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SPRING 2018



# RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR DESIGN

NICOLE HOLLIS



A massive bronze sculpture by Michele Oka Doner separates the entry from the dining room. Jean Michel Frank dining chairs surround a table Nicole Hollis designed and had finished in white automotive paint. The light fixture is by Lindsey Adelman.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURE JOLIET

For some projects, every element seems to come together to create something remarkable. For this home, it was a trifecta of a scenic site, an amazing art collection and the right team.

As with most great projects, it starts with the site. In this case, it's a waterside location in Tiburon, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. From the windows and front yard, you can see the San Francisco Bay and the gorgeous landscape of Marin County.

A couple of art collectors lived in the original home with their son. Their collection centers around powerful pieces by Asian artists, and although it is common to see people buy art to fill a new or newly remodeled home, these clients came to the project with their collection already assembled.

When they decided to tear down the existing home (it used to stand roughly where you see the swimming pool) and build something more befitting the site, they tapped Brooks Walker of Walker Warner Architects and interior designer Nicole Hollis to create a 12,000-square-foot dwelling. The interior design of the new home has garnered Hollis her third CHD Design Award.

Seeing how the art integrates so beautifully with the finished space, you would assume that it served as the main inspiration for the project—but that's not the case. "When we started, the art wasn't on the scene. Instead, I looked to my clients for inspiration," Hollis says. "Although they didn't yet have an interior design vocabulary, they had great personal style and knew a lot about fashion."

With that in mind, she started to create settings and select pieces of furniture that are more elegant and subtle than attention grabbing. After all, with a stunning art collection and to-die-for scenes visible from every window, finishes and furnishings were never going to be the star of the show. "It was important that this be a formal and polished home," she says. "With the amazing views and art, a 'look at me, look at me' interior just wasn't appropriate. It was all about quietness and restraint."

That quality is visible in the selection of the materials that compose the rooms. In the most basic terms, the elements in the large home are simple: wood (white oak), stone (basalt) and metal (blackened steel and bronze). "Our firm likes to keep the material palette limited. We believe that a consistent motif throughout a home is very calming," says Hollis.

While the art may be the primary interior interest instigator, Hollis added more notes of quiet excitement with accessories. To explain the strategy, she cites the example of her client. "When I asked him how many gray suits he owns, the answer was 'many,'" she explains. "That's the thinking behind our dark gray sofas. We chose beautiful, grounding pieces and then layered in accessories to create 'wow' moments—the same way you might dress up a classic gray suit."

One of the bigger wow moments greets anyone who walks through the front door in the form of a two-ton





**THIS PAGE:** A custom light fixture by Lindsey Adelman hangs over the stairway. **OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:** The old house used to stand where the swimming pool is now. The new house makes the most of this rare site. **BELOW:** Looking out, from the living room, over a sofa by Jean Michel Frank, you can see the material mix of wood, stone and metal. A Zorzi lamp in the corner makes a sculptural statement.



bronze screen that stretches from the floor to the ceiling. It's the work of Michele Oka Doner, an artist Hollis had worked with previously to craft custom chandeliers. The designer compares the amorphous shape of the piece to something from nature—such as coral or an aquatic plant. But this is an element that is as purposeful as it is pretty. “You walk right to it from the entry stair,” Hollis notes. “We wanted to separate and define the formal dining room, but we didn’t want to block the light or the views. This perforated screen was the answer.”

The large table in the dining room is just one of many congregation spaces, because this is a home that’s usually filled with family. “She has a large extended family, and he also has a large extended family—and there are always visitors. The clients wanted places where they could all gather,” Hollis says.

In addition to having a formal living room, a couple of family rooms and a rec room equipped with a pool table, this home comes with a 12-foot kitchen island and







a 12-foot kitchen table. The table is so generous, it accommodates two bench seats on one side and four chairs on the other. This is a case where size really does matter. “It is a truly a multigenerational home, and we wanted to give them places where they could entertain and all sit together comfortably,” Hollis explains.

And that means gathering spaces for the younger members too. The son’s room is furnished with a one-of-a-kind bed system that takes the concept of bunk beds to the next level. In order to free up floor space, the designers hung a pair of beds (full-size for the son, twin-size for sleepover guests) from the ceiling. Accessed by either a ladder or a climbing wall, they are designed to delight.

That’s not the only captivating feature mounted from the ceiling. Throughout, light fixtures make a statement. “Most of the fixtures are artisan pieces. These are clients that get a lot of enjoyment from working collaboratively with artists,” says Hollis. “Just like the other pieces of art and furniture in this home, every light was carefully considered and is meaningful.”

Which brings us back to the concept of everything working together for a harmonious whole. For Hollis, it’s a “rule of three” concept, where everything comes together in a pleasing way. “The house is a comfortable family home,” she says. “It’s refined, but it’s also relaxed and approachable.” — *Mary Jo Bowling*

**THIS PAGE:** A Barcelona tub by Concreteworks sits by a corner window to soak in the views. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Like nearly every room, the living room has a stunning water view. It can be enjoyed from the large wingback chairs by Jean de Merry or from black sofas by Jean Michel Frank. A geometric pendant by Hervé Van der Straeten hangs between the chairs. The leather and teak bench is by William Emmerson; the cowhide benches are by Michael Boyd. The coffee table is a custom piece. **BELOW:** The Holly Hunt canopy bed is pointed toward the view, a KGBL bench is at the foot of it. A pair of Christian Liaigre chairs are placed near the window and view.

