

A GOLDEN STATE

MAYBE IT'S THE CALIFORNIA SUNSHINE,
BUT PACIFIC PENINSULA GROUP HOMES
SEEM TO RADIATE FROM WITHIN

text by Brian Libby / photos by Barry Camoun







When Pacific Peninsula Group set out to build the Cypress House in Pebble Beach, CA, co-founder Steve Ackley jokes that there were three overriding concerns: “the view, the view, and the view.” The house, situated on a hillside near the 18th-hole fairway of the legendary Pebble Beach golf course, takes advantage of its hillside perch overlooking the Pacific Ocean with 16 different viewing opportunities. Whether it’s one of two master bedroom suites, a guesthouse or its rooftop decks, one enjoys an unobstructed view over the other houses’ rooftops of the crystal blue water.

“Cypress was a once-in-a-lifetime lot,” says Ackley, who formed the company more than 20 years ago with business partner Brad Smith. “As you walk through the entry, the house opens up to the back and presents breathtaking ocean views.”

The company, located in Menlo Park, California, has made its name largely with houses on small, urban and suburban infill sites. “We’re in a tightly controlled, very populated and constrained area,” Ackley adds. “But one thing we’ve been really consistent with, in whatever marketplace we’re targeting, is to be more progressive with our designs and use of materials, and several notches higher in quality. I think we’re always looked at as a leader in what’s coming, what’s next on the design horizon.”

01

The rear exterior of the home features a second floor terrace and two-story living room, bathing the area in evening sunlight.

02

The view as you enter the house, which presents itself as a contemporary and elegant home with quiet, natural finishes designed to showcase the spectacular setting.

03

The rear exterior of the house, featuring close-up views of the mahogany windows, limestone walls and terraces, and the linear fireplace in the foreground.

Cypress Residence

Like some champion golfers who have mastered the Pebble Beach links a few yards away, the Cypress House exhibits a kind of effortless elegance. Inside and out, the design balances traditional and contemporary stylistic influences. Its surfaces are richly appointed, from limestone and marble countertops to mahogany windows, along with rift-sawn white oak cabinetry and flooring, yet the materials work so quietly together, one is continuously led to the view and the home's numerous outdoor spaces. A simple array of creamy tones and natural materials help focus one's eye on the color of the golden light coming off the Pacific through the trees. The house is conducive to entertaining; its outdoor terraces can be accessed separately from the outside, and among the trees sprinkled throughout the property is a separate patio area and bocce ball court. Ideally situated for overlooking a quintessential Pebble Beach sunset.





04

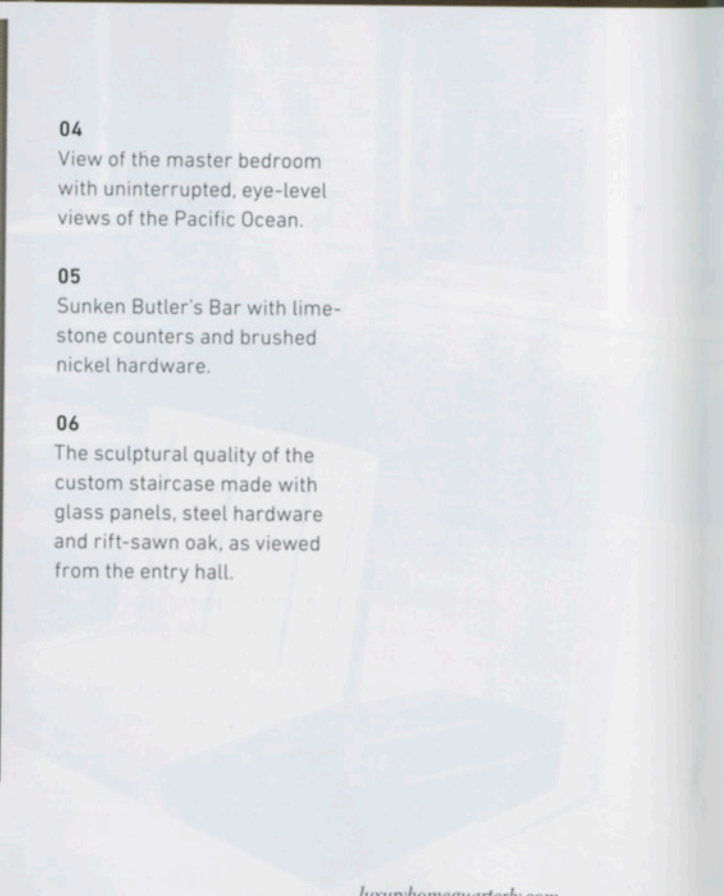
View of the master bedroom with uninterrupted, eye-level views of the Pacific Ocean.

05

Sunken Butler's Bar with limestone counters and brushed nickel hardware.

06

The sculptural quality of the custom staircase made with glass panels, steel hardware and rift-sawn oak, as viewed from the entry hall.



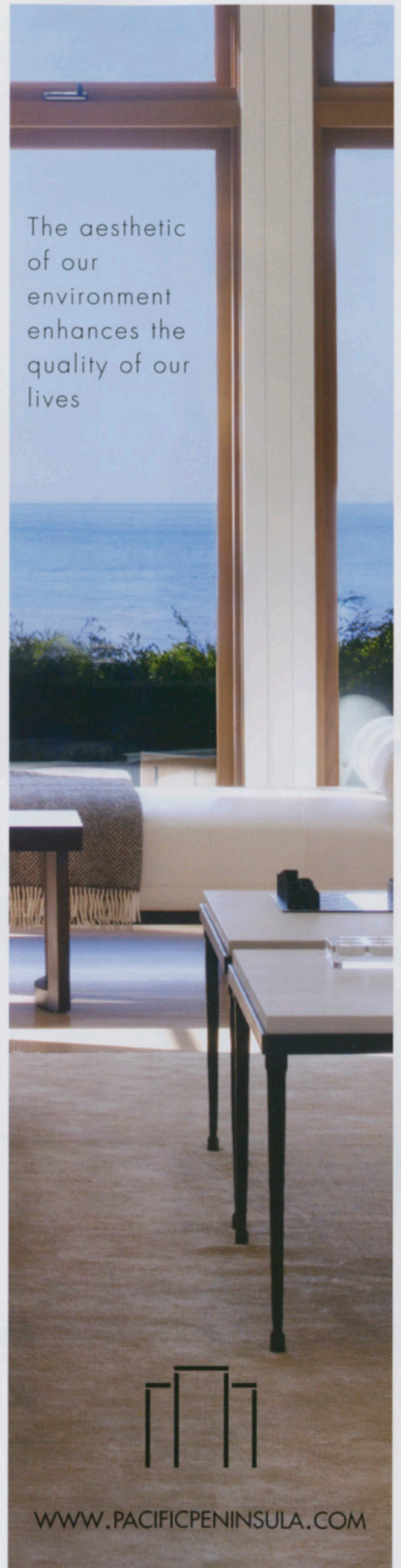


The company initially worked solely with outside architects such as Jude Kirik. But Kirik has become such a frequent collaborator that Pacific Peninsula Group brought him into the fold, creating an architecture firm that is now one of three separate companies.

In the ensuing years, Pacific Peninsula Group has developed a kind of signature in its balance of contemporary and classical forms and sensibilities. "We work with many clients on the custom side that still like traditional homes but also want the openness, light and views—all modern aspects of homes that you can't find in an existing 1930's Palo Alto home," Kirik says. "We've recognized this and expanded our interpretation so that the end result is a more contemporary design, incorporating the use of natural materials and colors."

Everything in the Cypress, or other Pacific Peninsula Group projects like the Walsh Residence or the Almendal Residence seems to be in delicate, subtle balance. Often the solid masonry of a ground floor façade gives way to a lighter material on the second floor, as if one level is rising from the other like a Russian doll. Inside, the interior unfolds intuitively from one room to another. "I call it just good Midwestern common sense," says Kirik, who grew up in Ohio. "The house has to work. It has to flow right. There are spatial relationships that have to be maintained. How do you get that light, that view, that openness, into the plan?" In the Cypress House, for example, a double-height living room gives way to the dining room and then

The aesthetic
of our
environment
enhances the
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lives





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*Jude Kirik, Architect, Principal-in-Charge,
Pacific Peninsula Group*





08

07
Afternoon sunlight streams onto the chiseled limestone fireplace wall in the dining room.

08
The subdued palette of the dining room reflects the natural views of the exterior.

the kitchen in a succession that allows the spaces to feel part of one continuous open space, yet still separate enough to each feel distinct. Creamy tones were used throughout the inside and out of the home, from off-white walls and rift-sawn white-oak floors to matching sofas, punctuated occasionally with dramatic pieces like a ring-shaped chandelier over the living room or the chocolate marble countertops in one of two master baths. "Our main goal was to keep the interiors subtle – let the outside speak and be your wow factor," Ackley says. "Everything inside was purposefully done in a quiet and monochromatic fashion, using natural materials and colors."

Indeed, whether it's the majestic coastline near the Cypress House or sites amid the Bay Area urbanity, the climate and living style in Pacific Peninsula's region make outdoor spaces a natural luxury. The Pebble Beach house includes a guesthouse as well as terraces on the second floor, a main terrace off the living room and a dining patio amongst a grove of mature Cypress trees and Monterey pines. "Flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces is a huge selling point here in California," Ackley says. "It's a design element we try to achieve in each of our homes." ■

A MESSAGE FROM LAURIE GHIEMMETTI INTERIORS

Laurie Ghilmetti Interiors congratulates Pacific Peninsula Group for their extraordinary attention to detail and exceptional craftsmanship. Our participation in their homes is a subject of great pride knowing that our company provides the same level of creativity, service and expertise.



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AT HOME WITH

Laurie Ghielmetti

DESIGNER LAURIE GHIELMETTI OF LAURIE GHIELMETTI INTERIORS SPECIALIZES IN CREATING ENVIRONMENTS THAT REFLECT THE OUTLOOK AND LIFESTYLES OF ITS CLIENTS.



01 The traditional master bedroom features an abundance of artful touches. The headboard is upholstered in Clarence House fabric from Belmar Company, in San Francisco CA (belmarcompany.com). The bed itself showcases a cashmere coverlet from Pratesi (pratesi.com), bedskirt by Christopher Hyland (christopherhyland.com) and Italian pillows, Chinese silk fabric bolster pillow and antique throw all from The Lotus Collection (ktaylor-lotus.com) The gold mohair chair from Gregorius/Pineo (gregoriuspineo.com) and iron bench from Blank and Cable skillfully complement the Bessarabian rug.

LHQ: Where did you study architecture, and what major influences have shaped your business?

LG: I was a Humanities Field Major at Berkeley and studied Art and English. I worked with my aunt, an Interior Designer, and then started my own business 23 years ago. My early travels abroad with my parents and journeys with my own family into Asia and other areas of the world have influenced me. I felt the confluence of the mixture of cultures here in California and wanted to use that wonderful eclecticism to help inform my own work. [It was] a mixture of balance and surprise.

LHQ: What types of services does your company offer?

LG: We are a full service interior design firm. That includes: architectural consultation for new or remodeled homes, furnishings and accessories for the home and art advice for building or adding to personal collections of contemporary art.

LHQ: How do you connect with your clients, to understand their needs and desires?

LG: We have several conversations about their lifestyle, the adjectives that they would like to use when they enter their own home and how they would like others to feel in that home as honored guests. Clients often show us photos of homes they have admired in magazines and if not, we ask them to go onto our web site and let us know which rooms appeal to them and why. Most of the time, people wear colors that they feel enhance them and explain their personality and that is often carried through in the colors that speak positively to them in their home; whether it be in furnishings, art or paint that car-

ries through even in the choice of style for their pieces. And then we continue that communication throughout the relationship. We are a small firm, which allows us to create intense personal relationships with our clients often over a period of years as we grow together to fit their needs.

LHQ: What's in the future for Laurie Ghielmetti Interiors?

LG: I feel so passionately about the joyous pursuit of interior design that at this point I cannot imagine waking in the morning and not wanting the challenge of this work. I continue to enjoy the variety of clients who invite us into their private lives and ask us to turn their thoughts and ideas into a wonderful reality, where a marriage of both style and comfort can be attained. A home is supposed to enhance our lives and the interior of that home needs to feel there is a conversation between the various elements that is balanced. A result that provides both stimulation and serenity.