

Evening at the Malibu, California, home of real-estate entrepreneur Kurt Rappaport. The architecture and landscaping are by Scott Mitchell Studio, and the interiors are by Denise Kuriger Design. For details see Sources.

MALIBU MODERN

Just off the Pacific Coast Highway, architectural designer Scott Mitchell devises a strikingly streamlined oceanside showplace for real-estate maven Kurt Rappaport

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY MAYER RUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT FRANCES STYLED BY HOWARD CHRISTIAN



Clockwise from above: Rappaport and his fiancée, model Sarah Mutch, stand on the six-acre property's back lawn. Concrete monoliths dot the gravel entrance drive. A painting by the Bruce High Quality Foundation is set into bookshelves in the living room; both the bookshelves and the cocktail table in the foreground are by Scott Mitchell, who collaborated with Denise Kuriger on the armchairs and sofa, the latter covered in a de Le Cuona fabric. At the opposite end of the room, armchairs by Kuriger and vintage Ross Littell woven-leather lounge chairs flank a group of ceramic tables by Michael Smolich; a work by KAWS hangs above the fireplace, and the carpets are by Mansour Modern.

Considering the impact of the film industry on the economy and psyche of Los Angeles, it's only natural that denizens of this glittering town tend to view just about everything through a cinematic lens. Even houses have their analogous counterparts in the movies—there are edgy independent projects, lavish period pieces, high-minded foreign productions, and so on. As for the Malibu home of real-estate czar Kurt Rappaport and his fiancée, model Sarah Mutch, there's only one word to describe it: blockbuster.

Spread out over six acres on a majestic bluff overlooking the ocean, this extraordinary residence occupies a world of its own, far removed from the humble beach shacks and stately manses packed cheek by jowl along other stretches of the Pacific Coast Highway. After turning off that celebrated thoroughfare, toward the water, one descends a gently sloping drive through a landscape dotted with freestanding concrete pillars that ease the transition from exhaust fumes to Eden. The pageantry of the entry procession makes it feel as if one has arrived at a modernist Luxor—think Cecil B. DeMille by way of Louis Kahn.

The house itself—a long, linear expanse nestled discreetly into the hillside and facing the sea—barely reveals itself to the street. (Sodded green roofs further that mission.) A masterful composition of intersecting planes and volumes, the structure marries the gravitas of concrete piers and walls with the lightness of glass. Floors and





ceilings of white oak coupled with antique granite pavers in outdoor areas lend texture and warmth to the starkly modern scheme.

"I'm obsessed with the ways that buildings express the subtle qualities of the materials used in their construction," says architectural designer Scott Mitchell, who began working on the project shortly after Rappaport acquired the land in 2006. "This house is all about honoring the integrity of concrete and glass while creating a rhythmic interplay between those materials and the landscape."

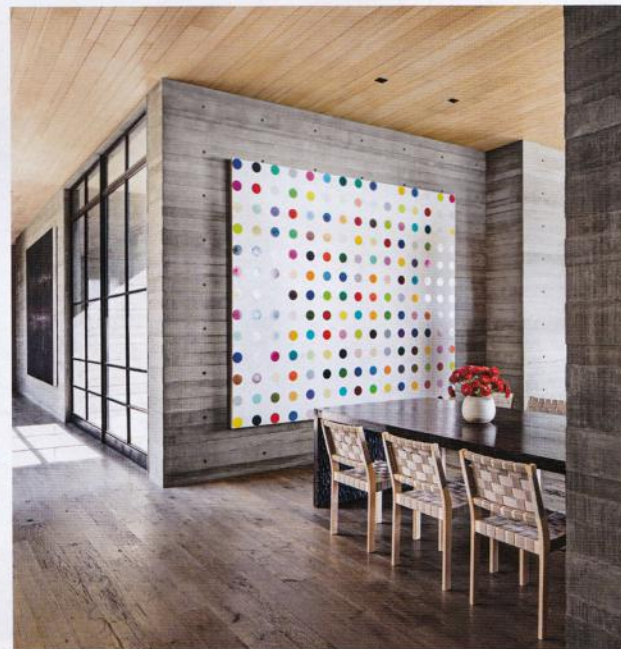
The architectural language of the 15,000-square-foot residence, which encompasses a sweeping living room, a master suite with a luxurious bathroom worthy of Hollywood royalty, a wing of bedrooms for Rappaport's children, and a basement with a game room and a home theater, is reiterated in an adjacent pavilion containing two guest suites. Outside, the 168-foot-long infinity pool is said to be the longest residential swimming pool in California. Set into the lush lawn and sheathed in black granite tile, it resembles the monolith from 2001: A Space Odyssey tipped onto its side and stretched—it's a knockout. "Considering the

breadth of the site and the linearity of the house, the pool had to be a big gesture," Mitchell says.

The sprawling estate represents the most ambitious solo commission to date for Mitchell, a longtime collaborator of talent manager turned residential designer Sandy Gallin's on projects for such high-powered clients as studio chief Jeffrey Katzenberg and music mogul Jimmy Iovine. Mitchell first teamed with Rappaport more than a decade ago, when he renovated a historic Beverly Hills dwelling that Rappaport then sold to Tom Cruise. But it was the crisp, beach-friendly scheme Mitchell conceived for the Nobu restaurant in Malibu (later completed by two other firms) that convinced the entrepreneur to hire him for his own home.

"Scott has a vision attuned to contemporary life in L.A.," Rappaport attests. "Originally I wanted a two-story Shingle Style house with a Hamptons vibe. Scott talked me out of it . . . mercifully."

As construction on the home progressed, Mitchell brought in New York interior designer Denise Kuriger, with whom he had worked on previous assignments. The two came up with a decor



Clockwise from above: Scott Mitchell devised the breakfast area's table and its banquette, which is cushioned in a de Le Cuona linen, while Denise Kuriger designed the chair; the kitchen includes a pot rack custom made by Paul Ferrante, counter stools by Bourgeois Bohème, and a Wolf range. A Damien Hirst painting presides over the dining room, where Alvar Aalto chairs by Artek surround a bespoke table; the large canvas in the hallway is by Sterling Ruby. In the study, an O. C. White light fixture from Wyeth is suspended above a pair of Jean-Michel Frank-inspired chairs made by Jonas and clad in a Moore & Giles leather; the daybed is from Blackman Cruz, and the rug is by Mansour Modern.



that was not only sympathetic to the architecture but also tailored to the Southern California climate and the personalities of the convivial owners. "That was the first thing I told Kurt: It has to be a house for young people," recalls Kuriger, an alumna of the offices of Victoria Hagan and the late Naomi Leff. "Yes, it's a grand house and an important house, but ultimately it needed to reflect the spirit and energy of this incredible young couple."

In practical terms Kuriger interpreted that mandate with a broad array of midcentury classics, Art Deco pieces, quirky vintage finds, furnishings with an industrial edge, and a few complementary 18th-century antiques, all united by their emphasis on clean lines and understated forms. One leitmotif of the decor is homages to Jean-Michel Frank, a 1920s and '30s designer renowned for melding historical and modern styles in dashing fashion. Kuriger and Mitchell's tributes to the French maestro include a parchment-and-walnut waterfall-edge desk in the study, an oak center table in the entry, and, most amusingly, a pool table outfitted with a variation on Frank's signature pineapple legs in the lower-level game room. Accenting this largely monochromatic assortment—"It runs the gamut from beige to beige," Kuriger jokes—is a collection of vivid contemporary artworks by the likes of Damien Hirst, Ed Ruscha, Richard Prince, Sterling Ruby, and KAWS.

Rappaport downplays his contributions to the creation of so much gorgeousness, insisting that he, like any good movie director, assembled a talented team and simply demanded the best. "I compare the making of this house to the filming of *Titanic*," he says. "We didn't know how long it would take or how much it would cost, but we were certain it was going to be great." □



Above: Andy Warhol "Mao" prints enliven a bedroom in the guesthouse. **Below:** The master bath features a rain-shower system by Dornbracht. **Opposite, from top:** In the master suite, a Matthew Brandt photograph is mounted over the fireplace and ink drawings by Van Hanos are displayed above the bed; the sofa and bed are custom designs by Scott Mitchell and Denise Kuriger and are upholstered in de Le Cuona fabrics, and the low table is from JF Chen. The master bath's tub, which has Dornbracht fittings, was designed by Mitchell and fabricated by Zeolla Marble Co.; the pillow on the lounge chair is by Hermès.



Extending a showstopping 168 feet, the swimming pool is lined in black granite tile and offers unobstructed views of the Pacific.

"THIS HOUSE," SAYS SCOTT MITCHELL, "IS ALL ABOUT HONORING THE INTEGRITY OF CONCRETE AND GLASS WHILE CREATING A RHYTHMIC INTERPLAY BETWEEN THOSE MATERIALS AND THE LANDSCAPE."

