

# ABOVE AND BEYOND

Tag Front takes a spec home on Appian Way to soaring heights

by **LINDSEY SHOOK** photography by **PAUL VU**



A view of the entrance to the spec home on Appian Way with a steel sculptural detail in front of the garage.



OPPOSITE PAGE: The master bedroom and bath offer pristine views. THIS PAGE, TOP: The open living spaces were divided creatively with a sculptural above the fireplace that emerges from the ceiling. BOTTOM: Dekton surfacing was used throughout to create dimension.



**TO SAY THE SPEC HOME MARKET** in Los Angeles is healthy is an understatement. Whether looking high atop the Hollywood Hills or along the streets of Venice Beach, you will find a number of modern structures that are covered in glass and sexy stone finishes and equipped with the smartest technology around. While the majority of these projects are move-in-ready for a luxury clientele, many of these savvy structures are missing personal, sophisticated style.

When it came to developing a luxury hillside spec home just above Sunset Plaza, Peter Georges, founder of Willcore Corporation, envisioned a posh pad where no design detail was left untouched. Georges enlisted Los Angeles architecture and design firm Tag Front not only to engineer the architecture of the home but also to design dynamic interiors. "I knew that Tag Front would leave no detail untouched and would deliver the highest

level of quality possible," says Georges.

Recognized for their work in commercial spaces, Tag Front principals and brothers Mandi and Mehdi Rafatys' work at restaurants, including 71 Above in Downtown L.A., caught the attention of Georges. "We have worked on many other spec projects in Los Angeles," says Mandi. "The difference in our approach on this house was to achieve an extremely high level of detail and development on a very tight and challenging lot."

In order to achieve their collective vision, the Tag Front team worked with Willcore on the ground-up build by applying many of the same design concepts they use when designing for their commercial projects. From the front door to the pool deck, their approach was to create surprising design elements that unfold as a person walks through each room. "What makes this house unique is that it incorporates a series of what I call installations



A blue felt wall adds a pop of color and texture in the breakfast area which features lighting from Rewire.



or sculptural elements that guide users through the space,” says Mandi. “There is never a boring moment.”

They achieved their goal of creating visual splendor around every corner. When walking in the front door, visitors experience a massive CNC milled wall that features an etched map of L.A. (an original Tag Front sculpture). Dimensional details continue when moving to the main floor where the Tag Front team installed a custom cobalt blue felt wall behind a breakfast table. “These are the type of elements that our firm has been using in our restaurant and retail interiors for the past 20 years but here they are redone to a more residential scale,” says Mandi.

Surfaces play a big role in the impactful design throughout the house. César Giraldo of César Giraldo Design assisted Tag Front on interior and finish selections that enhance textures while maintaining the modern appeal. The team innovatively installed a wall sculpture made of Dekton in the open living and dining areas. “I’m in love with Dekton by Cosentino. From an investment standpoint, it’s great for developers to use because it’s highly resistant to ultraviolet light, which makes it ideal to use indoors or outdoors,”

says Giraldo. “It’s immune to scratching and has a high resistance to abrasion, so it will not degrade over time. Plus, the color selection is dynamic and beautiful!”

The team sought to create a more unique kitchen design than other spec homes in the area and achieved this by incorporating a dark walnut kitchen by Elmar Italian Kitchens, from the Montanari Group. “The most predictable choice is to install very white, glossy cabinets and cement surfaces in spec home kitchens, but we wanted to create a more inviting kitchen, which we achieved with the finishes and warm hues.”

Tag Front’s efforts to go above and beyond are even more evident in the lighting and furniture selections. Giraldo worked with renowned L.A. showrooms and brands including In-Ex, Hammer and Spear, Rewire and Siglo Moderno to cultivate the very highly curated aesthetic that separates this house from the rest. “We could not have done this project without the support of the showrooms and vendors,” says Giraldo. “Each piece brought life to the house and created a harmonious balance of color, texture and dynamic design.”



34° 06' 20.2" N  
118° 22' 53.4" W

LOS ANGELES

THIS PAGE: The Air Chair by Jason Mizrahi and the At 16 Floor to Ceiling coat rack welcomes guests at the front door. OPPOSITE PAGE: The pool feels as if it is floating on top of Sunset Plaza.

# Appian Way

Cesar Giraldo of Cesar Giraldo Design indulges in his love for the artists, brands and showrooms that helped fill the exquisite spec home on Appian Way.

## 1. In-Ex

"When I need contemporary European design, In-Ex is the place to go. The Groundpiece sofa by Flexform featured in Appian Way is a contemporary, timeless design that brings beauty and comfort to a home."  
[inex.la](http://inex.la)

## 2. Siglo Moderno

"Located in the heart of Silver Lake, I often find inspiration at Siglo Moderno. I know that I will always come in contact with magnificently curated, rare and authentic design. The Wood Interlocking Cube sculpture by Aleph Geddis that I selected for Appian Way combines complexity, simplicity and a feeling of timeless beauty."  
[siglomoderno.com](http://siglomoderno.com)

## 3. Rewire Gallery Inc.

"If you think you have seen the best in lighting you haven't until you visit Rewire Gallery Inc.. Walking into the showroom transports you to a universe of light. I selected many pieces from their showroom for Appian Way, but the Stilnovo brass chandelier made a big impression on me. The vintage pieces represent elegance in a rock and roll, Hollywood way."  
[decaso.com/shop/rewire](http://decaso.com/shop/rewire)

## 4. Jason Mizrahi

"Jason is a young, talented furniture designer that I collaborate with often. When I first saw his Air Chair, I instinctively knew I had to place it at the front entrance of Appian Way. Its geometric form enlightens the visitor of what's to come with welcoming design."  
[jasonmizrahi.com](http://jasonmizrahi.com)

## 5. 10 000 by Flavien Demarigny

"Collaborating with a world-class artist, like Flavien Demarigny, is both an honor and a luxury. I could not get enough of his amazing creations while touring his studio. I selected the painting 10 000 for the dining room to introduce a whimsical tone to the environment. The grand shower of beautiful bright colors elicits warm



feelings and creates a wonderful balance with the Dekton accent wall and benches positioned nearby."  
[flaviendemarigny.com](http://flaviendemarigny.com)

## 6. J.H. Minassian & Co

"For this project I used the most exquisite, antique rugs from J.H. Minassian & Co. For generations they have provided the best collection of carpets. The pieces I used defined a modern environment with beauty and historic elegance."  
[jhminassian.com](http://jhminassian.com)

## 7. Galerie Carole Decombe

"A visit to Galerie Carole Decombe is a treat, where one becomes fascinated with the juxtaposition of rare 18th-20th century Scandinavian furniture with contemporary fine art. I love the dialogue between the Old World and the New World as it creates visual poetry that's vital in a living space. I chose *Spirit Fruit* by Jeremy Maxwell Wintrebert, an opal yellow filigree glass sculpture, to feature in Appian Way. I was convinced the piece's delicate nature and color would introduce a certain vulnerability and a softness that could be considered both strong and masculine."  
[galeriecaroledecombe.com](http://galeriecaroledecombe.com)

## 8. MA+39

"MA+39, located on Beverly Boulevard, is a true gem. Their collection of Italian mid-century modern furniture is breathtaking. We purchased a 1950s birch and mahogany bar by Paola Buffa to bring a playful, vintage design element to the highly contemporary environment. I knew it would make people smile and stop them in their tracks while enabling them envision a night of unwinding downstairs with a whisky on the rocks."  
[ma39shop.com](http://ma39shop.com)

## 9. Assouline

"I cannot imagine a home without books. They are one of my favorite interior design accessories, as they not only add beauty to a home, but they say a lot about the person who lives there. It's a true luxury to have books by Assouline. The quality of the books they publish is visually and physically incomparable and features fascinating subjects on art, fashion, photography, travel, design and architecture."  
[assouline.com](http://assouline.com)



## DEKTON

"Dekton by Cosentino is an exciting new product that can be used for countertop surfaces, flooring, building facades, outdoor kitchens and much more. It is a proprietary blend of quartz, porcelain and glass and I love it!"  
[dektion.com](http://dektion.com)

