

ASPIRE DESIGN AND HOME

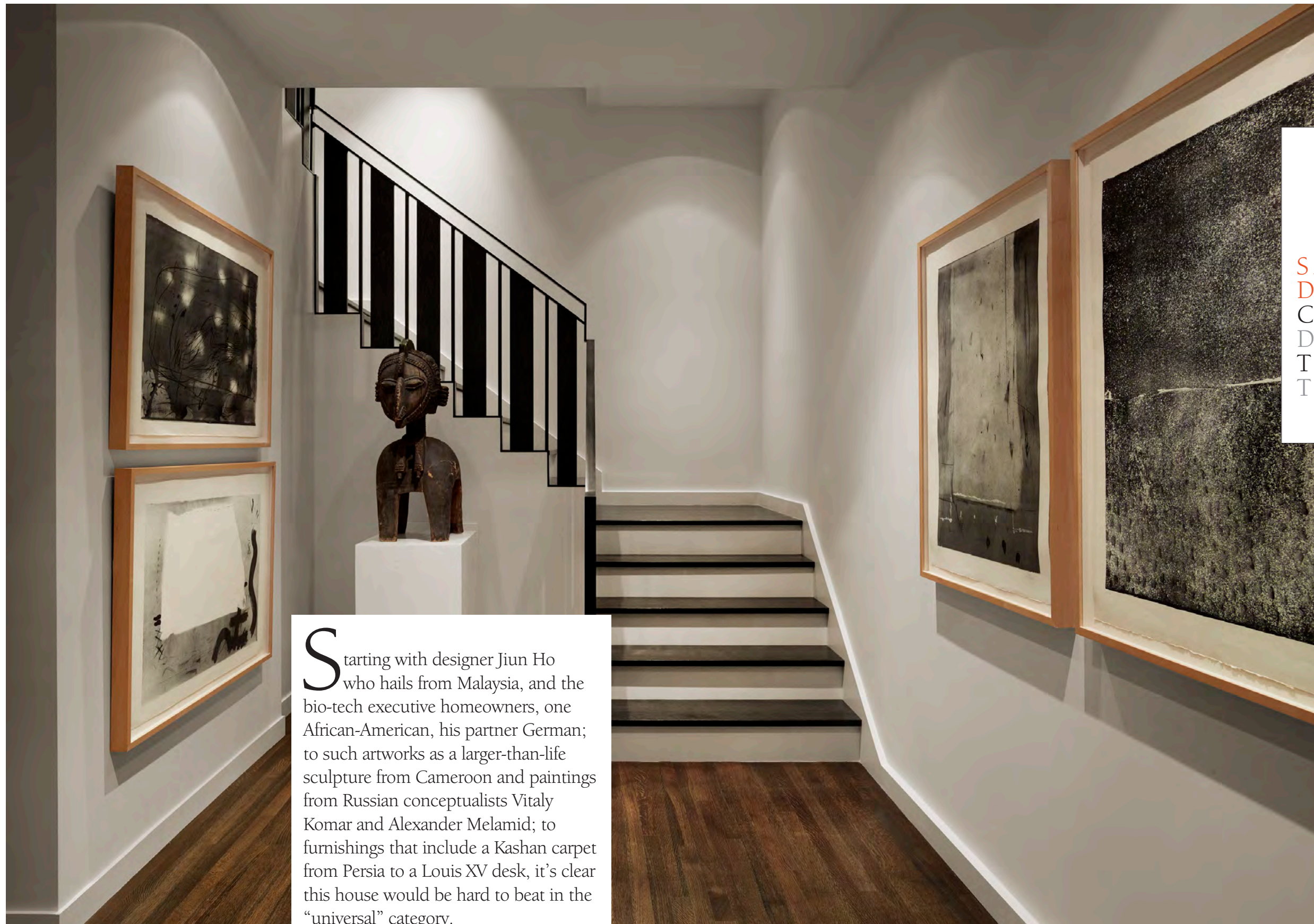
JUXTAPOSITION
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& INSIDE ON THE MARKET: HUDSON VALLEY | HAWAII | BROOKLYN | NAPA VALLEY



Starting with designer Jiun Ho who hails from Malaysia, and the bio-tech executive homeowners, one African-American, his partner German; to such artworks as a larger-than-life sculpture from Cameroon and paintings from Russian conceptualists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid; to furnishings that include a Kashan carpet from Persia to a Louis XV desk, it's clear this house would be hard to beat in the "universal" category.

universal candor

SAN FRANCISCO-BASED DESIGNER JIUN HO COLLABORATES WITH A DECISIVE COUPLE TO RECONFIGURE THEIR ECLECTIC HOME

TEXT MICHELE KEITH PHOTOGRAPHY MATTHEW MILLMAN



Above: Skillfully concealed lighting casts a glow on the hallway's art collection distinguished by an early-20th-century Baga Nimba shoulder mask from Guinea, West Africa. The stairs, with balustrade designed by Ho, are made of oak as is the flooring. **Opposite:** Viewed through an arch, the office area features a Louis XV desk. Acquired at auction, with gilt bronze embellishments, it's made of tulipwood, amaranth and rosewood. Creating a contemporary contrast are lithographs by Antoni Tàpies, acquired by the homeowners at auction.



In the light-filled living room where curves contrast with straight edges, an oil

and tar on canvas by Piero Manzoni, “*Genus*,” draws attention to the fireplace.



“IT WAS A TREMENDOUSLY REWARDING PROJECT,”

notes Ho. While another designer might not relish clients who voice their opinions on every detail, right down to the door hinges, and send near-monthly emails about a newly acquired artwork or piece of furniture to include in the décor, Ho adds, “I like clients who are involved. If they’re not, you can have a disconnect and end up with an unhappy situation. Plus, these men are so well educated in art and antiques, it was useful to have their insights.”

The homeowner’s directive – their second venture with Ho – was simple. They wanted their new home to be a place to live not only now, but later, in retirement. Equally important, they wanted their home to reflect themselves and their personalities, suit their lifestyle – which includes a great deal of entertaining for their charity work – and finally, enable them to easily add to and rearrange their art.

The designer reconfigured the entire layout of the 3,700-square-foot, 1930s-era house beginning with a near-total gut. Significantly, he redesigned the awkward exits and entrances from one room to the next; transformed an open-air atrium into a reception area with a glass-floored elevator landing with skylight above – a wise move, for as is often the case in San Francisco, there are three flights of stairs between the sidewalk and the front door, which can be hazardous for older people – and created a new back stairway that brings to mind Art-Deco geometrics. All

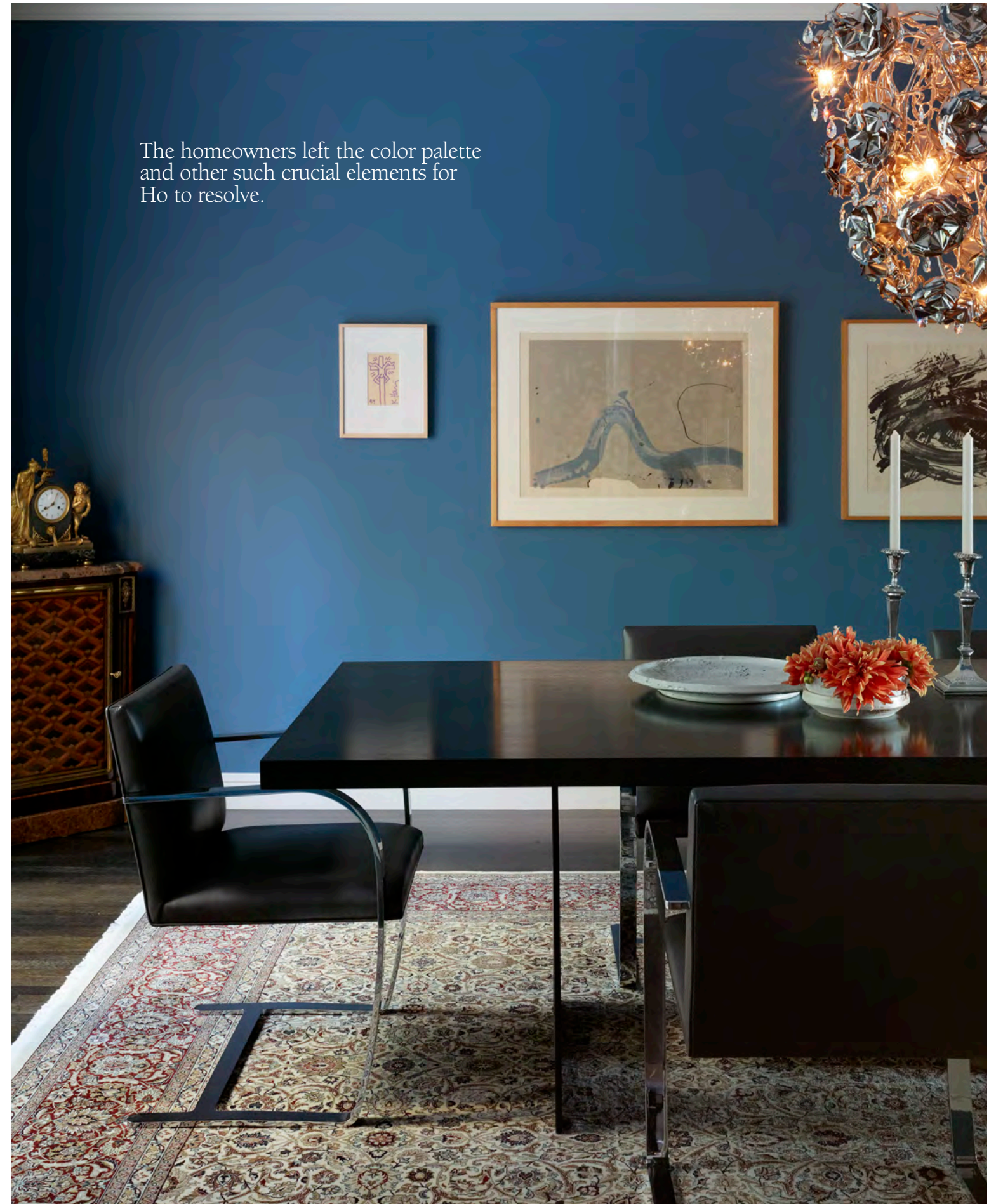
of this provided what Ho deems “a good architectural backdrop with perfectly proportioned rooms and lighting systems throughout that will make the most of any art they install.”

As for color, the designer notes that, “I based the palette on the views seen from the windows, which include the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, Alcatraz, Angel Island, and of course, San Francisco Bay. Each room is a different shade of grey-blue with the living room being the lightest, showcasing the merest hint of color, and the back of the house the darkest, painted a deep grey-blue.”

In addition to the thoughtfully-selected color scheme, Ho embraced a vast number of textures in a mix of materials to “add another dimension and create an interesting dynamic.” Sometimes this came from items already owned by the clients, for example the wood-topped coffee table and metal-framed Eames chair in a guest room, gifts from one of their mothers; at other times, as with the silk mohair- and leather-upholstered living-room sofa, items were designed specifically for the space.

Most remarkable is how well the most disparate items look together. One prime example is in the living room where two triangular, fluted and carved banquettes c. 1775 appear completely at home with multiple examples of lineal contemporary art. The same holds true in the dining room where Ho’s subdued table – combining a base of cold rolled steel and sandblasted wood with a top of rift-sawn oak – stands firm below a fantastical chandelier of steel roses and crystal dew drops by the Dutch lighting team, Annet van Egmond and William Brand.

Above Left: An enfilade of arches as viewed from the living room. Framing the entrance at the left is “*Study for Reader*,” an oil by Mark Tansey. On the right is Adolf Luther’s concave mirror object. Both acquired at auction. **Above Right:** The piano, played by both clients, takes pride of place in the living room. Providing a colorful backdrop on the rear wall are pieces by Adolf Fleischmann, Louise Nevelson, Aaron Young and Kenneth Noland. **Opposite:** Materials mix harmoniously together in the dining room: metal and crystal chandelier, oak and steel table, leather and metal chairs, wool rug.



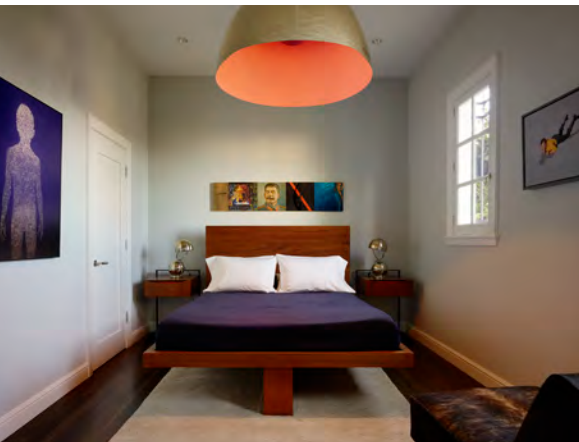
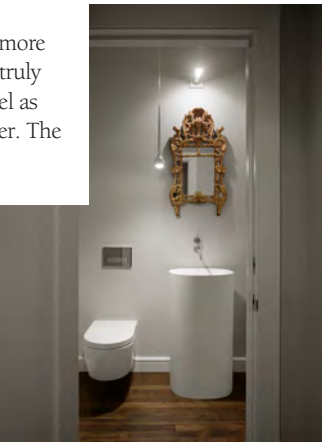
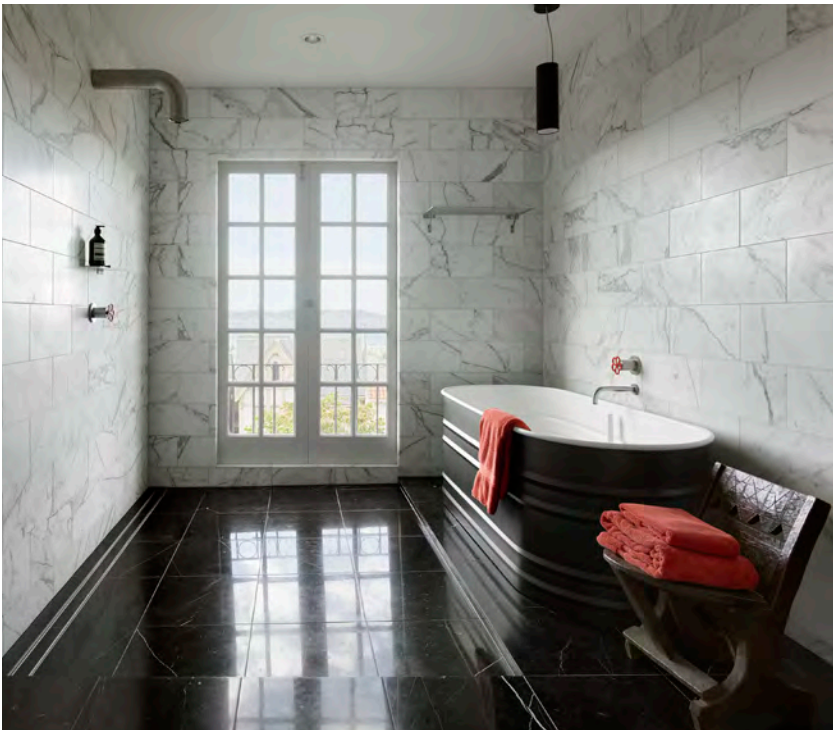
The homeowners left the color palette and other such crucial elements for Ho to resolve.



WHILE
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only one notable disagreement occurred involving the kitchen and baths. As happens frequently in Europe, the German-born client focused on the utilitarian aspect of these areas with little regard for aesthetics; his partner argued for a more traditional, American style; and Ho himself says, he would have liked a warmer, more integrated look with millwork and built-ins.

Now, a year after completing the project, Ho reflects, “There’s nothing more satisfying than designing a home that truly fits the client, one that makes them feel as though they’ve been living there forever. The house does just that for these men.”



Above: The enormous kitchen features cabinetry by Bulthaup b3, appliances by Gaggenau and light fixtures by Boffi. French doors open onto the garden in back. **Opposite Page: Top:** Clad in marble, the bathroom features a retro-inspired steel Vieques tub by Patricia Urquiola for Agape. Boffi, Dornbracht and Flos provided the fittings and lights for a pared-down master bath. **Middle Left:** The guest bathroom is a study in contrasts with a Louis XV mirror (c.1760) illuminated by Tobias Grau’s Falling pendant light. Toilet and sink are by Boffi. **Middle Right:** An oversize pendant light by Ingo Maurer adds a sculptural quality to the guestroom that features a wood bed and side tables designed by Ho. Setting the bed off is a Berber rug, a family heirloom. Artwork from left to right: Christopher Bucklow photograph, Komar and Melamid multiple materials on wood, Luke Butler painting. **Bottom Left:** The guest room is divided into sleeping and lounge areas. On the floating wall hangs “*Bosque, Noviembre*,” an oil by J. Mark Howie. **Bottom Right:** A striped floor covering sparks a sophisticated gathering of neutrals in the guestroom sitting area. On the far wall hangs a Jim Dine woodcut entitled “*Tree*.”