

COOL, CALM, AND COLLECTED

Sometimes it feels as though there's a gravitational force at play in the world of design that draws architect, interior designer, and client inexorably toward one another. That was the case with this project, a remarkable home in Atherton, California, designed by Andrew Skurman Architects for clients with an extraordinary art collection. All of our design decisions, from furniture and fabric selections to lighting and color schemes, were made to enhance appreciation of the art from every vantage point and to complement the architecture.

An ultra-modern take on the Spanish Colonial style, the house features red-tiled roofs, a white stucco front façade, and a sequence of steel-framed glass doors that line the back façade and open up to a park-like garden. Inside, the rooms are expansive and rectilinear. Many of the furnishings we chose share the architecture's clean, straight lines, counterbalanced by round and sinuously curving pieces, including side tables and benches. In deference to the art that hangs on nearly every wall, we kept the profile of the furnishings low and arranged them in groupings that facilitate both conversation and optimal viewing of the art.

Just as important as the placement of the paintings and sculptures in every room was the choice of lighting, which had to resonate with the art but not compete with it. In the entrance hall, a Fragile Future chandelier by Studio Drift, painstakingly made by gluing dandelion seeds to LED lights within a copper framework,

hangs above a stone slab that rests on a cast-bronze base. It gives guests a hint of the special experience in store for them in this home.

In the dining room, the chandelier of clear glass globes subtly echoes a large black-and-white photograph of rippling water over the leather-and-stone credenza, as well as the custom-designed dining table with inset droplets of bronze. Walking from the dining room down the long, glass door-lined hall, you arrive at one of the most breathtaking architectural elements of the home: an elegant, three-story spiral staircase. It was important to us to find the perfect way of both illuminating and subtly echoing its beautiful curvature. Ultimately, we chose a dramatic curved-bronze fixture with acrylic panels that is as much a unique sculpture as it is a light source.

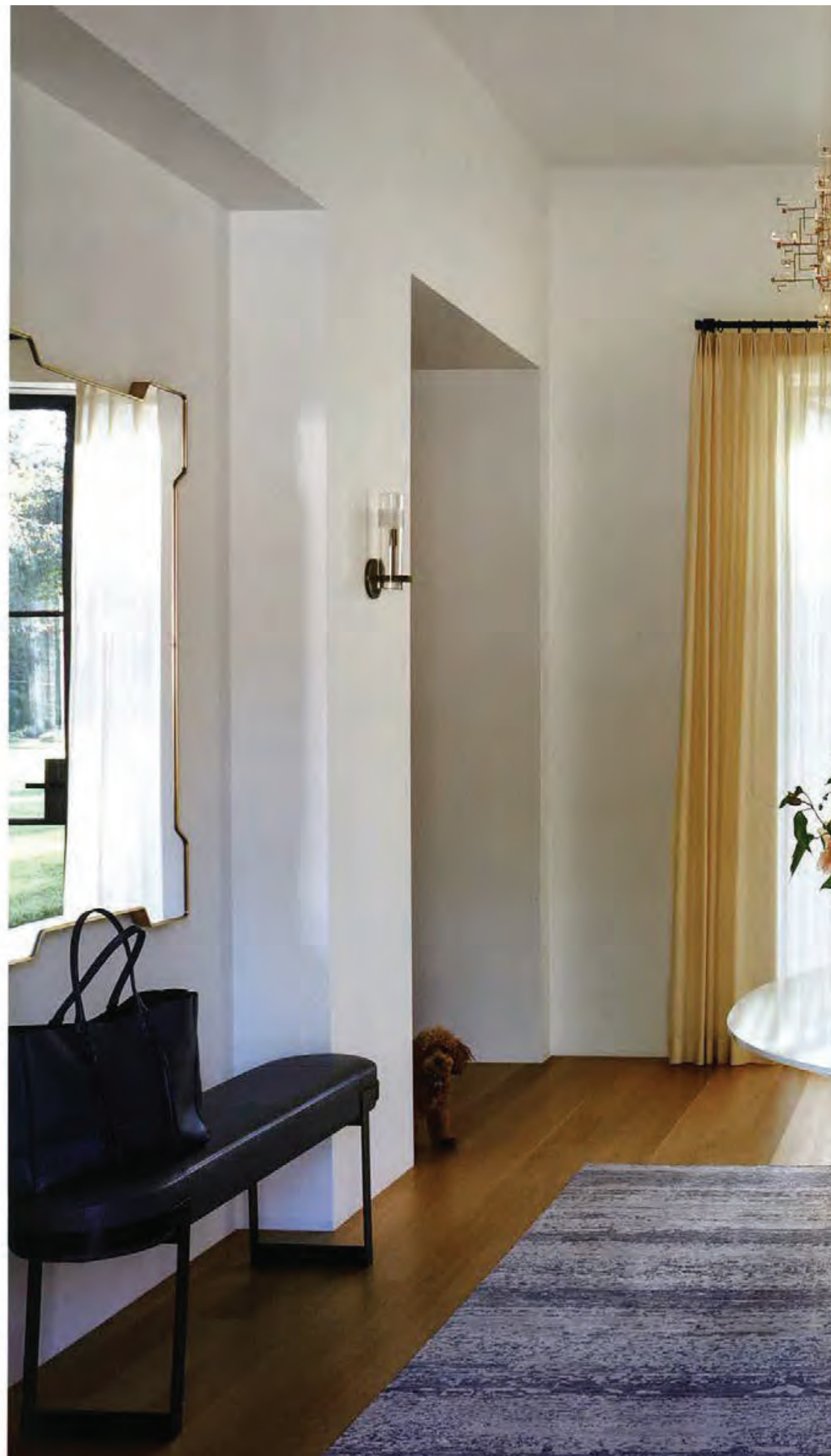
When you ascend the spiral stair to the second floor, another glass door-lined hall leads to the master suite, where a stunning circular bronze chandelier with faceted quartz crystals hovers like a halo over the bed and fills the room with light and energy. We furnished the suite with warm wood pieces and luxurious materials, including cashmere, wool, and mohair, to create an inviting and restful sanctuary.

From the first moment we laid eyes on this house, we resolved to create the lightest of design footprints. We felt that this approach would be the ideal way to showcase the beauty of both its art and architecture. Through elegant and comfortable interiors that feature furnishings and accessories meticulously crafted by artisans from around the world and focus the attention on the art in every room, we strove to enhance the clients' enjoyment of their art and home.



The rather austere front façade of this modern interpretation of a Spanish Colonial house, designed by Andrew Skurman Architects, belies its expansive, open interior and back façade.

RIGHT: The airiness that permeates the entire home starts here, in the entrance hall. It is encapsulated in the Fragile Future chandelier by Dutch designers Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta of Studio Drift, represented by Carpenters Workshop Gallery. It is constructed of a copper framework supporting LED lights surrounded by dandelion seed heads. OVERLEAF LEFT: We hung silk linen sheers along the entire length of the glass-and-steel-door-lined hallway to soften the incoming light. OVERLEAF RIGHT: We chose a softly curving leather settee with no back to allow an unobstructed view of this Aboriginal artwork. PAGES 230-31: We furnished the living room with refined pieces from Jun Ho, Caste, and Christian Liaigre. The low-backed profile of the seating and the palette of earth tones both complements the art and provides comfortable vantage points to view it.







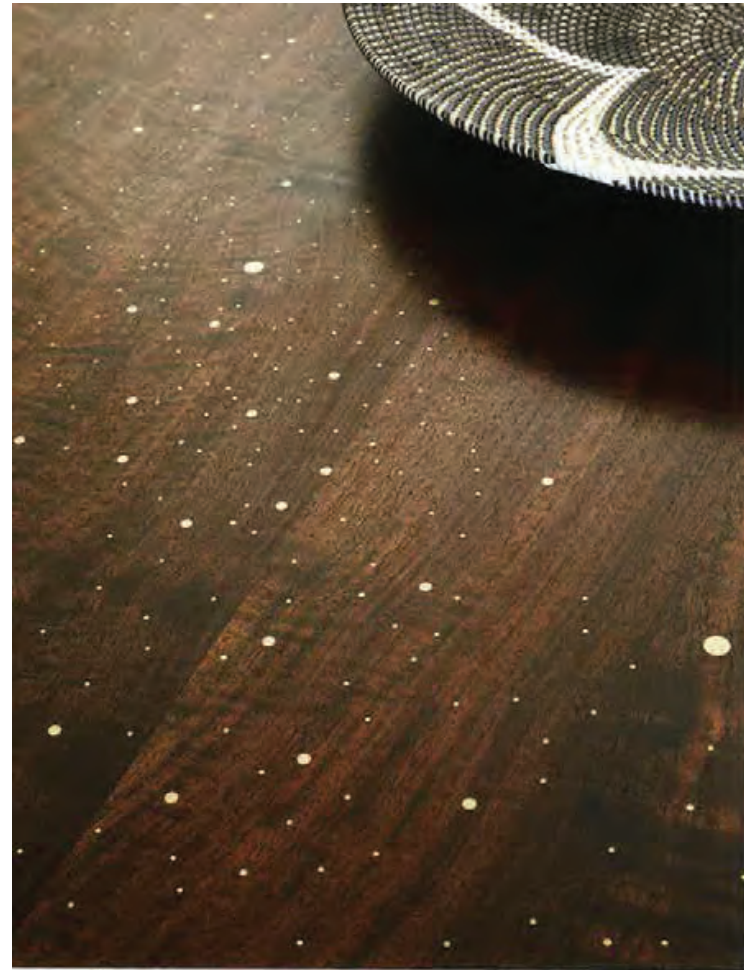


ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: A primary design challenge of this project was determining the most advantageous ways of displaying the clients' extensive and varied art collection. In this corner of the living room, we placed objects in a bookcase and on side and coffee tables, taking into account shape, height, and thematic groupings.





Organic shapes predominate in the dining room, from the clear glass globes of the Giopato & Coombes Bolle chandelier to the more subtle curves of the table's steel base and the ripples in the photograph.



All of our design choices, from lighting to consoles to tabletops, were made to resonate with and enhance the art throughout the residence.



OPPOSITE: We designed the outdoor seating areas for maximum comfort and relaxation with furnishings by Janus et Cie and Tribù. ABOVE: In the spacious family room, the large sectional couch and oversize ottomans accommodate many people and invite lounging. A silk-and-wool Joseph Carini Aquarium rug covers much of the floor.



ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: The spiral staircase, an architectural highlight of the house, required an equally distinctive light fixture. When viewed from below, the bronze and acrylic chandelier, designed by artist Johanna Grawunder of Studio Drift, playfully riffs on the stair's sinuous curves.





ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: In the master bedroom, we opted for a neutral palette as a backdrop for the art. Our primary decorative addition to the room is the circular bronze chandelier with faceted quartz pendants that subtly reflect the colors of the art.



A serene, calming atmosphere presides in the master bath with its marbled floor, partially frosted-glass shower enclosure, and porthole-like window, which admits natural light but preserves privacy.



Study and travel are essential.
Your experiences will feed
you and become a well from
which to draw inspiration.

In the office, a handsome sawhorse desk in bronze is the perfect
spot for the homeowners to do their art-historical research.
A pair of photographs by David LaChapelle hangs above it.





In contrast to the nearly windowless front façade, the back façade is entirely, and joyously, open to the elements.

