



BACHELOR PAD, OCEAN VIEW

Steve Tillack, South Bay resident and Ferrari aficionado, has a very clear mantra: “No boring cars!” When he purchased a mid-century modern Palos Verdes home to remodel, he confirmed his home design mantra as well: “No boring houses!”

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Steve Tillack's life is constantly in motion. With a career in the specialty automotive world that includes time spent behind the wheel in nonprofessional auto races around the world, he sells, restores and collects Ferraris for himself and clients at Tillack & Co. in Redondo Beach.

Although Steve was a Redondo resident not looking for a house, a friend contacted him about a listing in Palos Verdes. Curious, he drove by to discover the current tenant in the process of moving out.

Steve recalls, "She invited me in for a walkabout. My first impression was: 'What a disaster!' Then I got to the west windows. It was a clear day, and I could see from Point Mugu all the way south to Catalina."

Eager to transform the dated interior to match the view, Steve purchased the house and started demolition himself. "Images of how I wanted it to look began taking shape, and the latent architect took over," says Steve, who studied drafting and architecture in high school.

However, he quickly realized that executing his vision would require professionals—especially a designer to interpret the dream home taking shape in his head.

While researching the remodeling process, Steve came across an issue of *Southbay* featuring an article on Diane

Barber's interior design work.

Steve had worked with Diane previously in the auto racing industry. He notes, "Having very successfully worked with Diane, I called her immediately and said, 'Hey, D, going to need you. Release the emergency brake on your car and coast down to my new house.'"

As soon as Diane saw the view and sensed what Steve envisioned, she knew this would be a singular, stunning project.

Architect Miles Pritzkat also cites the view as the focal point for the home's unique style.

In order to enhance it, they demolished the original (very low) ceilings and installed floor-to-ceiling glass wherever they could. Miles notes, "Since the low point was at the kitchen, we added skylights to visually raise the ceiling height."

Steve knew that once the walls came down, the view would dictate much of the design. Miles adds, "When we created the see-through fireplace between the great room and the sitting room, it opened up a view to the Point Fermin Lighthouse from the master bedroom!"

As anyone who has remodeled a home can attest, working with a designer is a personal process. Diane had an advantage in having a prior friendship with Steve; it helped her read his aesthetic and incorporate both function and flair into the home. Like Steve, she also travels to Europe





frequently, which influenced the materials she sourced—such as Duravit sinks and cabinets from Germany, Carrara marble from Italy and Thassos stone from Greece.

Diane also partnered with local artisans and vendors to hone the many materials that went into every room. She collaborated with Classic Tile & Design, His Life Woodworks and Dave Denne for furnishings, including a custom steering wheel table.

Dave is also a car collector and notes, “I knew Steve would appreciate great craftsmanship and features such as hand-antiqued leather and chrome. The steering wheel table is a good example of how we like to put things in a home that relate to a client’s lifestyle.”

Diane and Steve also considered how certain spaces could adapt over time. Diane notes, “We took an aging-in-place approach to building Steve’s dream home, which I always do with clients intending to retire in their homes. An elevator topped his list. The master shower does not have a dam, for easy access. The door openings and passageways are wide, for easy mobility. And the shower walls have wood reinforcement behind the tiles, should grab bars need to be installed later.”

As the house reached completion, Diane had quite a view to work with. To complement it, she chose a neutral color palette with white walls throughout so the landscape offers color and stands out.

While the great room feels like it is floating, the space is grounded by custom-milled, dark hickory hardwood floors and is framed by dark wood ceiling beams. The many surfaces in the home are both elegant and earthy, further anchoring the space against its ethereal backdrop.

With Diane and a talented renovation team led by Shoreline Construction, Steve’s vision was realized and he now has a home with much more than a view. He reflects, “I am blessed with the ability to envision a concept. As a project like this evolves, you must keep an open mind. Diane’s eye for design and detail was an absolute inspiration and wonderfully compatible with my vision.” ●



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is not what we do,
It's who we are.

