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# ON THE WATERFRONT

TEXTURED MATERIALS, CUSTOM FURNISHINGS AND COMPELLING ARTWORK COME TOGETHER WITHIN A TIBURON HOME THAT'S BOTH GROUNDED AND EXPANSIVE.

WRITTEN BY LAURA MAUK / PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURE JOLIE  
STYLING BY YEDDA MORRISON

On a promontory north of the Golden Gate Bridge in Tiburon, a house was designed to be so woven into the landscape that it appears to be part of it. "My clients wanted to feel as connected to the earth as they could," says architect Brooks Walker, who devised the modernist home as a family compound to host the residents' immediate and extended families. "The architecture is a frame to allow that to happen." Just as harmonious as the structure is with its surroundings, so too is the interior design with the architecture. "It was a close collaboration that looked to the land for inspiration," says Nicole Hollis, the designer who furnished the rooms and worked with Walker to develop portions of the interior architecture and select finishes that speak to the wooded and bayside setting. "These clients love being on the bay and the idea of indoor-outdoor living. They wanted the interiors to flow seamlessly with the exterior."

The couple, who moved to Northern California from Hong Kong with their teenage son to be closer to family, expressed being drawn to modern architecture specifically. Starting in that direction, Walker sat with them and pored over images of buildings designed by midcentury masters such as Cliff May and Frank Lloyd Wright. "We also looked at the work



ARCHITECTURE / BROOKS WALKER, WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN / NICOLE HOLLIS, NICOLEHOLLIS  
HOME BUILDER / GLEN SHERMAN, VAN ACKER CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATES



of William Wurster and Joseph Esherick,” he says. “Their designs have this absolute simplicity that I strive for in my own work because I want to create architecture that’s timeless.” Walker, who worked with project manager Anne Griffes and job captain Anja Hämäläinen, developed the concept for the residence as a series of low-lying rectangular forms that nestle into a hillside on the south side of the property and stretch toward the bay on the north, east and west sides. The central volume houses formal living and dining rooms and an open great room, which includes the kitchen and informal living and dining areas. Upstairs are the master suite and a second bedroom. Two connecting wings hold guest quarters.

When it came to materials, Walker worked with a palette that included Aegean limestone, western red cedar, zinc and board-form concrete. “The stone helps to anchor the structure to the site,” says the architect, who used the limestone for both interior and exterior walls. “The roof is standing-seam zinc, and there’s zinc siding, too,” he says. “It will weather and develop a subtle patina.” The western red cedar siding adds warmth, while the board-form concrete of the retaining walls has an understated sensibility. Walker also used plenty of glass to let in sunlight and cinematic vistas

of the bay. “It looks like the house was chiseled into the site,” says builder Glen Sherman, who worked with project manager Yun-Ju Cho. “The house stands firm, poised and is exposed widely to the water and expansive views.”

For the interiors, Hollis, working with her residential studio director Adele Cunningham, created spaces that display a dynamic-of-the-earth quality similar to aspects of the architecture. White-oak and bronze-and-glass cabinetry and Belgian stone counters supply refinement and rusticity in the kitchen, as do layers of varying textures employed elsewhere, including brass panels covering the formal living room’s fire surround. “The panels have a silver nitrate finish,” Hollis says. “It’s created by applying silver to the panels and then using a torch flame to achieve a live patina.” For the formal dining room, she commissioned a 2-ton cast-bronze screen by artist Michele Oka Doner. The piece has an organic aesthetic and calls to mind a kelp forest and the wonder of the bay. “It has a handmade feeling,” Hollis says. “I like things with a sense of craft or sleight of hand. They’re more soulful.” The light fixtures by Lindsey Adelman Studio in the dining room, a stairwell and the master bedroom exhibit a kind of idiosyncratic artisanship as well.

For a modernist house in Tiburon, architect Brooks Walker designed an Aegean limestone wall that extends from the exterior into the entry, weaving the indoors with the outdoors. Designer Nicole Hollis outfitted the space with a Liaigre bronze bench from De Sousa Hughes.



A pendant by Lindsey Adelman Studio hangs from the ceiling in a stairwell where there are large-scale contemporary artworks from the residents’ collection. Rift-sawn European white-oak wall paneling and engineered European oak flooring by Tulip Hardwood Floors lend texture and warmth to the space.



In the formal living room, Hollis kept the palette understated to keep the focus on the view. Sofas by Ecart International and a William Emerson bench, all from Ralph Pucci International in Los Angeles, team up with a custom coffee table by Julian Giuntoli Custom Furniture. Near the windows, an Hervé Van der Straeten pendant is suspended above wing chairs by Jean de Merry from De Sousa Hughes.



**Left:** Hollis hung a large custom glass pendant with an ethereal sensibility by Esque Studio in a hallway, a space adorned with warm wood finishes, including rift-sawn European white-oak wall panels and engineered European oak flooring.

**Opposite:** An Aegean limestone wall in the formal living room adds a natural quality and complements the silk-velvet that upholsters the sofas. A Zorzi floor lamp by Vincent Collin from Roseland Art and Decoration in Toronto stands next to a John Pomp cabinet.



When it came to color, Hollis let the outdoors dictate the palette for the furniture and the fabrics. "I love color but find myself more immediately inspired by texture and materials," says the designer. "There's a lot of glass here, and we all agreed we wanted the landscape to bring in the color." For the formal living room, the designer covered a pair of sofas with a dark gray silk-velvet to play off the water of the bay. A teak-and-leather bench designed by William Emmeron and a John Pomp cabinet with a brass top, a blackened-steel frame, ebonized ash panels, and glass-and-brass doors bring in brown and black tones that reference the earth and the bark of the trees outside.

The design for this home is most certainly an exercise in the art of restrained beauty, which lets the scenery around it take center stage. "The rear garden is vast with panoramic views of the bay," says landscape architect Todd R. Cole, who designed the grounds and worked with project manager Will Saltenberger and project manager

and assistant designer Annie Amundsen while he was a principal at Suzman & Cole Design Associates. "We saved a few pine and oak trees along the edge of a bluff and planted a broad lawn that leads to an infinity pool and enhances the feeling of tranquility." Toward the end of the project, Cole cofounded Strata Landscape Architecture, and Saltenberger and landscape designer Stephen Suzman joined Zetterre Landscape Architecture, and the two firms finished the project together.

Although the epic setting is indeed compelling, so is the contemporary art collection the owners have curated to include works by Robert Rauschenberg, Xu Bing and Richard Misrach among others. "These clients requested a warm, open, modern home that would hold their extensive art collection," Hollis says. "They have a minimalist and refined sensibility and are drawn to a materials palette that connects to the landscape. The house was created to support the art and the landscape and not to compete with them." ■

**Opposite:** In the kitchen, customized cabinetry, crafted with rift-sawn European white oak that matches the wood wall panels throughout the house, provides continuity and a natural texture. The island is topped with aged Petit Granit from Omnistone Masonry, and the faucets are by Dornbracht.

**Below:** Bar chairs by BDDW pull up to the kitchen island, which is next to an informal dining area appointed with an ash-and-bronze table designed by Hollis. The leather-upholstered metal side chairs are by Jess Design, and the light fixture is by Rich Brilliant Willing.





In the formal dining room, a brass-and-glass chandelier by Lindsey Adelman Studio hovers above a Hollis-designed table fabricated by Thomas Fetherston Custom Furniture Design and chairs by Ecart International from Ralph Pucci International. Hollis commissioned the sculptural floor-to-ceiling bronze screen from artist Michele Oka Doner. Eric Johnson Associates handled the recessed lighting throughout the house.

“THE CLIENTS HAVE A MINIMALIST AND REFINED SENSIBILITY AND ARE DRAWN TO A MATERIALS PALETTE THAT CONNECTS TO THE LANDSCAPE.”

-NICOLE HOLLIS



**Above:** A large terrace is paved with honed basaltina and displays a teak sofa by James Perse. Walker juxtaposed horizontal zinc siding with vertical western red cedar siding for the exterior and employed glass corners to blur the indoors and outdoors.

**Right:** The residence, built by Van Acker Construction Associates, features windows by Fleetwood Windows & Doors that overlook a verdant lawn and sleek swimming pool, installed by Aquascape Custom Crafted Pools, along with expansive vistas of the bay.







**Above:** Custom cabinetry is topped with aged Petit Granit counters in the master bathroom, where wall sconces by Apparatus flank the mirrors. The hanging pendant is by Chris Lehrecke.

**Left:** In the master bedroom, a custom leather-wrapped nightstand with brass panels stands beside a walnut bed by Holly Hunt from Kneeder-Fauchère. A large-scale mixed media artwork by Kibong Rhee hangs near a Liaigre chaise lounge from De Sousa Hughes.

Low-slung teak sofas by James Perse flank a fire pit on a terrace connecting to the great room. A covered outdoor dining area adjacent to the terrace is arranged with a table by James de Wulf and Roda chairs.



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