

# EURO ZONE

CLEAN, MODERN LINES AND HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL DESIGN DEFINE  
A EUROPEAN COUPLE'S HOME IN THE BERKELEY HILLS.

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**W**hen the new owners of a house in the Berkeley Hills wanted to remodel the original 1950s structure, they had a very clear aesthetic in mind: modern European design. The couple and their two children had moved to the Bay Area from Europe—he is from Austria, she is from Germany—where they’d had a modern, streamlined home, and they wanted to find an architect who could help

them translate their sensibilities into their new residence. Enter Holder Parlette, a Marin County architecture firm founded by Kenneth Holder and Chris Parlette. The architects stayed within the “envelope” of the existing house, but they were able to significantly enlarge the space by converting the gabled roof into a raised flat roof, giving the house’s great room 13-foot ceilings. “That room, with

its views of Oakland and Berkeley, became the epicenter of the house and the starting point for the whole design,” Parlette says. With a full-height sliding door opening onto the deck, the great room serves as an inviting indoor-outdoor living space that feels suspended in air. The architects transformed the lower level—formerly the garage—into the master bedroom and bath, and designed a

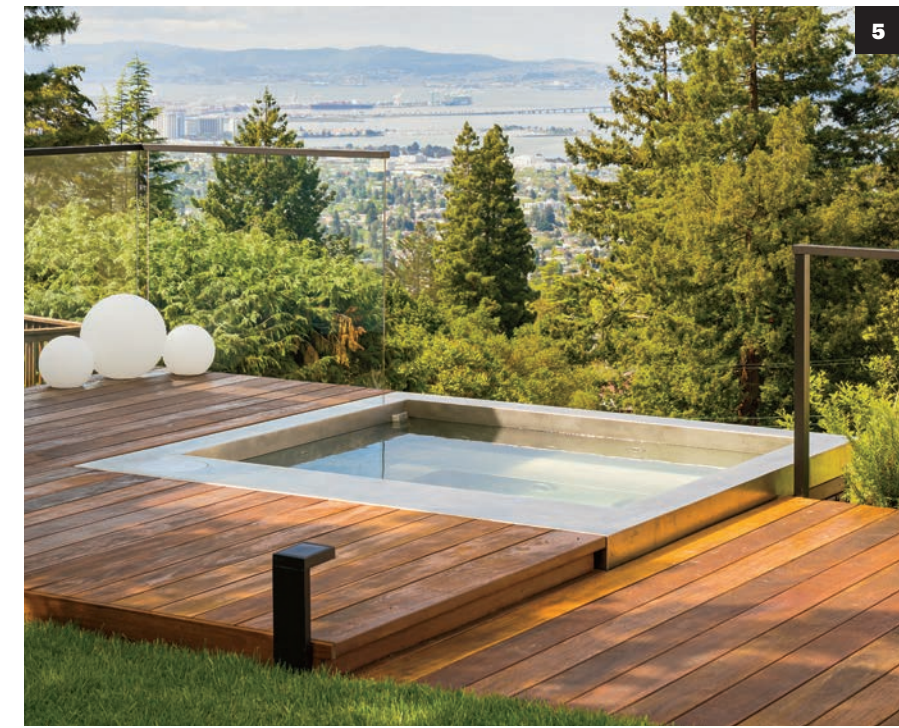
**1: THE OWNERS CHOSE A SAARINEN TABLE, PANTON CHAIRS, AND THE BIG BANG CHANDELIER BY ITALIAN LIGHTING COMPANY FOSCARINI FOR THE DINING AREA. 2: THE MASTER BATHROOM, WHICH FEATURES PORCELANOSA TILES AND FIXTURES, CONNECTS TO A PRIVATE ZEN GARDEN. 3: THE HOUSE’S GREAT ROOM HAS A 13-FOOT-TALL SLIDING GLASS DOOR THAT OPENS ONTO THE DECK, CREATING AN INDOOR-OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE.**





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**4:** HOLDER PARLETTE ARCHITECTS DESIGNED THE HOUSE'S MASTER BEDROOM ON THE LOWER LEVEL WHERE THERE ONCE HAD BEEN A GARAGE AND CREATED A SMALL YARD OUT OF THE FORMER DRIVEWAY. **5:** THE ARCHITECTS PLACED A HOT TUB RIGHT AT THE PROPERTY'S EDGE, WHICH OFFERS SWEEPING VIEWS OF THE BAY. **6:** A CEDAR FENCE AND WELL-PLACED BENCH GIVE A SENSE OF PRIVACY TO A SERENE CORNER OF THE GARDEN.



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landscaped yard where there once had been a driveway. They placed a hot tub at the edge of the property, installed an outdoor shower, and updated a small detached studio that now serves as a guest room. "One of our main goals was to create some green space that we could connect to the lower floor," Parlette says. "That was kind of a radical change."

The owners also wanted the house to have more privacy from the street, so Holder

Parlette designed a distinctive wooden scrim for the front. "The facade has an abstract composition out of stained cedar wood that softens the elevation and serves as a privacy screen," Parlette explains.

Inside, the owners envisioned the same kind of modern accoutrements that they were accustomed to in Europe and chose state-of-the-art appliances from German manufacturers like Gaggenau and Miele

and a Saarinen dining table. To keep the kitchen uncluttered, the architects hid lights in the skylight well over the counter, giving the space an appealing minimalism.

All in all, Parlette says, the project was an exciting and like-minded collaboration. "You don't often have clients who have such a well-defined aesthetic," he adds, "and their vision was just what I wanted to work with." ■