

MANHATTAN BEACH MODERN / CLASSIC COAST INTERIORS

# OCEAN HOME

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## COASTAL COMFORT

+  
SEASIDE TRENDS

ON THE COVER: KAA designs a contemporary house on Manhattan Beach, California.

A large artwork inside the front door sets the tone for the house, whose top level appears to be floating on water.

# MODERN

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# MARVEL

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KAA creates a one-of-a-kind design on the Strand in Manhattan Beach, California.

By NANCY A. RUHLING  
Photographs by ROGER DAVIES/OTTO



The Bulthaup kitchen sets the material palette for the rest of the house, which has an open layout and a sculptural staircase. A spa brings serenity. A trio of portraits by Andy Warhol and a George Nakashima table are the focal points of the dining room.



## ON THE BOARDWALK

in Manhattan Beach, California, there's a new house that stands out amid its neighbors.

The three-story board-formed concrete and cedar modernist structure, a breathtaking fusion of art and architecture, appears to be floating placidly, like a boat, above the white-sand beach of The Strand, the most exclusive of the city's communities.

"The site is coveted—it's like having a front-row seat, and the architecture is singularly unique," says Grant Kirkpatrick, a founding partner of Los Angeles-based KAA Design, which designed it and some three dozen others on The Strand. "A two-foot-high band of windows between the upper and lower floors creates that floating illusion. At night, it glows like a lantern."

The owners, a couple with an experienced eye for design, commissioned Kirkpatrick and his team, which included project manager Meghan Beckmann and landscape architect Michael McGowen, to build a place that would serve as their primary residence and as a gathering spot for family and friends.

They asked Los Angeles-based interior designer Alana Homesley who had done other projects on The Strand, to create warm, welcoming spaces.



The floors of the house are in an open plan that allows the landscape to come inside.





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Top to bottom, Walls of windows in the primary suite make it one with the beach. The top level of the house appears to be floating on water.

The couple had been renting a house near the property for years, and when it came on the market, they snapped it up.

The lot is small—it's only 33 feet by 100 feet—but that didn't deter the couple from asking KAA to design a 7,400-square-foot house packed with amenities.

"Manhattan Beach is urban beach living," Kirkpatrick says. "There's only about six feet between each house—not a lot of elbow room."

The owners had a couple of considerations that also influenced the design: They wanted to showcase their extensive collection of large-scale contemporary art, and they wanted an open floor plan that would invite the outdoors in.

"The juxtaposition of these opposing objectives of wanting to see the views but needing to create enough space for the art created a great challenge," Kirkpatrick says.



To that end, KAA designed gardens that, as Kirkpatrick says, "permeate the space. In the sculpture courtyard, the garden is literally pulled into the house. It bleeds into the exterior and creates a warm glow at night."

The blending of indoor and outdoor spaces is cunningly achieved in the primary suite, where a large circular "sky opening" in the terrace ceiling off the bath acts as a welcoming portal to the natural world.

It went without saying (although the couple did request it) that the house be a unique work of art and architecture.

"There are quite a few styles of houses on The Strand," Kirkpatrick says. "They wanted theirs to be different."

Because the houses are packed so closely together, the KAA team envisioned the lots as shipping berths and the couple's home as a boat slipping into dock.

"Privacy also was a prime concern," Kirkpatrick says. "The upper level of the house has vertical cedar paneling and shutters that can be manipulated to control the sunlight and the views."

Like The Strand's other houses, this home's front door, made of bronze, is on the side. But the placement isn't strictly conventional: Following the principles of feng shui, it is set on an angle for a positive flow of energy.

Because the home is so in sync with its surroundings, it would be natural to wrap it in neutral tones that put the scenery center stage.

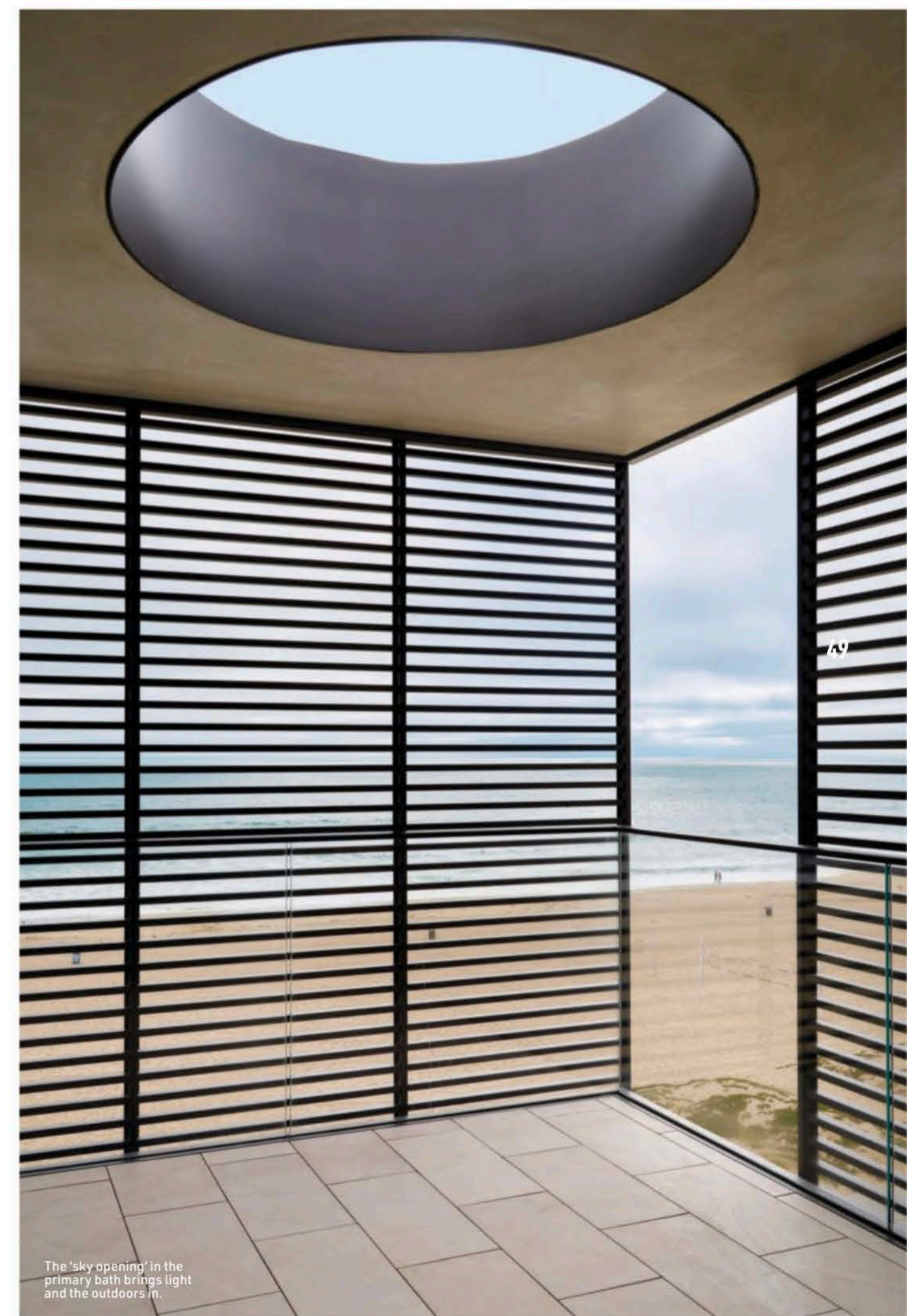
But the couple had other ideas.

"They prefer clean, primary and secondary colors," Homesley says, adding that the interior spaces subtly evoke a houseboat. "The biggest challenge was how to marry the environment with the bold colors of the artworks they collect."

The color scheme draws not only from the art but also from the Bulthaup kitchen the clients chose.

In each space, Homesley selected a "star," a focal point for her design. The dining room, whose main wall features a trio of Andy Warhol portraits, revolves around the couple's George Nakashima table.

"It's such a precious piece that I didn't want to overpower it, so I looked for delicate furniture to surround it," Homesley says, adding that it had to hold its own against the art wall.



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The 'sky opening' in the primary bath brings light and the outdoors in.



Top to bottom, The beach room has a billiards table with an orange felt top and its own sunset. The bar is one of the fun amenities in the beach room.

She paired it with classic-form walnut Danish chairs upholstered in cognac-color leather that's almost orange.

The space opens to and complements the living area, which is defined by a bold blue leather ottoman.

The home's sense of sophisticated fun is reflected in the entertaining beach room, a ground-level floor that announces itself with the text artwork SUN SET in illuminated marquee-size letters.

Homesley used that sculpture as the starting off point for her design, giving herself license to cover the top of the billiards table with felt the color of a construction cone.

In addition to the pool table, there's a flat-screen TV, a sectional sofa, a cozy bar with an

island and seating, and a pool/spa combo.

The primary suite is a calm, soothing counterpoint to the beach room. Clad in nice-on-the-toes, off-white wall-to-wall carpeting, the space has two sections—one for sleeping, one for sitting.

A ribbed wooden wall behind the bed separates them. A corner of floor-to-ceiling glass brings the beach in, providing unobstructed views.

It is here that the calming colors live—the carpet and bedding are wave white.

Interior design, Homesley notes, is a collaborative process. It's like putting together a puzzle that has more than one correct solution.

And, in the case of The Strand beach house, everything fits together beautifully. +

