

LIVING IN MONTEREY COUNTY

Haven

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PHOTO: Rick Pharaoh

By Sandra Leader

Like virtually every room in the Archibalds' Asilomar Dunes home, the family and dining rooms are oriented to take advantage of their spectacular ocean view

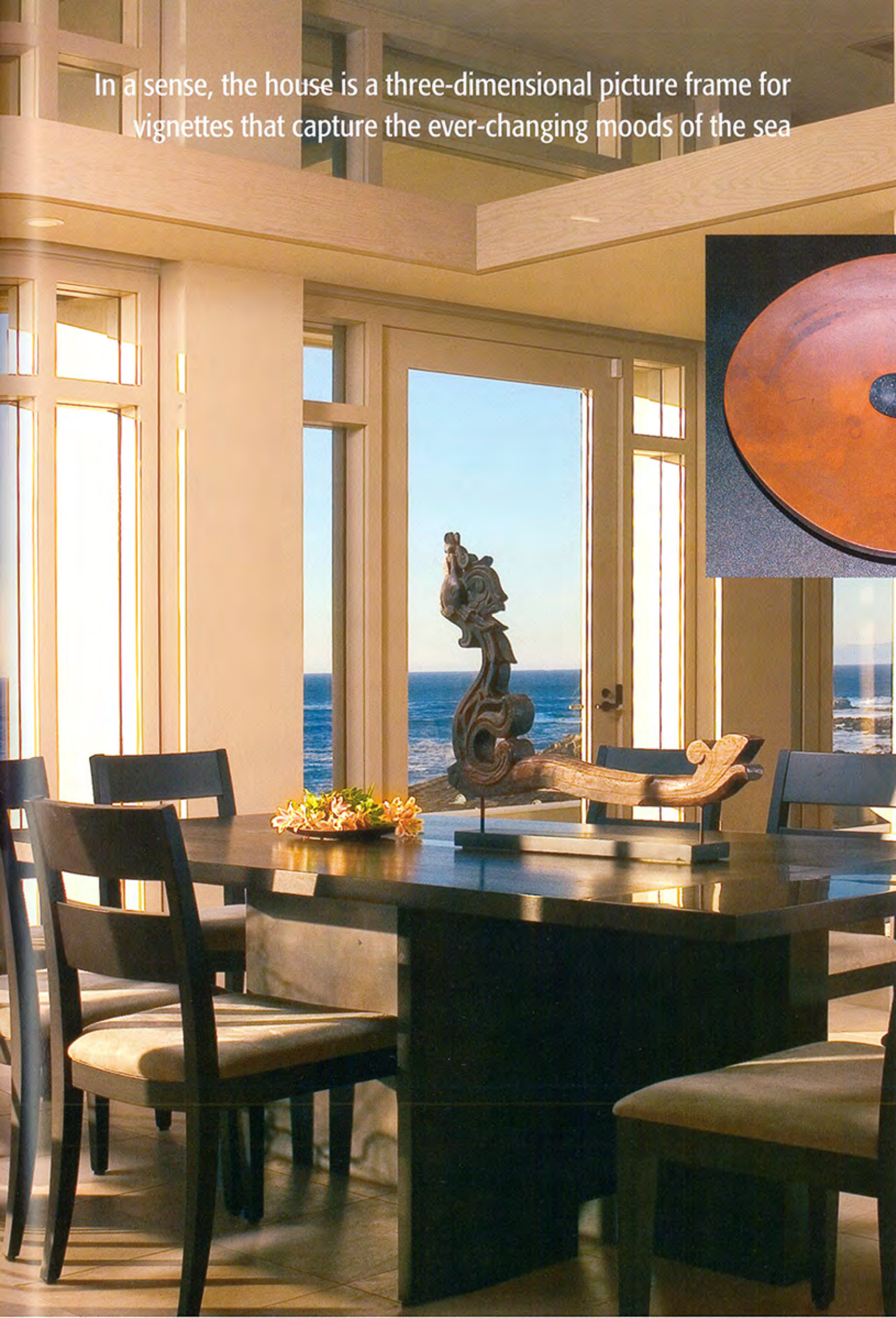
SOMETIMES IN A PROJECT there is one overarching challenge, the resolution of which shapes the entire character of a design. In the case of Tom and Judy Archibald's home in Pacific Grove, it was the light.

Much of what defines their 4,900-square-foot home, located about 100 yards from the ocean in Asilomar Dunes, evolved out of a desire to balance the unrelenting brightness that pours in from the west.

The house sits on a small ridge on one acre amidst sand dunes dotted with native shrubs, succulents and gnarly, wind-blown pines and cypresses. Beyond is a 180-degree ocean view that encompasses the Pacific Grove Golf Links and Point Pinos to the north, with Santa Cruz in the distance (on a clear day), and Point Joe and the Monterey Peninsula Country Club to the south.

The Archibalds treasure their view and consciously worked with architect David Martin of Wm David Martin, AIA, & Associates in Pacific Grove to maximize this asset, which is what attracted them when they were house-hunting a decade ago. The couple relocated from Ridgewood, N.J., after Tom retired from his job as a banker and Judy from a private practice in speech and language pathology.

In a sense, the house is a three-dimensional picture frame for vignettes that capture the ever-changing moods of the sea



Interior Notices

PHOTO: Rick Pharaoh



"The house needed updating. It had anodized, single pane, aluminum-frame windows that had to go," she says. "They were completely compromised from years of exposure to the ocean elements. The wind was coming through."

What started out as a project to replace windows, evolved into an extensive renovation. "Once we looked at the existing house carefully, we realized that because much of it was post adobe and it didn't meet the current energy requirements; there was very little that could actually be salvaged. What was saved were the existing foundations and floor framing," says David. General contractor for the project was Jerry Stepanek, who "went that oft-difficult extra mile numerous times in many capacities," David says.

The floor plan generally follows the original footprint, but 700 square feet were added in six areas, including the living room, dining room and a breakfast nook.

"If there was one primary design challenge," says David, "it was how to capture these incredible views of the ocean and bring them inside without eye strain and without the huge contrast that you have in most houses with large sheets of glass facing

west." A key objective was to increase the natural ambient light inside the house to balance the glare coming off the ocean. This was achieved by numerous means, including bringing in light via large windows on all sides of the house and opening up the rooms so light flows evenly throughout.

"The original house was a series of discrete rooms," David explains. "We opened it up so there is flow from one space to another. There is overhead interpenetration of the spaces, allowing light to be shared between rooms. The rooms are open to each other, but well defined."

Light is also allowed in through numerous skylights and, in the front ocean-facing rooms, through light wells that provide high, luminous ceilings. Pale neutral colors were selected for the walls and floors "to bounce the light around," says David.

Even at night, light streams into the house. "When there's a moon, it's amazing how much light there is," says Tom.

Spacious and airy, the completed structure is noteworthy for its tranquil, Zen-like aesthetic that, while spare, is elegant and impressive. Interest is added by repetition of rectangular shapes — in multi-paned windows, in soji screens, in the spaces interpenetrating rooms and, overhead in the front rooms, where the elevation climbs by levels that decrease in area, culminating in the luminous light wells whose surface area is also broken up into a grid of rectangles.

David calls it a "hierarchy of proportions. It was worked out so it all had a sense of scale," he says. "By layering and having levels, you get a lot more visual interest."

The minimalist, linear simplicity belies the unseen structural complexity required to achieve it. No small amount of effort, for example, was involved in achieving the sense of streamlined flow. Motorized shades — which at night are opaque, presenting a neutral flat surface, but see-through during the day to allow a diffused view — were recessed into soffets so there are no visible fixtures. Interior doors are recessed so that, when open, they do not protrude into the space but align flat with the walls.



PHOTO: Rick Pharaoh

A spare, Japanese-influenced aesthetic allows the architecture and ocean vistas to predominate, creating a mood of expansiveness and calm



The interior décor is similarly clean and without extraneous embellishment. A neutral palette, chiefly warm sandy beige and gray, echoes the colors of the dunes and waves on an overcast day. The few *objets d'art*, mostly Asian, are artfully placed and arranged for maximum impact. Bold colors appear rarely and serve as vibrant focal points in an otherwise restrained atmosphere.

Utmost respect is paid to the outer environment through the countless ways in which the dwelling sensitively mirrors its surroundings. In a sense, it is not simply a stylish home, but a virtual three-dimensional picture frame for numerous vignettes that capture the ever-changing moods of the sea.

All these aspects combine to enhance the Archibalds' eclectic art collection. "We like to collect disparate objects when we travel," notes Judy. The Asian theme is perpetuated by a number of works, including a Han Dynasty terra cotta horse invisibly wall-mounted in a beautifully lit hall off the entryway, and a slate-gray painted wood triptych by Hiromichi Iwashita in the living room.

Tom recently served as president of the Monterey

Museum of Art, an undertaking which, he says, resulted in them also "backing into a small collection of California art," including three metal wall sculptures by local artist Stefani Esta. The family's East Coast roots are represented by a Wolf Kahn landscape over the fireplace in the family room.

Ask Judy what she likes best about the house, and she hesitates not a moment before answering: the kitchen. Designed by Sharon Bailey, now of Las Vegas, it features brushed stainless steel appliances, a generous island, a dishwasher incognito behind a cabinet façade, refrigerator drawers, Miele and Viking ovens, oak cabinetry, black granite countertops and plenty of storage. She has a little office behind a Shoji screen adjacent to the breakfast nook.

"I love my kitchen," she says. "It is very functional, but I can stand at my stove and look at the ocean. And it's part of everything. I'm not isolated."

The Archibalds never tire of the changing panorama they can enjoy from virtually any room in their house. "The ocean is an endless source of visual entertainment," says Judy. "Every day is different."