

I'm in love. Again.

This time my obsession is a beautifully understated farmhouse-looking building tucked away just a block from Butterfly Beach.

Architect Christopher Manson-Hing was struck by its charm and Cape Dutch architecture the minute he saw it too.

"I saw the possibilities immediately. It reminded me of a Belgian farmhouse and that aesthetic really appealed to me," he says.

Cape Dutch is not an architectural style commonly found in Santa Barbara. Its roots run deep in the Western Cape of South Africa. It was prominent in the early 17th century of the Cape Colony where the initial settlers were primarily Dutch.

The new owners aren't Dutch, but the Texans too were smitten by its simplicity, and apparently inspired by the vision Manson-Hing had for the property. He exudes enthusiasm when presented with potential! "The people who have been remodeling these farmhouses have been doing a wonderful job of getting understated elegance by using simple lines and quality materials," he says. "And that's what we did."

Keep it Simple

Manson-Hing used European white oak wood floors and the enveloping palette of creamy white paint throughout. Touches of Carrara marble add to the fresh feel. There's nothing fussy here. Fireplace mantels are simple and understated, there is no unnecessary adornment on the railings. Steel windows keep molding to a minimum and allow more light to pour in.

"I really tried to show restraint. Keep it simple and clean, modern and breezy," he says.

Go with the Flow

That's not to say that this was a quick

The houseaholic:

Dutch Treat



By Andrea Cambern

"Hello, my name is Andrea and I'm a houseaholic...."

Simplicity and elegance are the hallmarks of Cape Dutch style architecture. The home was renovated by Lynn Morris Contracting. Architect Christopher Manson-Hing used steel framed windows to bring as much of the yard and patio on the small lot to the interior of the house.

Photos Courtesy Jim Bartsch

or easy fix. As charming as the exterior was, Manson-Hing says the interior was fraught with problems. "I walked in and wondered why there was this negative movement." There were small spaces, separated from each other. There was no relationship between the inside and out. Something Santa Barbarans live for.

"Everything seemed to be a little tight, restrictive," recalls Manson-Hing. "So we took that little house and opened it up as much as possible so each room flowed from one to the other, that's what it was all about."

Manson-Hing kept the original footprint in place. Instead of expanding out, he went up. A charming guest suite was added in an attic storage space. Its pitched ceiling and dormer window add to that farmhouse feel. "We made a very special space up there, a place where guests want to come," he says.

The homeowners want to come more often too. Designed as a second home, Manson-Hing says they are appar-

ently having a change of heart! "They love it, they want to be here more. Normally they spend most of their time in Texas but they're thinking of switching!"

That's no surprise to an architect who has called Santa Barbara home for almost 25 years. Despite growing up in the West Indies and being educated in Canada and Switzerland he became smitten with Santa Barbara on a road trip up the Coast. "I just thought this was a great place."

And Manson-Hing is working to keep it that way. Not only with his own architectural designs, but with others. He served several years on the architectural review board, and is the current President of the AIA Santa Barbara Chapter.

"I get back a lot from it, giving back to the profession," he says. "This town has a history of architecture that is so rich, you come in and feel that you have a responsibility to honor that."

Honor with restraint, respect and just the right

amount of renovation, as he did with this charming Cape Dutch style house. Because of that it doesn't stand out, but instead lives in perfect harmony in its architecturally eclectic neighborhood, just a block from the beach.



Belgian farmhouse feel. Architect Christopher Manson-Hing's goal was to keep it simple, clean, modern and breezy.



European white oak floors and a peaceful creamy white palette provide a spacious feel for the 2400 square foot home.



Instead of expanding the footprint of the home, the architect transformed a lofted attic into an inviting guest suite. Sisal carpeting adds to the organic feel of the home.



Nothing fussy. Simple lines and quality materials including soapstone, walnut and carrara marble are used in the inviting casual kitchen.



Andrea Cambern is an award winning broadcast journalist and columnist based in Santa Barbara. A self-proclaimed houseaholic, who is addicted to designing and renovating homes, Andrea is also the producer and host of Open House TV, coming soon to www.newspress.com. Share your story ideas: andrea@thehou.seaholic.com