

CURRENTS: LOS ANGELES

Frances Anderton

ARCHITECTURE

A Beach House In Malibu That Throws A Curve or Two

What is an architect to do when the husband is a modernist and the wife a traditionalist? Stephen Kanner of Kanner Architects in Los Angeles wed the two for Catherine and Peter Dussmann in this part bubbly, part formal, clapboard summer house on the beach in Malibu. It is, Mr. Kanner said, "a traditional clapboarded beach house given a big spin."

A combination of exposed steel frame, wooden siding and zinc roofs, the festive architectural fusion was a collaboration between the architect and his father, Charles Kanner, who died last June.

Its creamy blue and green two-tone clapboard siding of different widths had to align perfectly, and the house's curving trusses had to intersect with angular pediments. Built on a lot only 32 feet wide, the 3,500-square-foot house has the compact scale and precision of a boat and is made of materials chosen to withstand salt air.

A complex interior plan made it difficult to align the windows, a problem neatly solved with distinctive circular openings. The clients liked the idea and encouraged Mr. Kanner to go full throttle with round motifs.

One nice detail: the round bathroom windows become opaque for privacy at the turn of a switch.

