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The outdoor pool looks out to the ocean and has an underwater window to the subterranean garage.

BY LISA LIDDANE ::
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC FIGGE PRODUCTIONS, INC.

AN ARCHITECT DESIGNS A COUPLE'S DREAM HOME IN MONARCH BEACH.

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY that an architect gets to design the ultimate house for a couple who have made it their life's journey to live in a home, then move to another one after several years. Envisioning the last home certainly wasn't the mission given to architect David Fink when a Pleasanton-based couple hired him to create an oceanside custom home for them in a Monarch Beach enclave.

The couple had always wanted a beachfront house and had looked at lots and properties from Malibu down to San Diego before choosing a Monarch Beach location with a 180-degree westward view of the ocean.

By their standards, the lot was rather compact – all 9,200 square feet of it – given that the homes they lived in previously were on one acre or bigger. So Fink's task was to maximize square footage, integrating the must-have list of five bedrooms with bathrooms en suite, a six-car subterranean garage, two fitness rooms, and water features – all while keeping the vibe spacious and airy.

He also was given specific aesthetic directives by the homeowners, who had decades of experience in the construction industry. "The clients wanted a warm, contemporary home with both curved and linear elements and an open floor plan to take advantage of the views the site offered," Fink says.

A circle figured early in the architect's initial conceptual sketches and he eventually decided to make a circle the center of the house from which other rooms radiated. On the main



FINAL DESTINATION





The light-filled atrium is the figurative and literal center of the house. The hallway exemplifies the numerous curves of the house, a request of the homeowners.

or middle floor of the three-level home, a two-story atrium occupies that center, encircled by the entry, kitchen, the family room, the dining room and the media/home theater room.

"The curved central core of the home was created as a focal point for the entry and the bedrooms on the east side of the home," Fink says. "These rooms we've designed for the purpose of privacy, so instead of emphasizing the lack of views to the north and south, I chose to focus these rooms to the central core. This core is flooded with light from a 14-foot square skylight and from the core's center the views expand, with the ocean on the west. The juxtaposed walls came purely from the function of the spaces within the home. For instance, the thick curved front wall denotes the entry of the home, but is also the perfect radius for cars going in and out of the subterranean garage. Curving the walls on the north offered a perfect back wall for theater seating."

Among the less obvious but pervasive hallmarks of the home are the built-in cabinetry and seating, all of which the couple asked Fink to design. The husband/homeowner, a long-time devotee of Frank Lloyd Wright,

adapted one of the architecture giant's design signatures for his own house. "We wanted the cabinets and furniture to look like they belonged to the home," the homeowner says.

The couple also loves freshwater aquariums, so two built-in large fish tanks in the main level were not only decorative but also functional as clever structures to delineate rooms. These also gave the home the "tropical look" that the homeowners requested.

To keep the atmosphere open and flowing, there are no superfluous walls, but there are many windows, including some in the most unexpected places, that let light in and create a sense of transparency. The koi pond in the entrance, for example, has a glass bottom that allows people in the subterranean rec room to look up at the fish. There's also a transparent panel on one wall of the garage that has become a conversation piece in the house because it provides a horizontal underwater view of the pool.

As for the garage itself, it's finished to look like a room of the house, complete with terrazzo floors, so much so that with the Lamborghini in the middle of it all, an auto gallery seems a more apt descriptor.

The homeowner says the home is nothing short of perfect for him and his wife. "We got everything we wanted, all the way to the end," he says. "Believe me, I've looked hard and I have found nothing wrong with the quality of the workmanship."

The homeowners may not have been consciously searching for a house to spend the next half century of their lives in, but somehow, the completion of the Monarch Beach house after four years of planning and building spelled the end of one journey for them and the significant beginning of another. Finally, they are home.

FIND IT

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The subterranean garage next to the rec room has terrazzo floors and an underwater view of the pool.