 3 x 6, 3 x 3, 1 x 6, 2 x 6, 2 x 2 and 1 x 1 inches — along with $\frac{3}{4}$ - x 6-inch quarter rounds and custom extruded moldings. “We did create a few custom pieces where patterns needed to end gracefully within the installation,” Mausser said.

In addition to the detailed tilework, the clients also wanted to showcase their love for natural stone in the home, which needed to be consistent with the overall design. “We were challenged to create tile in colors that would work well with

La Jolla is known for its prominent seaside location in California. Occupying seven miles of curving coastline along the Pacific Ocean, the majority of homes in the community showcase panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, including a recently completed oceanfront residence known as “Casa de Sueños” or the “The House of Dreams.”

The Mediterranean-style home, which was designed by Beth McGehee of SB Design in Scottsdale, AZ, combines inspiration from historic and modern-day

homes in the area. “This Southern California project is in a location where there is a healthy mixture of historic homes and new construction,” said Diana Mausser, owner of Native Tile & Ceramics, who supplied all of the ceramic tile used for the home’s design. “The goal was to combine inspiration from the historic homes in the area and a love for the California Mediterranean style into a new home that had all of the modern conveniences, but felt like it had been there for a long time.

“Having worked with this designer on previous projects and knowing her



The 6- x 6-inch “Medieval Creatures” design continues throughout the house as the shoe molding for the walls in the main living areas and master bedroom, while a “tile rug” was created for the kitchen floor using a 6- x 6-inch version of the “Jay #4 Medallion” bordered by 3- x 6-inch tiles from the “New Helix” design, which were also used on the island.



The master bathroom’s shower is bordered with 6- x 6-inch tiles from the Malibu’s series “Antel” design, which was inspired by a historical pattern originally produced by the Catalina Pottery.

the stone that was to be used throughout the home,” Mausser explained. “We developed a glaze palette that was colorful yet earthy and coordinated well with the warm tones of the stone.

“For me, the concern was whether the tile was going to work well with the stone and because of this concern, I was very sensitive to the color palette,” the tile designer further explained. “I feel the glaze colors selected for the tile are what make the graphic patterns coexist nicely together with the stone.”

From design to completion, the tile-work portion of the project took around one-and-a-half years to complete, and has been celebrated by the owners and other residents within the neighborhood. “It’s probably a little unnerving when you see new construction going up in your neighborhood and especially a neighborhood that is sensitive to the architectural history of the area. So, the



In addition to the front door surround, decorative tiles were also implemented on the outdoor patio’s fire pit. The Malibu series’ 6- x 6-inch “Weeping Vines Medallion” and custom 3- x 6-inch version of the “Two Ziggurats” design complements the natural stone that was also used for this element.

fact that the neighbors were pleased is quite a compliment,” Mausser said.

Casa de Sueños was also awarded first place in the “Residential Tile Design

- Budget Above 15K” category at the 2019 Coverings Installation & Design (CID) Awards. “Most importantly, the clients are extremely pleased with the tile used throughout their home,” Mausser said. “In fact, they were so enamored with one of our tile patterns that depicts a whimsical image of a medieval griffin-like creature that they incorporated it into other decorative features within the home.” **TILE**

*Private residence
La Jolla, CA*

DESIGNER: SB Design LLC,
Scottsdale, AZ

TILE SUPPLIER: Native Tile &
Ceramics, Torrance, CA

INSTALLATION PRODUCTS: Custom
Building Products, Huntington
Beach, CA