



TINY, BUT PERFECT

300 SQUARE FEET FITS THE BILL FOR BEACH COTTAGE

BY LILLIAN COX

Catherine Hayes' favorite place in the world is what she describes as her "300-square-foot beach cottage in a mobile home park in Leucadia."

She is an award-winning architect and interior designer from Phoenix who appreciates the romance of living by the coast. Cathy visits twice a month, usually for two or three days, and a week or two during the summer.

She discovered Leucadia about five years ago when she was using her frequent flyer miles to travel to San Diego.

"I'd drive north on I-5 to Carlsbad where I'd turn around and take the side streets going back," she recalled. "One day after going

to a juice bar near Swami's, I decided to investigate Beacons Beach Mobile Home Park."

Cathy was drawn to what she describes as the "rhythm of the town" and "nice temperament" of the people and decided to create a tiny beach house of her own as a sanctuary.

"It took me two years, but I found a lady who was interested in selling," she said. "The minute I could, I gave her some cash and pulled her trailer out and started working on my own thing."

Cathy purchased a small manufactured home from a company near Phoenix and began preparing drawings for custom accessories and furniture for her

SEE LEUCADIA • 24



CHRISTINE JOHNSON

Phoenix architect/interior designer Catherine Hayes enjoys escaping the heat to the serenity of her Leucadia cottage. The compact 300-square-foot space includes a kitchen area with a two-burner stove and an under-the-counter refrigerator.

Leucadia

CONTINUED FROM 22

new home, including a headboard and sofa, contracting vendors associated with her design firm serving the resort and restaurant industry.

For art and décor, she felt strongly about supporting local artists. "The hanging wine cast light fixture in the living room is made by the Chandelier Fine Lighting Company in Encinitas," she said. "The peace sign on the wall was cut from the lid of an oil can."

A painting of Encinitas by artist Alan Casagrande hanging over her bed is from Coast HWY Traders in Encinitas, and a "Home Sweet Home" needlepoint was purchased at the Antique Warehouse in Solana Beach.

Cathy began the project in 2012 and completed her tiny beach cottage the winter of 2013. The home is paneled with shiplap and boasts a combined living, dining and kitchen area with a two-burner stove and under-the-counter refrigerator. Sleeping accommodations include a bedroom and sleeping loft, each with a queen bed. There is also a bathroom with shower.

"I took a very standard, inexpensive manufactured home which I gussied up for the 21st century, making it affordable so it can be next to the beach," she said. "Literally, all I'm doing is leasing space.

"To have a 300-square-foot house, and a tiny, perfect garden, that is what I absolutely love from a beach perspective. I want it to be a lovely, legitimate home - just as small as I can get. No hippy things. Nice stuff. I want to have this house for the rest of my life."

Subsequently, Cathy purchased a second manufactured home that she fitted with cabinetry, fixtures, flooring and millwork and sold to a buyer from Arizona, inspiring others to create their tiny beach cottage in the same park.

"It's nice that we ended up improving the park with a new home and garden," she said. "We are 'Zonies,' not permanent residents. I'm taking care of the property and being a good neighbor."

When she's not using her



CHRISTINE JOHNSON PHOTOS

The home has ample sleep accommodations with a bedroom and a separate sleeping loft, each with a queen bed, plus room for an air mattress for one adult or two kids. Homeowner Catherine Hayes often invites friends, family and co-workers to stay at the cottage.



Supporting the local arts scene was important to the homeowner. A hanging wine cast light fixture and peace sign are among the pieces by local artists in the living area. A painting of Encinitas by artist Alan Casagrande hangs over the bed (top).

beach retreat, Cathy makes it available to employees, friends and family, which includes four brothers, three sisters and their children.

"One of my nieces went to USD and spent weekends here, holed up and studying," she said.

"Now that she's graduated, these will be great memories for her."

Photographer Christine Johnson and her teenage son stayed for a long weekend in June. She came to appreciate Cathy's minimalist style in Phoenix when Cathy purchased a 1,500-square-

foot home and reduced it to 986 square feet.

"Her tiny beach cottage is almost the coolest place that I've ever been to, and I travel a lot," Christine said. "If I could live in there tomorrow, I would do it in a second because everything has a purpose and a meaning, and there's nothing fussy about it."

Christine adds that she feels comfortable putting her feet on the table, and at some point could see herself hosting a fancy dinner or a book club meeting in the cottage.

"I was happy, and my son loved it because of the loft," she said. "There is plenty of room - and it was beyond what we expected. I thought, 'I can't believe I'm staying in a tiny manufactured home. How can I buy one and do this myself?'"

Cathy has only one request from her houseguests:

"Please, God, don't leave a gift," she said. "Don't wash your linens or clean up after yourself. I want you to go to the beach and have a really great time!"

Lillian Cox is an Encinitas-based writer who has been covering North County for the Union-Tribune since 2002.