

# PERCH PERFECT

ANCHORED TO ITS ROCKY SITE, A SAN FRANCISCO HOME IS RE-ENVISIONED WITH A LIGHT-CATCHING INTERIOR THAT FRAMES SWEEPING CITY VISTAS.

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ARCHITECTURE / OLLE LUNDBERG, LUNDBERG DESIGN  
INTERIOR DESIGN / JENNIFER JONES, NICHE INTERIORS  
HOME BUILDER / GLEN SHERMAN, VAN ACKER CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATES  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / ANDREA COCHRAN, ANDREA COCHRAN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE





Building in extreme environments calls for an extreme design, and that’s just what Olle Lundberg delivered for his clients’ jaw-dropping cliffside property in San Francisco. The owners, a couple with an affinity for collecting art, purchased the site and challenged Lundberg—who studied sculpture before becoming an architect—to reimagine the dated residence that occupied it as a livable piece of art. Lundberg responded by transforming the existing structure into a home, marked by ipe, glass, concrete and steel, which manages to feel both anchored and weightless. “It’s an incredibly dramatic site,” Lundberg says. “The structure is embedded in the rock, but there are elements that allow you to hover above everything.”

Working with project architect Caroline Nassif, Lundberg began the transformation by lowering the house 6 feet. “The garage level was originally 4 feet below the first floor,” Lundberg explains. “So, we lowered it an additional 6 feet to extend the first floor over the garage and create a more functional basement level.” In addition to handling the structure’s remodel, builder Glen Sherman—who acted

as project manager alongside site superintendent Ace Robey and assistant project manager Mindy Jennings—oversaw the excavation and securing the house to the cliffside. “Digging down and anchoring that foundation into the rock was a feat,” he says. “The work was delicate due to the sensitive geology. It was a difficult site in terms of building, but it had the biggest payoff, because this house has the most unbelievable views.”

The architects continued the makeover by rewrapping the house with horizontal ipe siding. “Originally, the cladding was horizontal wood siding,” says Nassif. “But it had been renovated over the years and had wood shingles before we remodeled it.” Lundberg wanted to keep the exterior in character with the neighborhood, but on the inside, he wanted to entirely recreate the architectural experience. Working closely with the project’s structural engineer, GFDS Engineers, he removed the switchback staircase and replaced it with two single-run sets of stairs marked by glass railings and floating steel-and-wood treads. “The materials helped create a stair that was well-anchored, but most importantly, we wanted to be

For the approach of a residence recreated by architect Olle Lundberg, landscape architect Andrea Cochran designed Cor-Ten steel balconies—executed by the project’s builder, Van Acker Construction Associates, in conjunction with Copper Iron Designs—that project from the façade and cantilever over the dramatic site’s cliffside.



Lundberg clad the residence with horizontal ipe siding that provides texture and an organic feel. The wood frames the entry door, located on the second level, and also acts as a counterpoint to the slate paving and steel planter boxes.





**Left:** The dining area looks to a floating staircase and a window wall that floods the area with natural light. Designer Jennifer Jones anchored the space with a custom walnut-topped table with Lucite legs crafted by Design Woodworking and vintage Pagholz chairs. The pendants are by Labo Crème Brûlée.

**Below:** Lundberg designed a sculptural steel fire surround for the living room, where Jones joined a walnut coffee table by Vioski with a Liaigre sofa from De Sousa Hughes and Bonacina 1889 armchairs. The sculptural stools by Chris Lehrecke are from Ralph Pucci International, and the rug is by Stark.



able to see through the stairs in both directions,” says Lundberg. “It looks and feels almost skeletal.”

The architect then replaced the adjacent wall with a massive steel grid of windows, which looks into a nearly four-story light well lined with large granite rocks. More glass was employed on the third level with a bridge that connects the master bedroom to an additional bedroom on the opposite side of the floor. The bridge, in turn, acts as a partial ceiling for the dining area on the second level below. Together, the glass wall, the floating staircase—with its glass railing—and the bridge all work together as part of one composition to pull light into the center of the house. “The light well runs from the basement level almost to

the top floor and brings in natural light from different directions,” says Lundberg, who rounded out the second level with the entry, living room and kitchen. A family room, small kitchenette and bedroom fill the first floor, and the basement is below that.

When it came to furnishing the new spaces, designer Jennifer Jones took an equally artful approach. “The interior design is restrained because the views take center stage,” says Jones, who worked with senior designer Lynn Trinh. “We incorporated new pieces with low-profile vintage and bespoke furniture with light, graceful silhouettes.” In the dining area, Jones designed a custom dining table to have a walnut top and rectangular Lucite legs. “The table appears to be floating,” says Jones, noting the shape





Inspired by the colors of the San Francisco landscape, Jones upholstered a B&B Italia sectional with blue wool by Knoll and vintage Milo Baughman chairs with a green cotton-velvet in the family room. The custom rug is by Stark, and the coffee table is by Bolier.





**Above:** A bench built into the living room's bay window offers a tree house-like effect. Jones upholstered the seats with a Lee Jofa velvet and chose an Eero Saarinen table to center the space.

**Right:** Lundberg designed the kitchen with a steel-wrapped island—fabricated jointly by Design Woodworking and Product and Design—topped with a countertop made of honed Pietra Cardosa from Fox Marble.





Lundberg collaborated with GFDS Engineers on creating the staircase, which culminates on the top level. A steel-supported glass bridge hovers above the dining area below. Design Woodworking sourced the oak beams for the flooring and then cut the end-grain tiles, which were installed and finished by First, Last & Always.



**Above:** Jones placed a large dining table crafted from natural hemlock by Porro from Dzine on one side of the family room and paired it with a John Pomp bench made of blackened steel and distressed leather.

**Left:** The light-filled eat-in kitchen showcases a natural-oak table by Jean Prouvé, chairs by Charles and Ray Eames from Design Within Reach and John Pomp pendants from De Sousa Hughes.





In the guest bedroom, Jayson Home's Lucite trunk acts as a nightstand beside an understated walnut Catalina bed by Copeland Furniture from YLiving. The neutral-toned rug is by Stark.

of the legs is echoed in the forms of the glass pendants suspended overhead. “The clients found the pendants on a trip to Europe. They were very collaborative and love to discover unique things. They didn’t want anything in the house that they’d seen before.” In keeping with that idea, Jones designed built-in bench seating for a nook in the living room. And for the study, she created a sideboard with matchbook walnut on the front and steel with a waterfall effect on the sides.

“Our clients were as passionate about eco-friendliness as they were about aesthetics,” Jones says. “All of the custom furniture was locally fabricated, and the upholstered pieces have natural latex-foam inserts wrapped in organic wool.” Most of the vintage selections the designers placed are ones they refurbished. “We re-covered the seats of the dining chairs and powder-coated the steel legs,” Jones says. “We also reupholstered chairs for the family room using green cotton-velvet.” The oak floors are reclaimed, as well, with a distinctive end-grain pattern Lundberg selected. “The subcontractor had a photograph of the beams next to the barn they came from,” says Nassif. “The clients just treasured it.”

Bringing the sculptural feel of the house outside, landscape architect Andrea Cochran devised dynamic designs for the front and rear yards. “Since the site is on the edge of a cliff, we had the opportunity to do something dramatic,” says Cochran, who designed Cor-Ten steel balconies for the front façade that cantilever over the cliffside. “They provide a thrill and engage you with the landscape.” In the back, Cochran created a meditative garden with a deck, a modernist fire pit and oversize stones that function as seating.

The landscape, architecture and interiors all come together in a way that honors and enhances the experience of the dramatic property. Indeed, the transparent nature of the structure reveals a connection to its surroundings that’s almost visceral. “When you’re in that light well, you’re looking at the granite wall,” Lundberg says. “You experience a sense of solidity and feel strongly tied to the rock. But elsewhere, the glass, the views and that height—they make you feel like you’re soaring.”





**Opposite:** Walls made of Cor-Ten steel (top), which Cochran chose because of the material's natural patina and earthy color, define exterior passageways. Large smooth stones sculpted by Concreteworks (bottom) offer places to sit in the rear garden.

**Below:** Cochran designed the house's rear yard as a meditative space with a raised deck constructed of Resysta and a minimalist concrete fire pit fabricated by Concreteworks. The calming area is planted with dogwoods and Japanese maples.

