

The 20-year Residents of This Redondo Beach Home Knew a View This Good Needs to Be Seen

Light & air.

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[Written by](#)

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Amber Klinck

Kristin Anderson

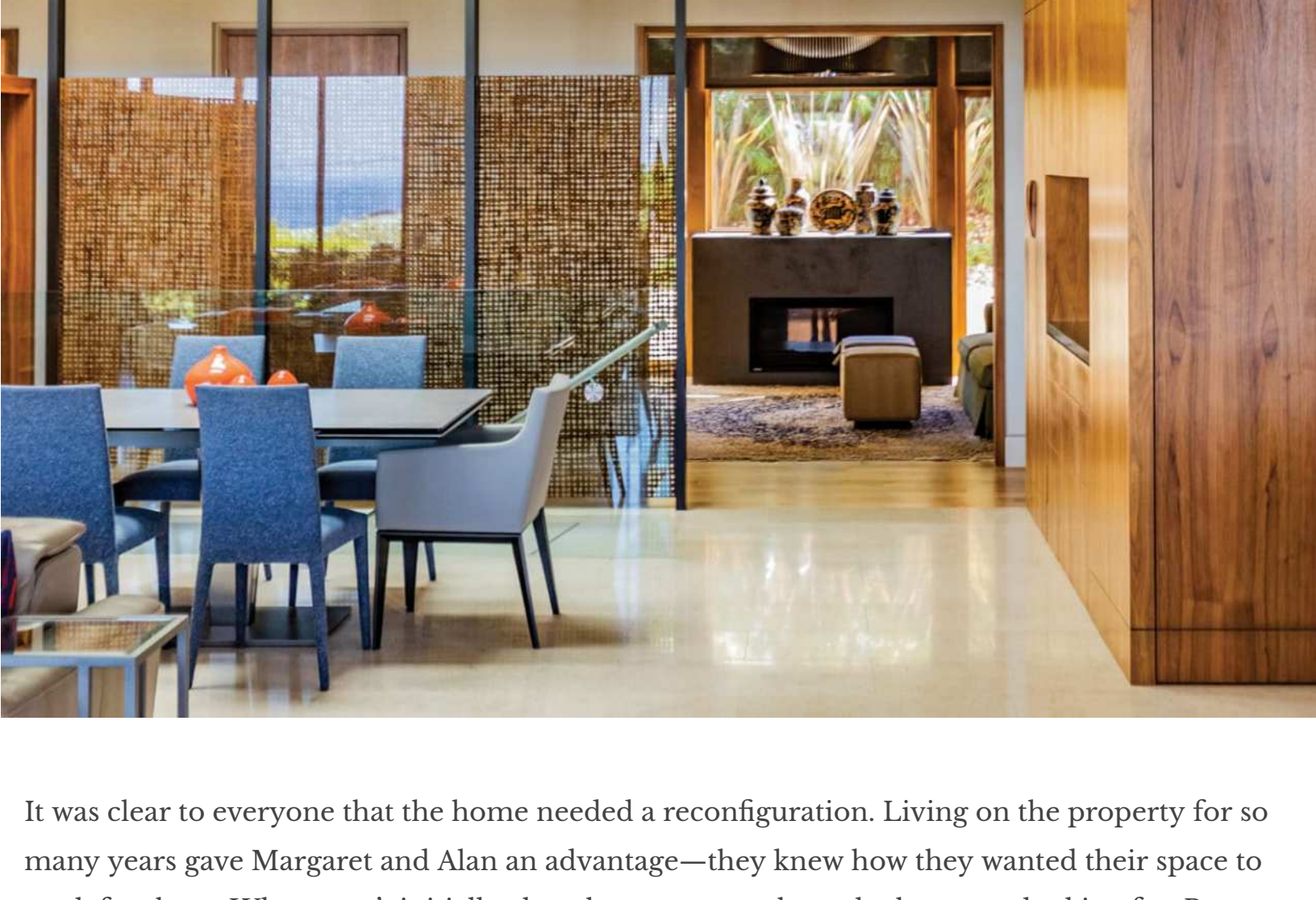
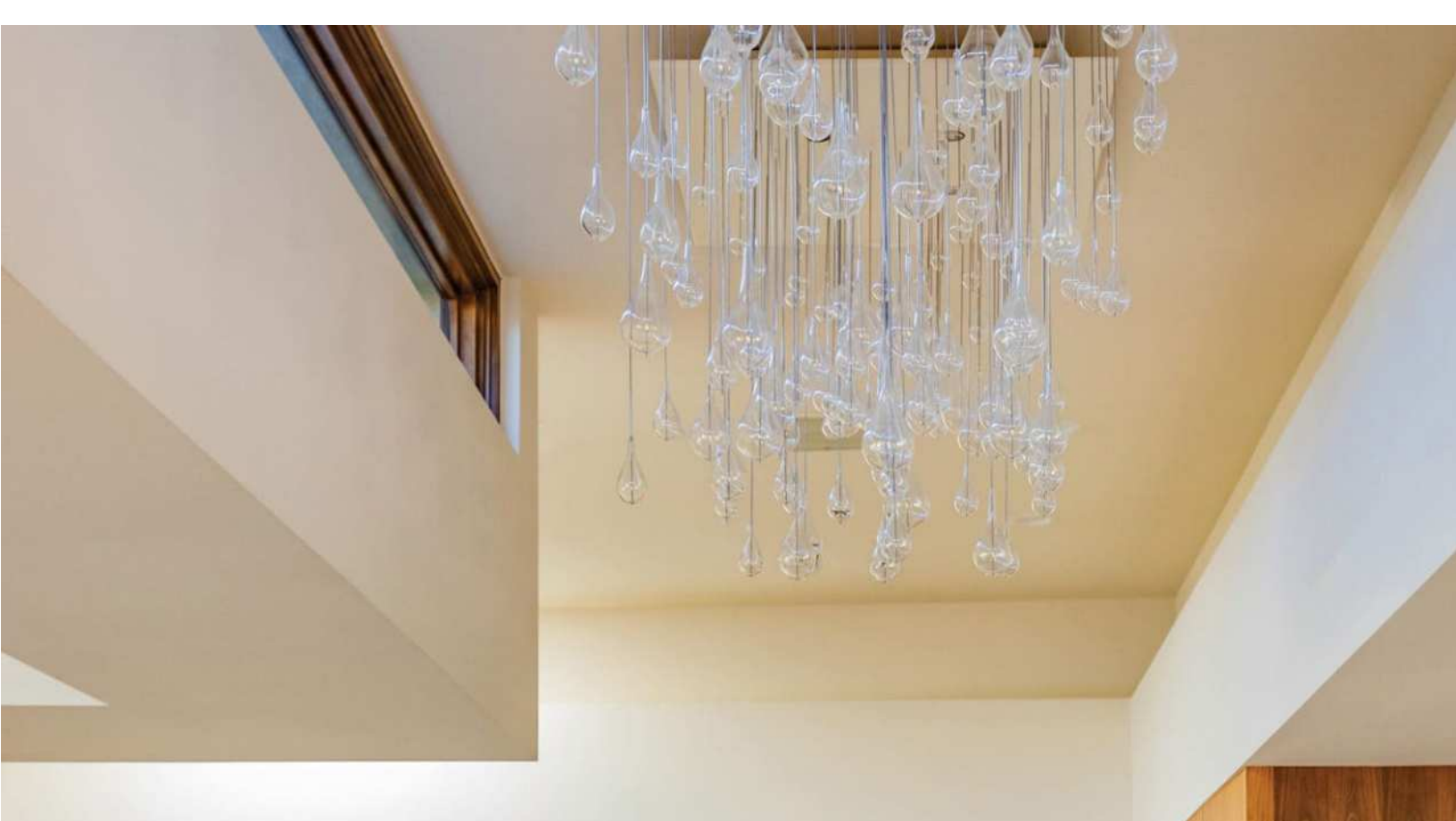
Margaret Dano and Alan Wozniak have lived on their property for roughly 20 years, though the home they live in today is much different than the one they moved into. Walking up the steps to the main entrance of their current residence reveals a breathtaking, unobstructed ocean view.



“You can see all the way to Malibu,” Alan says. It’s the centerpiece of the property—enhanced by the design of the current home, from the glass front door to the wall-to-wall windows. The original home never fully capitalized on this feature.

“You really didn’t feel like you had an expansive view,” Margaret says. “There was very little light and air; it felt kind of cramped. And the whole front area was underutilized.”

When Josette Murphy, founder of About:Space, visited the original home, her first thought was that the living room was facing the wrong direction. “The previous layout sacrificed the view in favor of the TV,” Josette notes.



It was clear to everyone that the home needed a reconfiguration. Living on the property for so many years gave Margaret and Alan an advantage—they knew how they wanted their space to work for them. What wasn’t initially clear, however, was the style they were looking for. But Josette had a plan for that.

“I try to make it fun. We review photos of spaces you like and those you hate, and that will inform the design direction,” she explains.

“I kept saying from the first meeting, ‘Light and air, light and air,’” Margaret says. “And function,” Josette adds.

Getting to know Margaret and Alan and learning a little bit of their story also helped Josette guide the design process. “I like more complexity,” she says. “I don’t want the result to look as if we went to Restoration Hardware and bought the room. That’s not unique, and it doesn’t reflect the client’s history or their personality.”



Margaret and Alan’s initial goal wasn’t to completely transform their home; it was to expand the master closet and move the laundry room. But the project quickly evolved into a total renovation that took the entire property down to the studs. This undertaking came with its own set of unique challenges.

Because the home is under the jurisdiction of the Hillside Overlay Area in the city of Torrance, they couldn’t add more than 10% square footage. “So part of the challenge was: Where do you add the 10%?” Margaret says. “Where do you really spend the time?” For Margaret and Alan, it was their main living space.

Walking into the home today, it’s clear Margaret got her wish for more light and air. “The highest point of the roof isn’t any higher than the original highest point, but we brought all the ceilings up,” Josette notes.

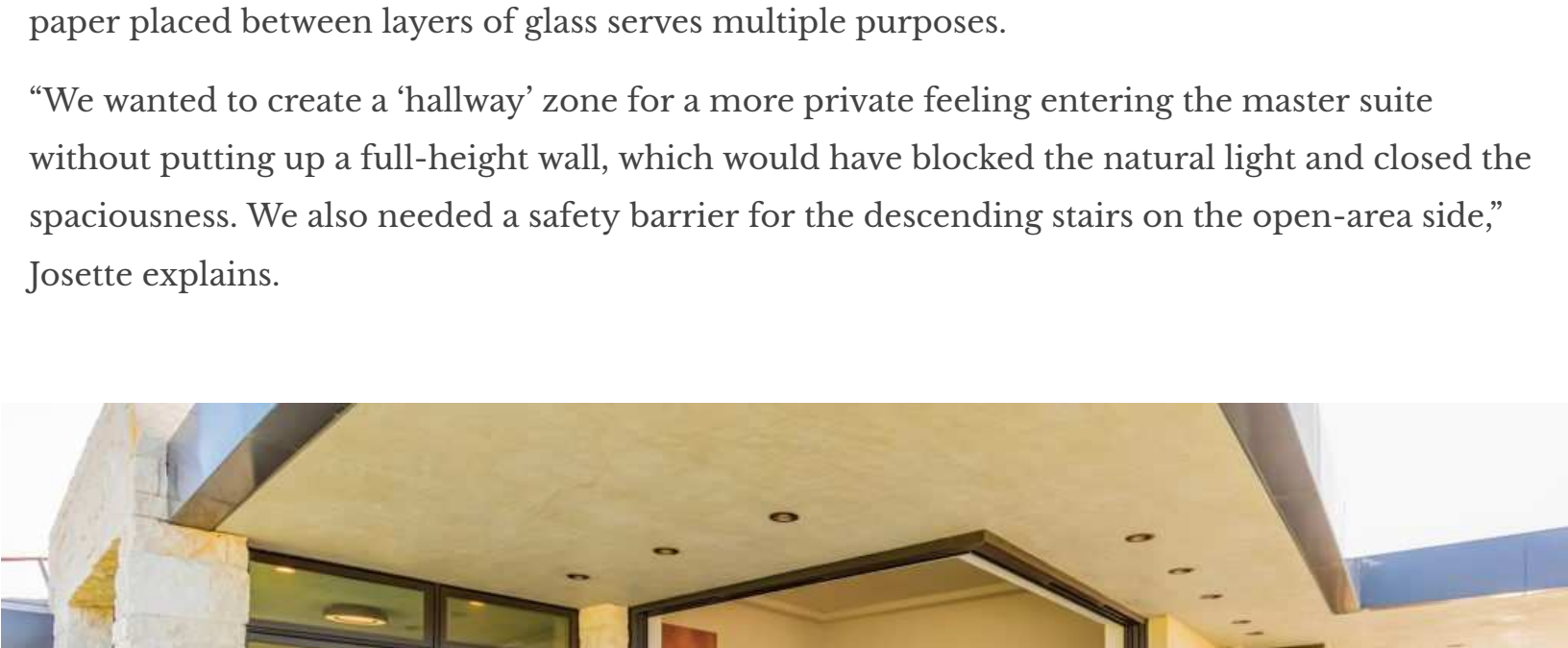


The large communal space includes a dining area, kitchen, sitting room with a fireplace, and a more casual area with a TV, bar and access to the front patio. Though each of these spaces is essentially part of one large room, they are masterfully distinguished from one another in the most subtle ways.

Above the main entrance of the home is a stunning fixture of mouth-blown glass handmade in Italy. “We wanted to define the moment of arrival,” Josette points out. “I designed a fixture that visitors walk underneath—for a playful experience. The ‘droplets’ are at different heights, as if a soft rain just began and you got caught underneath it.”

Separating the dining area from the door leading to Margaret’s office and the master bedroom is an implied hallway with ample storage. Outside Alan’s office, a large screen of handmade paper placed between layers of glass serves multiple purposes.

“We wanted to create a ‘hallway’ zone for a more private feeling entering the master suite without putting up a full-height wall, which would have blocked the natural light and closed the spaciousness. We also needed a safety barrier for the descending stairs on the open-area side,” Josette explains.



The screen is striking—it grabs your attention. It’s an excellent example of how Josette merges beauty and functionality throughout the project.

The kitchen feels more like a lounge. The only visible utility item is the stovetop. The ovens are concealed in the large walk-in pantry around the corner, and the refrigerator looks like a beautifully crafted cabinet. Off the kitchen there’s access to another large outdoor seating area with a fireplace.

The design of the home was a collaborative effort between Josette and architect Patrick Cunningham of C&C Partners. The builder was Mike Cunningham, Patrick’s brother and the other half of C&C.

Carpentry credit goes to Jean-Louis Boudreau, Josette’s husband. “We often work as a team,” she says. “And yes, it is as romantic as it sounds! For this project he fabricated all the complex custom cabinets, paneling and other wood elements that I designed for the project.”

Jim Matsuo led the landscape design. Josette credits him for the placement of the home’s main entrance and the surprise reveal of the view. “Jim had this brilliant idea: Let’s take everyone on a journey that will be more interesting.”

Today Margaret and Alan’s home is gorgeous and filled with personal touches that make it all their own. “I wouldn’t change a thing,” Alan says. But it’s Margaret and Alan themselves—with their warm and welcoming dispositions—who really steal the show.

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