



Best Transformation

Interior designer Paul Wiseman and architect Richard Beard transform a mid-century Joseph Esherick-designed home in Northern California

by JESSICA RITZ photography by JOSE MANUEL ALORDA

LE CORBUSIER'S OFT-QUOTED belief that “a house is a machine for living in” doesn’t have to mean a home is static. This credo can still imply that the literal and figurative technology needs regular updating. Such was the case with a dramatic house in Northern California that influential Bay Area architect Joseph Esherick designed in 1961.

The Wiseman Group and Richard Beard Architects sensitively transformed the property, which also includes outdoor spaces by Esherick’s colleague and fellow Sea Ranch community member, seminal landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. The renovation team retained character-defining elements and paid subtle homage to the original period while making much-needed intensive changes.

“We were able to preserve the unique architectural features, such as the concrete ceiling, and we took cues from the existing entry slotted window and repeated it throughout,” Paul Wiseman explains. The distinctive concrete and glass atrium ceiling remains intact, but the new interior



OPPOSITE PAGE: Steel beams greet guests at the entrance.
THIS PAGE: In the atrium, a pair of custom Mouille-style five-arm pendants by Urban Archaeology feel as if they emerge from the skylight, hanging above multiple seating areas including a custom sofa and expansive banquet.

perforations bring in light and enhance visual connections to adjacent rooms. Wiseman notes that “rearranging the plan so it functioned for modern family life” was another objective. So for instance, the kitchen was relocated and brought up to current standards with an open plan, along with sleek cabinetry and a roomy island outfitted with walnut and Danish cord stools from McGuire Furniture.

The interior design acknowledges the home’s early-1960s origins without leaning on heavy-handed references. Classic mid-century pieces by Vladimir Kagan and Eero Saarinen and Serge Mouille-inspired lighting are juxtaposed with contemporary custom elements. Gracious seating areas and luxurious soft surfaces abound, making light-flooded spaces feel welcoming and practical. The indoor-outdoor flow has been strengthened so the homeowners can better enjoy Halprin’s original landscape scheme, which was one of his rare residential undertakings. Strata Landscape Architecture. also improved the water efficiency with the pool and fountain systems and created more user-friendly exterior places. In sum, it’s an ideal way to live in concert with significant architecture and design history.



ABOVE: A set of McGuire barstools line the island with four Mouille-style library ceiling lamps that float above. BELOW: The backside of the home features multiple areas of entertainment including a dining area and several lounge areas. Expansive Tuuci umbrellas cover much of the seating, which came from Sutherland.

