

Homeowner and designer Noelle Micek on the beach in Carmel with husband John, daughter Charlotte (5), and son Jack (3)



CARMEL CRUSH

Memories of the storybook California village, plus a renovation-ripe bungalow, draw designer Noelle Micek back to create a cozy weekend retreat

I HAVE A PICTURE of my great-grandfather from 1948, standing in front of the Lone Cypress along 17-Mile Drive. He was atop that craggy rock, the Pacific stretching out behind him—I think that’s part of where the magic of Carmel started for me, a pull toward this old California town. As a child, I used to walk the streets and gaze at those storybook houses, and I’d imagine a real coziness and sense of welcome inside. I’d try to picture the families who lived behind the front doors. So when my husband, John, and I set out to find a weekend house for our own family, it’s like there was a little cottage path—figuratively, at least—leading us right back to Carmel.

The house we found was built in 1914, pre-dating the so-called fairy-tale architecture that arose in the late 1920s, a style that was the brainchild of designer Hugh Comstock (think steep storybook gables, off-center doors, and deep eaves). But our cottage has many of Carmel’s earlier hallmarks, such as old wooden ceiling beams, board-and-batten walls, and a roofline that’s set in waves, mimicking the ocean. (The real waves, I can hear from the deck.) And there is this wonderful little wine cellar down a steep, narrow staircase, a discovery that has its own brand of kismet. John and I have a little boutique winery called Red Stitch that we own with two

In the living room, a stone hearth and board-and-batten walls (painted Manchester Tan by Benjamin Moore) are original to the circa 1914 house. The slipcovered armchairs are by Lee Industries, and the rug is by Serena & Lily.



HAVENS (LIFE ON THE COAST)

other families—call it a passion for wine that turned into a fun side venture. Even beyond the good fortune of this find, I can’t help but think of Comstock’s sense of whimsy with a mysterious little room like this. Maybe our house was ahead of its time.

There was, of course, work to be done. This little weekend cottage, particularly in a place with such strong memories for my family, needed to be a spot where we could welcome everyone—family, friends, groups big and small—and we wanted that to start with the Christmas after we bought the house. The idea of updating it was always exciting to me. Back in 2008, I traded my career in bond sales for an organization business, which quickly and happily blossomed into a design business, so I did the sketches myself. (Nothing like an invitation to 30-plus family members for the holidays to help hurry along a renovation!) In just three months, we had gutted and redesigned the kitchen, converted the existing family room into another bedroom, added a breakfast nook, installed new hardwood floors in the main house, and turned a separate cottage into updated guest quarters. I also added lots of built-ins throughout—I always loved the idea of someone tucking into a window seat with a good book.

Now, we spend two weekends a month here, plus three straight weeks in the summer. Though our full-time home is in Diablo, only an hour and a half north, there’s a real togetherness that happens when we’re here. Whether we have friends or family in tow or it’s just us, there’s an unspoken acknowledgment that we leave behind distractions. Here, we pack our little red wagon for the beach—I like to say the water is more wetsuit warm than bathing suit warm!—or walk into town, where there’s a great library that our



Clockwise from above: The front door is painted Evening Dove by Benjamin Moore. In the kitchen, the ceramic tiles have a linen-like texture beneath the gloss; the glass pendant lighting is from local shop Jan de Luz. Micek hung a sea grass drum chandelier above the breakfast nook’s zinc-topped table; the sea urchin art is by Natural Curiosities.



Micek custom-designed the bunks in Charlotte and Jack’s room, complete with jute-wrapped headboards and rope suspension. The striped turquoise fabric is by Osborne & Little, and the copper lantern-style sconces are from Circa Lighting.



LIFE IN ...
CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA,
CALIFORNIA

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Coast Carmel
NW Corner of Ocean Avenue
and San Carlos Street
831/250-5574

BEST CUP OF JOE
**The Carmel Coffee House
& Roasting Company**
Alleyway on Ocean Avenue
between Dolores and
San Carlos streets
831/626-2095 or carmelcoffee.com

KILLER SUNDAY BRUNCH
Mission Ranch
26270 Dolores St.
831/624-6436 or
missionranchcarmel.com

SALTIER DIVE BAR
Sade’s
Lincoln Street between
Ocean and 7th avenues
831/624-0787

STRONGEST WINE LIST
La Bicyclette
Center of Dolores Street
and 7th Avenue
831/624-6436 or labicyclette-restaurant.com

LOCALS LOUNGE
**Terry’s Restaurant & Lounge
in The Cypress Inn**
Lincoln Street at 7th Avenue
831/624-3871 or carmelterrys.com

BEST BEACHSIDE COCKTAIL
**BYO to Carmel Beach
for sunset**
At the foot of Ocean Avenue
[carmelcalifornia.com/
carmel-beach.htm](http://carmelcalifornia.com/carmel-beach.htm)

GO-TO GIFT SHOP
elizabethW
Ocean Avenue between Monte
Verde and Lincoln streets
831/626-3892 or elizabethw.com

HIDDEN BEACH SPOT
Carmel River State Beach
Carmelo Street
831/649-2836 or parks.ca.gov



THIS ROOM THEIR INSPIRATION

Designer: **Genevieve Ghaleb**

DXV tapped the celebrated expertise of **Genevieve Ghaleb** to reimagine the iconic city of Miami in the **Contemporary Movement**.

"How great would it be to take the palette from outside your window or from your balcony and just bring it into the space?"

— **Genevieve Ghaleb**

Contemporary Beach I was inspired by the present-day Contemporary Movement in Miami to create this room for a busy gentleman in need of intentional daily luxury. A lot of the elements feature simple, clean lines. The Percy® Collection Faucets capture this perfectly—their proportion is like no other I've seen. So refined, they just sit back unobtrusively in this contemporary space.

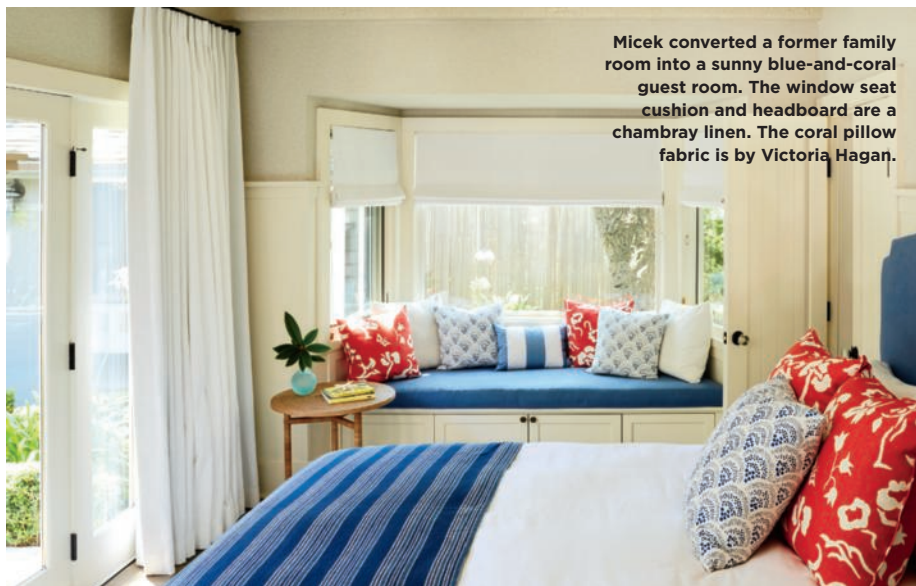
It so happens that the Lyndon® Freestanding Soaking Tub is by far my favorite tub on the market. It's very curvaceous and sexy. And I like that it is ageless, working well with the contemporary designs of today and tomorrow, yet flexible enough for historic rooms influenced by yesterday.

For more on Genevieve's room, visit us online at dxv.com



AMERICAN STANDARD

HAVENS (LIFE ON THE COAST)



Micek converted a former family room into a sunny blue-and-coral guest room. The window seat cushion and headboard are a chambray linen. The coral pillow fabric is by Victoria Hagan.

The family spends most evenings on the deck, which is just off the kitchen and dining room. The furniture is from Restoration Hardware.



kids love. At night, John often fills the wagon with firewood, and I pack hot dogs and s'mores fixings for the kids, plus some wine and snacks for us. We hang out on the beach, play, or sometimes just watch the dolphins, then run the kids through the shower outside before bed. Then we'll sit out on the deck and listen to the sounds of the ocean. The weather here is pretty dreamy all the time.

One of the other things I have always loved about Carmel is that

I can stand anywhere in town and know exactly where I am. There's a distinct style here, but there's also an enchantment. I felt it when I was 17 and brought my friends here to the old Tradewinds Cottage—a quintessential Carmel guesthouse a block from the beach—to celebrate my birthday. And I feel it now when I open the door to welcome someone new, or when I see one of my kids curled up in a window seat with a book, cozy and warm.
—as told to **Ellen McGauley** ■