

MODERN LUXURY

# Interiors

CALIFORNIA



*Innovations in*  
**KITCHEN  
& BATH**

SAN FRANCISCO'S MINIMALIST CHIC  
TIMELESS ELEGANCE IN ORANGE COUNTY  
HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR IN THE BIRD STREETS  
A STYLISH SAN DIEGO HAVEN  
JUST-OPENED SHOPS AND SHOWROOMS  
ACROSS THE STATE

Publishers of *Angeleno*,  
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*San Francisco* magazines

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SAN FRANCISCO

# SKY HIGH

A MODERN HOME IN RUSSIAN HILL  
MAXIMIZES SOARING VIEWS.

By Allison McCarthy | Portrait by Jan Siska

When a young San Francisco couple took on a complete rebuild of their newly purchased Russian Hill residence, they knew they wanted a warm and inviting family home that would take advantage of the breathtaking panoramic views outside. Perched high atop a hill, the four-story Butterfly House looks out onto the city, the Golden Gate Bridge and the bay. So the homeowners called on architect John Maniscalco of S.F.-based firm John Maniscalco Architecture to transform the midcentury-modern shell into a modern indoor-outdoor masterpiece. "A house with these kinds of views demands a quiet architecture that defers to the surrounding environment," Maniscalco says.

He settled on an open-plan construction with crisp, clean lines that gelled with the homeowners' desire for a modern look. In order to achieve the flow between



CRISP AND CLEAR One of the highlights of this San Francisco home is the Mies van der Rohe and Eames outdoor seating area and corner terrace. Opposite page: Architect John Maniscalco added a ground-level entrance by digging out 15 vertical feet of bedrock from the building's





**AIR APPARENT**  
New York artist Paul Villinski's butterfly installation floats up the central staircase from floor to floor.



indoor and outdoor spaces the couple was looking for, Maniscalco built in outdoor access on every level with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass pocket doors, terraces that wrap around the building and a spacious roof deck with a hot tub and walkable skylight. "You can be in the house and feel like you're outside," says Penny Shawback, whose family-run interiors business, Shawback Design, was brought in to style the inside of the 4,600-square-foot gem.

The desire to keep the design clean in form while adding elements of warmth and comfort dictated the use of natural materials like linens, cottons and mohairs to create an overall softening effect. And the tranquil color palette—aqua, navy, white, gray and raspberry tones—was inspired by beautiful indoor-outdoor living spaces in San Francisco. "We started calling it modern bohemian," Shawback says.

Douglas fir flooring from Dinesen of Denmark creates a soft, natural tactile element under the feet throughout the house. On the first level, the wood floors give way to soft gray concrete in the media room, which bleeds out into the south-facing concrete garden dreamed up by Surface Design.

Borrowing from the Japanese tradition of *tsubo miwa*, the courtyard flows seamlessly inside through glass pocket doors. A cantilevered walkway hovers above the stone patio, which is interspersed



**PLUSH PARTS** From top: Architect John Maniscalco and designer Penny Shawback lounge on Paola Lenti outdoor furniture in the south-facing garden; a fine Moroccan mohair rug lends a modern bohemian vibe to the master bedroom, which is decorated in crisp whites and blues.



with flowering thyme plants. Ferns and Japanese anemones line the perimeter, framing the black basalt fountain wall and linear fireplace.

To maximize the building's stunning views, the team reversed the typical home layout by moving the common areas to the top level. "Building an upside-down house presented the challenge of getting people up to the main living room in an elegant way," says Maniscalco. So he built one continuous staircase that runs through the center of the house and introduced light from above with a series of skylights.

The homeowners—avid art enthusiasts—sourced all of the artwork themselves and hired New York artist Paul Villinski to design the standout piece after which the house is named: a custom butterfly installation that floats continuously up the staircase backdrop from the second floor to the upper skylight, giving the effect of flying out of the house.

The master bedroom, decorated in crisp whites and tonal blues, is made cozy with the addition of a fine Moroccan mohair rug. "Even the most interior spaces of the house are lit naturally by skylights, large windows and sliding doors, giving them the bright, fresh feel that was

important to the couple," says Shawback.

Aptly named "the main event" by Shawback, the third level is the real showstopper. To the south, a comfortable living room is furnished with a Coup d'Etat custom sofa, A. Rudin swivel chairs upholstered in Madeline Weinrib fabric and a gas fireplace (which backs up to a private office). In the dining area, a large communal table overlooks a picture window with gaping views of the Golden Gate Bridge, and a hand-blown glass light fixture by John Pomp Studios hangs above. White countertops by Oakland's Concreteworks and the Heath Ceramics tile backsplash give the kitchen a pristine feel, and a retractable glass partition separates it from the rest of the floor for entertaining. But the home's pièce de résistance is the Noguchi- and Eames-outfitted sitting area and corner terrace under a cantilevered roofline and sliding doors that "finally reveal the true extent of the view," says Shawback. With the doors open, the room feels like it's floating high above the city.

Says Maniscalco, "The site assets are why the homeowners bought this property, so the redesign was an exercise in optimizing the panoramic views." Without a doubt, Butterfly House delivers on that promise. ■

**RESTING EASY**  
A. Rudin swivel chairs upholstered in Madeline Weinrib fabric, a custom Coup d'Etat sofa and a Jens Risom for Ralph Pucci chair soften the lines in the top-floor living room.

"EVEN THE MOST INTERIOR SPACES OF THE HOUSE ARE LIT NATURALLY BY SKYLIGHTS, LARGE WINDOWS AND SLIDING DOORS, GIVING THEM THE BRIGHT, FRESH FEEL THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO THE COUPLE," SAYS SHAWBACK.

## DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE  
Single-family

LOCATION  
San Francisco

ARCHITECTURE  
John Maniscalco Architecture  
m-architecture.com

INTERIORS  
Shawback Design  
shawbackdesign.com

LANDSCAPE DESIGN  
Surface Design Inc.  
sdisf.com

VENDORS  
Dinesen  
Douglas fir flooring  
dinesen.com

Paola Lenti  
Outdoor furniture  
paolalenti.it/en

Concreteworks  
Sinks and kitchen countertops  
concreteworks.com

Heath Ceramics  
Bathroom tiles and kitchen backsplash  
heathceramics.com



**GLASS MENAGERIE**  
A hand-blown glass light fixture by John Pomp Studios hangs above a custom-built Thomas Featherston table in the open dining area.