

HOME & GARDEN



Geoffrey De Sousa, of De Sousa Hughes, chose natural-toned roman shades in linen gauze by VW Home and trim from Holland & Sherry to frame the stunning view from the master suite at this year's San Francisco Decorator Showcase. Belgian apothecary jars, an abalone bowl (both courtesy Urban Chateau), and a telescope from Scope City sit atop a 1920s lab table from Swallowtail.

CHRIS HARDY / The Chronicle

Sea and be seen

Decorator Showcase designers make the most of stylish home's incredible views

By Angélica Pence
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

The deep blue sea washed up nicely on this year's San Francisco Decorator Showcase.

The 83-year-old mansion where the annual fund-raiser is taking place is submerged in aquatic ambience — from fog-inspired color schemes to a limestone boardwalk in the kitchen to a wind-blown light fixture in the music room. Participating designers couldn't help but invite the ocean inside. The estate, after all, is perched atop a precipice in the city's exclusive Sea Cliff neighborhood, with postcard views of the Golden Gate Bridge, Marin Headlands and Baker Beach.

Dive into the entryway of the 8,500-square-foot home, where artists from the Willem Racké Studio fashioned a chinoiserie of coral, seaweed, starfish and

other subaquatic creatures on muslin panels. Your Space's Charles de Lisle, Marion Philpotts and Jonathan Staub chose largely subdued monochromatic colors, furnishings and artwork in the living room to counterbalance the commanding vistas and "bring in the moodiness of the bay." Among them: hand-embroidered pillows by Alison Hoekstra with images of the making of the Golden Gate Bridge and the names of those who died doing so, and a white wool carpet by Ralph Lauren in the tradition of a fisherman's cable-knit sweater.

"We realized that we couldn't compete with the view," de Lisle said. "So we gave in to it."

In the kitchen and breakfast alcove, interior designer Kathleen Navarra laid in planks of Sauvignon-honed limestone and framed them with Waterworks' hand-broken Petra Azzurata mosaic tiles in moss to mimic a sandy boardwalk. A wainscoting of the company's cracked Icewater tiles (inspired by the

► **SHOWCASE:** Page E4

Nurseries
go buggy
PAGE E4



Navarra Design Consultants' "boardwalk" kitchen floor is anchored by artist John Haines' metal kelp sculpture on the pantry door.

Serene showcase rooms take their cues from ocean views

► SHOWCASE

From Page E4

kitchens of old) finished off the wet look.

Sun-inspired accents include a quartet of goldfish, tangerine-toned bouquets and copper range hoods and sinks. A metal sculpture by Santa Rosa artist John Haines mounted onto a pantry door evokes swaying kelp, while a Logico frosted glass ceiling pendant by Artemide serves as the room's lone cloud.

Inside 164 Sea Cliff Ave., you'd never know that the economy is in a slump, that the country is at war or that a mysterious respiratory illness has claimed the lives of hundreds. And it's safe to say that most visitors, organizers and volunteers at the showcase would have it no other way. To be sure, the event is not only an easy way to give to a charitable cause but also a welcome reprieve from the world's woes.

Case in point: a 1960s master suite befitting a well-shod diva, awash in creamy pleather, silk, lacquer and cashmere. The space unapologetically "indulges the three main passions of the Mrs. of the house," explains showcase veteran Geoffrey De Sousa, who designed the room with Gabriela Horikawa. "Glamour, shoes and the sea."

A flat-screen TV is tuned at all



Foggy seaside blues reign supreme inside The Wheeler Design Group's stylish guest bedroom. Most of the custom bedding, drapery panels and roman shades are courtesy of Tom Malatesta & Co.

times to the Style Network, while the bay and bridge make for a jaw-dropping backdrop to a collection of shoe boxes meticulously stacked, photographed and cataloged à la "Sex and the City."

Down the hall, the team of Marian Wheeler and Matthew Leverone swathed nearly every inch

of the small guest room (one of two) with matching tones of copper and an icy seaside blue. With little wall space to work with, choosing appropriate art — including Abstract Expressionist oil paintings by Robert De Niro Sr. (the actor's father) — was chief. An oversized wing chair (designed by Leverone) in one corner

gives the appearance of a larger space while balancing an equally large circa 1840s Swedish Empire mahogany round table in an opposite corner.

The historic house was originally designed by architect Albert Farr in 1920 and revamped for the showcase by San Francisco archi-

tect Frank Bergamaschi and Paragon General Contractors & Cabinetmakers.

Though much of the home's rich French Renaissance character was left intact, a laundry list of structural changes was necessary to better the flow from room to room, flood it with natural light and make way for several mini-retreats inside and out of the four-story structure. Walls were knocked down, narrow windows were expanded and new ones punched in. New systems were wired in, a cherry-wood elevator installed, a basement gutted and an entire room added to connect the garage to the house.

Out back, a once steep, unkept crag peering over Baker Beach was reborn into an elegant series of cascading terraces and cliffside gardens thanks to the handy work of landscape architects Chris Jacobson and Michael Bliss of the GardenArt Group.

Meantime, the dank basement was replaced by a family room, a 1,000-bottle wine cellar and an in-house spa. Interior designers Eugene Nahemow and David Rivera fashioned the watery hideaway (one of seven bathrooms) by pairing rich textures and materials with calm tints — including a cement sink by Sonoma Cast Stone

If you go

The San Francisco Decorator Showcase is open to the public through May 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays; and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursdays. The showcase is closed on Mondays, with the exception of Memorial Day, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are available at the door for \$25 or \$20 for seniors. The event, which has raised \$6.6 million since it began in 1977, benefits the San Francisco University High School financial aid program. For more information call (415) 447-5830 or visit www.decoratorshowcase.org.

stained a sea green, a wooden sauna, fossil limestone slabs on the floor and shower walls, and a rock waterfall. Yet another bath (this one a powder room on the ground floor) by Tracey Kessler of tkid likewise is dictated by Mother Nature, with dark, earthy limestone underfoot and glistening wallpaper by Maya Romanoff doubling for the swaying sand and sea.

The result, like much of the house, is a well-dressed seaside refuge fit for Grace Kelly.

E-mail Angelica.Pence@sfchronicle.com