

Marin at home

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LIVING WELL IN MARIN COUNTY

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ROOMS WITH

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A VIEW



At the top of a steep, narrow road on Corinthian Island, the world suddenly opens into a picture-postcard vision of terraced hills, gentle sea, and Crayola-blue sky, a veritable billboard for why people love living in Marin. Here, a contemporary five-level house sits tucked neatly into the cliff, with decks on most levels and views of Belvedere Cove. This is the home of Nellie and Zarko Draganic and their son, Sam.

"Zarko originally planned the house as a weekend getaway for sailing," says Nellie, who works in San Francisco. At the time, Zarko worked in Silicon Valley. "But we both love Marin, and we love being on the water, so this became the natural choice for our main house."





A wall of windows invites an abundance of light into the living room, where style and durability were the design priorities. Colors are inspired by the Iranian rug, and most fabrics are easy-care chenille. On cool evenings, the family curls up by the fire and takes in the view. The Holly Hunt limestone table stands ready to hold cocktails or an interrupted book.

great spaces





"I saw a lot of dining tables that I liked, but none worked," Nellie says. "Once Eugenia knew the curvature and color I wanted, she designed one to fit." Surrounding the table are Holly Hunt cane-back chairs upholstered in a sage bouclé from Kneedler-Fauchère. "We can comfortably seat eight, even ten," Nellie says. "For Thanksgiving, we pulled another table alongside and seated 17."

When they were ready to build, they called on San Francisco architect Dan Phipps and interior designer Eugenia Erskine Jesberg of Mill Valley.

Guests enter via a small foyer, walking down a flight of stairs to the high-ceilinged great room, a long, flowing space that includes the living room, dining room, and kitchen, plus a balcony overlooking the harbor. "The idea was to maximize the space indoors and out," Zarko says, "and to get lots of access to the water." On the floors below are the family bedrooms, a guest bedroom, and Zarko's nautical retreat and bar. The lowest level is the garage, where there's an elevator for transporting supplies.

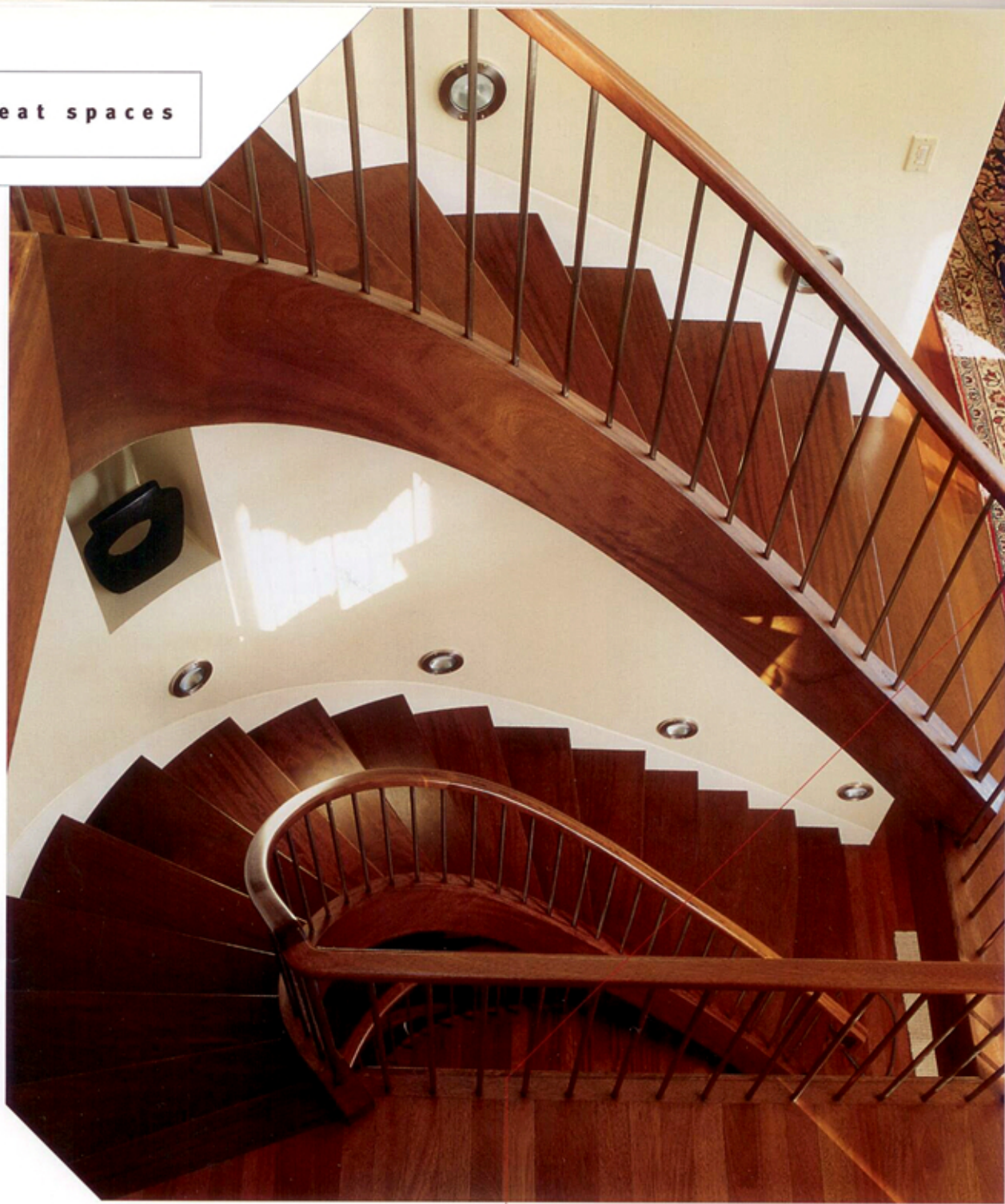
"The house is so well designed," Nellie says. "The great room is where we spend most of our time together. We wanted it stylish yet casual enough for entertaining family and friends. We also wanted a nautical feel, but not too extreme, so we used teak on the floors and stairs in keeping with the waterfront spirit." To that end, Phipps designed porthole-style light fixtures and lots of bow-shaped decks, where the family enjoys the balmy Marin weather.

"I'm on the living room balcony all the time, watching the boats or reading a book," says Nellie, who also enjoys spending private time on the bedroom deck. The lower-level deck is ideal for family activities: Sam plays soccer while Zarko works on their boats. "This is our yard," Zarko says. "Instead of grass, we have water."

Decorating proved to be an easy collaboration since Nellie and Zarko have similar tastes. Though they love the contemporary design, they wanted furnishings to be warm and inviting and able to withstand wear and tear. "If the architecture dominated, it would be a masculine setting," Nellie says. "We wanted the interior to soften the stark edges. That's why we brought down the light fixtures rather than having only recessed lighting—it creates a more intimate feel."

They pulled colors from the antique Iranian living room rug, using a rich cranberry mohair on the armchair and dressing the sofa in a tan Brunswick & Fils embellished with Clarence House pillows. The chaise is Nancy Corzine covered in a Clarence House gold stripe. Rounding out the room are a Holly Hunt limestone coffee table and a tribal end table salvaged from a former house.

Since Nellie loves to cook, the kitchen was another key space. To keep the room light and airy, they installed maple cabinets and con-



crete counters. "Concrete is an interesting material," designer Jesberg says. "It's pretty and durable and cast to shape so there are no seams." The island is also concrete, with two sinks and tiers so Nellie can prepare meals and, at the same time, talk to family and friends who are seated on stools opposite her. "It's interesting to see if things turn out as you planned," Nellie notes. "I pictured having breakfast with Sam at the island counter every morning, and that's become our tradition."

One ingenious addition is the 11-foot European accordion glass door that folds back so the indoors and outdoors become one. Both Draganiacs love to entertain, and when the door is open, the deck easily accommodates any overflow crowd. "The house is wonderful for parties," Zarko says. "It's cozy enough for a small group but

A spiral staircase crafted by San Jose Stair Company connects the various levels of this maritime masterpiece. Architect Dan Phipps designed the porthole-style light fixtures to complement the house's nautical feel.

The Draganics enjoy relaxing and informal entertaining on their deck, which is also the setting for their annual Opening Day on the Bay bash. Outdoor furniture by Henry Hall Designs.

spacious enough for large gatherings. Friends often motor here from the St. Francis Yacht Club and dock at the house."

Another favorite retreat is the media room, which they designed with several levels so everyone has a good view. "We both love movies and have friends over for 'movie nights' all the time," Nellie says. "We also have an annual Oscar party, which is great fun." They eschewed theater-style seating for a custom-made double leather Rolf Benz chaise and a Pucci sofa. Walls are soundproof and upholstered in linen for depth.

As with most busy couples, the master bedroom had to be a sanctuary for relaxing and enjoying the surroundings. "Lying in



bed and seeing the water every morning is a gift," says Nellie. She kept furnishings minimal: an antique Italian chair, custom nightstands, and a comfy bed with upholstered headboard and matching bed skirt. In lieu of, say, an Oriental rug, she used sisal to enhance the carefree beach feel.

While guests say it's hard to believe that just a short time ago this waterfront house was only a dream on paper, for the Draganics, it's already become a place for making memories and sharing good times. *MHH*

RESOURCES

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A huge window offers an awe-inspiring view of the water in the master bath, where tub surrounds are Millennium Gold limestone and fixtures are Dornbracht's Tara Classic in polished chrome. Heated floors and towel racks are put to good use chasing away the morning chill.