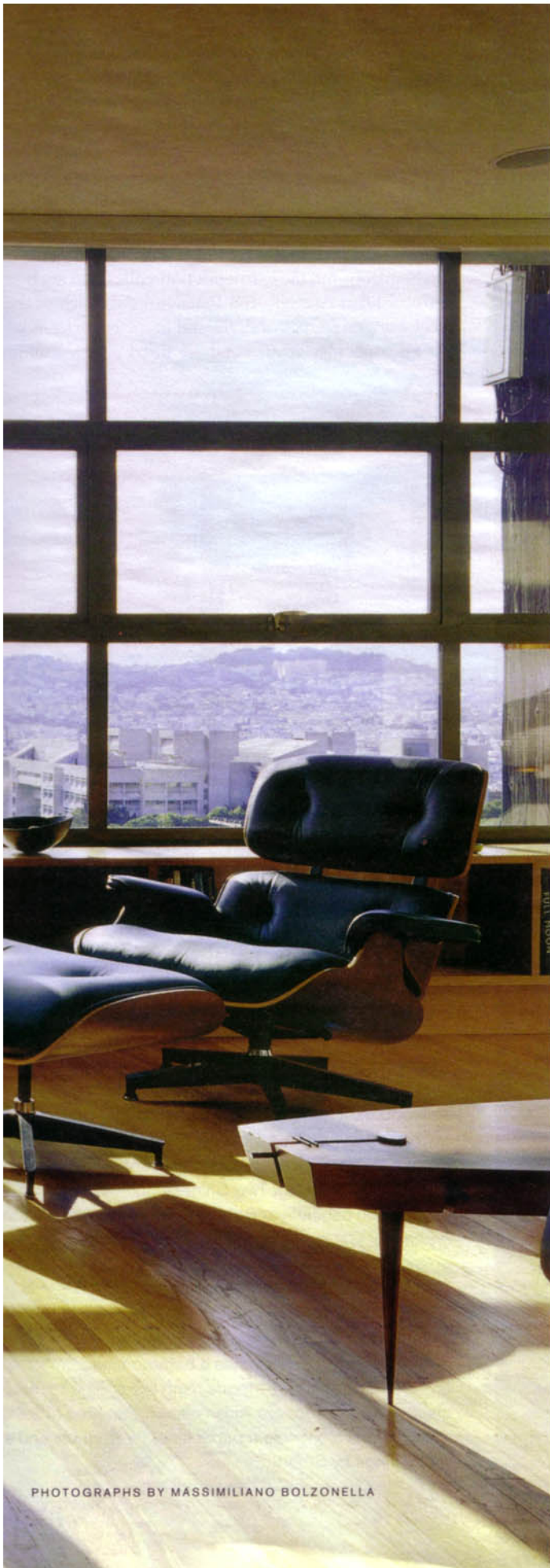




Tunnel Vision

An architect expands his views at home



When it came to his own house, architect Joshua Aidlin of Aidlin Darling Design became single-minded about one thing: how to maximize a nondescript 1,650-square-foot, two-story house in Potrero Hill without adding any more rooms. At first, even a small, light-filled studio for Aidlin's painter wife seemed impossible.

"We could have gone higher but we wanted to keep the envelope intact," Aidlin says. However, in the front, "in order to work within city guidelines we had to break that rule," the architect says. The city insisted that the metal-clad garage door had to be minimized visually and so as counterweight Aidlin extended a redwood-clad fin onto the sidewalk. A new stucco demi-wall and a cantilevered roof create a more protected entry, and further accent the dynamic, asymmetrical De Stijlian facade.

"We also wanted to take advantage of the panoramic views of the city out front and garden views in back," Aidlin says. The obvious solution — to get an illusion of extra space while bringing in light — was to move walls and reconfigure the house as a tube with open ends. "We spent our money on elegant

Above: Joshua Aidlin's house, remodeled last year in keeping with city design guidelines, minimizes the garage door opening. The home's De Stijlian facade is broken into multiple panels clad in stucco, wood and aluminum. A wood-clad fin wall that projects into the sidewalk animates the design. Left: The floor-through open-plan interior with wall-to-wall windows front and back is like a telescope trained on views of Twin Peaks (left) and garden views in the rear. The pear wood and stainless steel dining table by Ed Clay was designed by Aidlin. Dining chairs by Roberto Palomba & Ludovica Serafini are complemented by a George Nelson pendant lamp.

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finishes rather than on square footage. Every section not needed spatially in rooms was used for compact storage," he says. "The goal was to integrate cabinets sculptural way." For instance, a bench under the windows doubles as book storage and also helps to crop out foreground views.

Between the kitchen and living room Aidlin designed shaped steel shelf that acts as a hall table, and shields the kitchen from full view. Friends and colleagues such as artists Christi Azevedo and Peter Jeal did much of the steel work on stairs, handrails and fireplace surround.

The openings at each end are fitted with aluminum







Above: From the back garden, views of the bedroom, study and Twin Peaks out front. The existing deck was given new guardrails. Left, a shelving unit divides the study and master bedroom. Right: Stuart's basement painting studio with board-formed concrete walls, a new concrete floor and steel moment frames is furnished with heirlooms: Aidlin's father's drafting table, turn-of-the-century card table and chair from Stuart's family.

dows anodized to look like steel and the mullions are also made to look thicker than they actually are. To keep costs down, Aidlin retained the simple old floors and patched in new pieces where the old walls stood. Here and there cherry wood, pear wood and mahogany are combined with the existing proletarian oak to good effect.

"It was just a dumb 1950s Sheetrock box. We opened it up and also I moved a half wall toward the garden downstairs that lets light into the basement," he says. With its beautiful board-formed concrete walls, the basement has become the perfect studio. It had to be lowered for more headroom, a radiant heating was added within its new concrete floor.

Upstairs, the addition of a small 5-by-10-foot atrium between the central bathroom and the master bedroom in back was an inspired move that brought an unexpected feeling of open space.

"On the gloomiest days in Spring there is reflected sunlight in the core the house," Aidlin says. "And, because of the light and garden views, it is just like living in a tree house." ♦

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