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Leahy pursues interior design passion

*Leahy resident
boasts her
business*

Hartings

Elizabeth Leahy knew it was a career change when she started walking into family friends' homes and began rearranging furniture around.

For 15 years in advertising, including a stint at San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles, the 4S Ranch resident went to college for a degree in interior design.

Leahy of Leahy Interior Design is letting her creative side show, most recently in the San Diego Historical Society's Showcase House in San Diego Valley where her "Student's Bedroom" is among the rooms on display in the 83-room, 6,000-square-foot Craftsman-style farmhouse.

The room has been decorated by a professional interior designer to reflect many different styles and from classic Craftsman to contemporary. Two rooms are alike.

"Craftsman is all about clean, simple lines," Leahy said, gazing at the light, airy, contemporary room, which she decorated with her own 7-year-old son, Jared, in mind. "It's a room so it needed to be fun."

Leahy has more than succeeded in bright blue walls providing a pleasing contrast to the dark wood floor, chocolate leather rug and white wood-paneled desk that was part of the original farmhouse.

Leahy said her son loves cars, and she chose a contemporary sleigh bed with small



Elizabeth Leahy of 4S Ranch shows off the 'student's bedroom' she designed for the San Diego Historical Society's Showcase House in a restored 1915 Craftsman-style farmhouse.

Staff photo by
Steve Spangler

checks in the headboard signifying checkered flags. The custom-made bedding includes a comforter with a unique blue and green circular design resembling car wheels.

Leahy smiled mischievously as she flipped back one corner, revealing multi-colored race cars on the reverse side. She intends to take the comforter home to Jared as a peace offering of sorts when the showcase ends later this month.

"I kept going in and pilfering things from his room," Leahy explained, pointing to an extensive collection of hardbound "Hardy Boys" books, Lego cars and an iPod perched on book-

shelves in a free-standing apple green wardrobe along one wall.

Two orange night stands on moveable casters, a slipper chair and a spin chair, both in apple green, and a bookcase in espresso brown and chrome complete the look.

Despite the contemporary design of the "Student's Room," Leahy's 4S Ranch home, where her office is located, is done in Country French. But she frequently steers toward cleaner, simpler lines when decorating other people's homes. Her clientele over the past four years has ranged from Escondido to Scripps Ranch to La Jolla.

"It's really up to what the cli-

ent wants," Leahy said. "When someone is coming in to decorate your home, it's a very personal thing."

The 2006 Showcase House is at 14333 San Dieguito Road, east of Del Mar. Hours for the self-guided tour are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, which is the final day. Admission is \$10 for San Diego Historical Society Members and \$20 for non-members with proceeds benefitting the SDHS. For more information or directions, visit www.sandiegohistory.org or call (619) 232-6203, ext. 102.