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# A Home for Art

San Francisco Designer Barbara Scavullo Has Created A Living Gallery In Sea Cliffs

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The pared down furnishings in the dining room allow the view of the Golden Gate Bridge to take center stage. A triptych by Jun Kaneko (two of the three panels are visible here) anchors the interior aesthetic.

Every design project arrives with a mandate: the client wishes his home were more formal, her apartment less stuffy, their public and private spaces more distinct. For one client of Barbara Scavullo, however, the directive was simple. “She wanted the house be to a flexible palette for her art,” says Scavullo, whose team for the project included designers Steve Justrich and Arnelle Kase. While some search for the perfect art for their home, the client dreamed of the perfect home for her art, a growing collection she had been amassing since purchasing the Sea Cliffs house forty years ago.

“The house really celebrates two things: the art and the view,” explains Scavullo. Though the early modernist home already honored San Francisco’s famous red metal landmark—large picture windows frame the Golden Gate Bridge and Marin Headlands beyond—what was once a home full of children had become a tranquil residence whose primary occupants were the paintings, sculptures and other objets d’arte collected by the homeowners. “They bought this house when they were newlyweds,” says Scavullo of the clients. “When the children were gone, their lives were different.”

“The whole impetus of everything we did was to make it a living gallery,” continues Scavullo. “To make it art gallery as house, and house as art gallery.” The team began in the foyer and stairwell. Halls were widened considerably to create an immediate gallery feel for visitors entering the front door, where a cheerful yellow Julian Schnabel painting augurs the visual wonders throughout the remainder of the home. A previously solid stairwell was opened up as well. “By opening the stairs, we get all the light pouring down from the upper level and



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Above: An Astoria lounge chair (beechwood framed, with a leather strapped back and sides) beckons in the upstairs family room. Opposite: A detached wall panel separating the dining and living room was intentionally widened. Says designer Barbara Scavullo, “It was created specifically to allow for more area for display.”







Above: Accents in the living room pick up hues in the art over the sofa—and are easily adaptable should the clients choose to exchange the painting for another. The piece currently in place was created by a UC Berkeley MFA student. Right: A floating shelf runs through the dining and living rooms and abuts the simple fireplace, offering structure as well as a space for smaller art objects. A Jeff Koons piece, “Puppy,” adds whimsy to the space.



also open up a tremendous amount of wall space at the top of the stairs for more art,” Scavullo says. Picture frame railings mimic wall décor, while remaining unobtrusive for those gazing toward the second floor’s display.

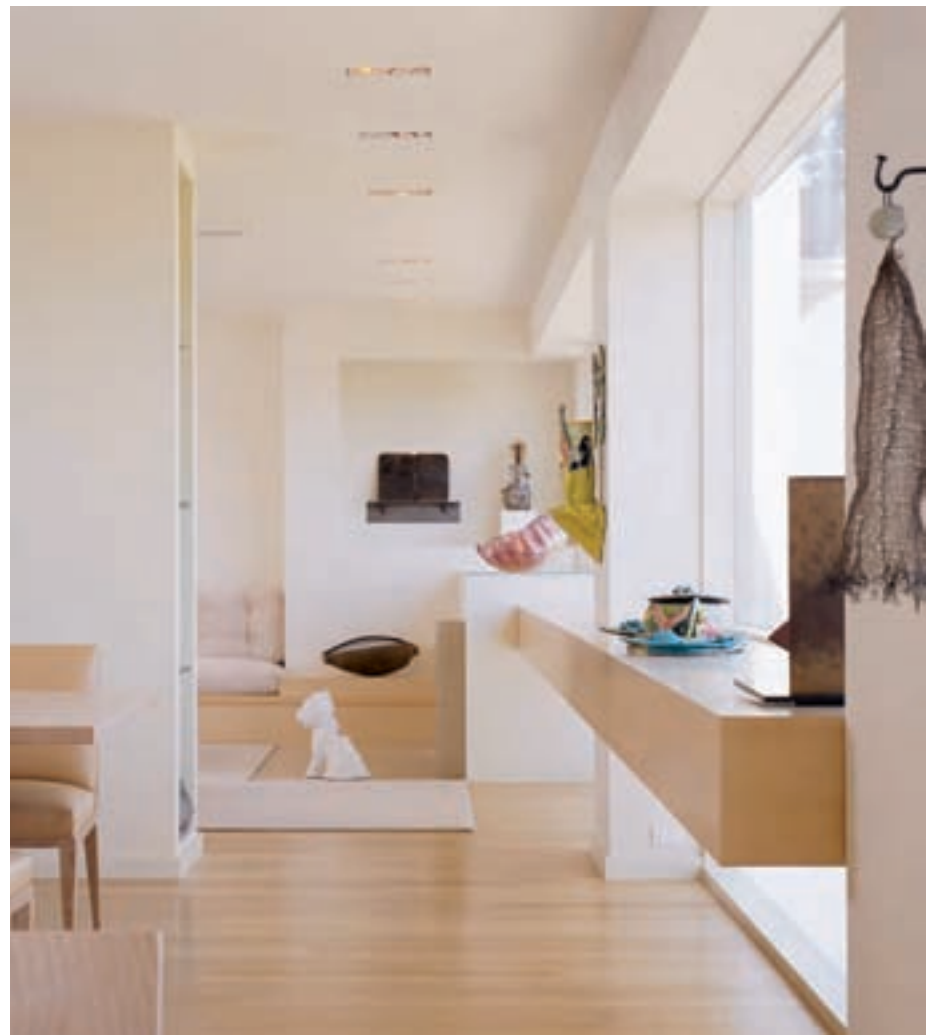
In the dining room, Mattaliano armless chairs surround an elegant dining table—period. “No rug. No chandelier,” says the designer. “Nothing superfluous at all.” Form is unembellished, and materials remain of the highest quality, as seen in the leather and mahogany of the dining room furniture. “Everything is incredibly simple,” she says. “It is very high quality and really pared down to its simplest, most elegant form or color, so that the art and the view dominate.”

The large picture window frames a postcard maker’s dream—and while the Golden Gate Bridge is often aesthetic enough, a simple floating shelf allows for displaying smaller accent pieces. Because the home is on a hill (this is San Francisco, after all), nearby rooftops were once included in the lower part of the striking

view. Frosted glass was thus placed below the shelf, allowing in light in while obscuring the glimpse of the surrounding neighborhood—and all the while evoking the famous Bay Area fog.

The shelf and window visually connect the dining room with the living room, a seamless connection at the forefront of the design team’s efforts throughout the home. “We eliminated all the barriers between the rooms without eliminating the room definitions,” says Scavullo. A panel stands between the dining and living rooms, unattached at either end to allow free flow between the two spaces. In lieu of traditional doors, full-height translucent panels can be pulled closed if privacy is needed, but otherwise remain inconspicuously tucked into a wall. Materials remain consistent throughout: bleached wood floors, unadorned windows, a neutral wall color and translucent glass reappear frequently.

In the living room, furnishings in neutral hues offer comfort without sacrificing the clean lines of the interior. Two Gary Hutton slipper chairs in a taupe chenille pair with a custom sofa








whose ash base reiterates the bleached hardwood floors. In the center of the room, art and furniture collide in a slumped-glass coffee table created by craftsman John Lewis. "Again, it reinforces that everything is about the art," says Scavullo. "The furniture is pared down to its most simple, but comfortable, form."

Comfort continues in the bedroom, where artwork is subtle and fabrics are again introduced to the décor. The repetition of elements is visible: simple, box-like bedside tables become a reinterpretation of the floating shelf from the living room. In the upstairs family room, brightly colored stools and an Astoria lounge chair introduce spots of color while a shag rug echoes the floor covering in the master bedroom, relating the two spaces by the presence of textiles and softer textures.

For all the meticulous design, and the view itself, the star of the show is the art. The home succeeds in providing a pristine canvas on which to exhibit the clients' eclectic and ever-growing collection. 

Above: Custom ash nightstands with laminated glass tops and glass-based lamps keep the bedroom consistent with home's public spaces, while chocolate bedding and a retro-feel shag rug bring softness and luxury into the room. Right: The home is a study in simple, flowing layers, as seen in the space between the dining room and kitchen. "All of these spaces just flow together without interruption," says Scavullo. Opposite: What might have been unused space becomes a gallery with colorful but eclectic pieces placed throughout. Savannah, the homeowners' dog, enjoys the sun streaming through the front door.





