

SCENE CHANGE

IN HER SEARCH FOR A PRIVATE MALIBU BEACH RETREAT, ACTRESS
COURTENEY COX DISCOVERS THAT THE PERFECT LOCATION IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

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FACING PAGE: Actress Courtney Cox at her home in Malibu, California, which was renovated by architect Michael Kovac and designed by Trip Haenisch; the painting is by Harland Miller. **THIS PAGE:** In the kitchen's sitting area, a Minotti cocktail table is surrounded by a sofa and armchairs designed by Haenisch; the floor lamp is by Christian Liaigre, and the stools are by Paul McCobb; a Massimo Vitali photograph hangs on the wall, and the rug is by the Rug Company. See Resources.



Before becoming an actress, Courtney Cox wanted to be an architect. Indeed, she began college course work in the field before deciding to pursue a career in Hollywood. But her passion for building, remodeling, and decorating homes never left her. Best known for her roles on the TV sitcoms *Friends* and *Cougar Town*, as well as the *Scream* series of horror movies, Cox rolled up her sleeves when it came time to renovate her new Malibu, California, home.

The midcentury structure sits high above the Pacific on two acres that include guest cottages, a tennis house and court, a screening room, and a saltwater swimming pool. Cox chose the location in part because of its privacy: Her previous home, designed by groundbreaking modernist architect John Lautner, was level with a public beach. "I couldn't take a walk without having my picture taken," she laments.

The curvy, futuristic, Lautner-designed residence was "the most amazing place I've ever lived in," she says. "But there was no way to replicate that. You don't want to half-ass a Lautner house. So I decided with this house to go a completely different route. I wanted it to look like a modern barn."



FROM TOP: Countertops by Caesar-Stone, ovens and a refrigerator by Gaggenau, and stainless-steel sinks by Franke in the main kitchen; the light fixture is from Nessen Lighting, and the barstools are vintage. In the living room, a Kent Williams painting hangs above a Jacques Adnet étagère and a lamp from Intérieurs. **FACING PAGE:** A vintage French lamp extends over a Haenisch-designed sectional in the living area, the custom-made cocktail table is from Bourgeois Bohème, and the chair is by Hans Wegner; a Samsung television is set into the flagstone fireplace surround. See Resources.



A John Lautner-designed concrete table from Cox's previous home is paired with stools from Lebanon. Gervasoni lounge chairs are upholstered in a Perennials fabric, and the decking is ipé. **FACING PAGE, FROM TOP:** A custom-made banquette surrounds a teak-and-steel lava-rock fire pit. Stools upholstered in vinyl at the bar outside the screening house's galley kitchen. See Resources.





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Her new home has a traditional shape and had been painted a rich brown by the previous owners. "It was beautiful," says Cox. "But I don't like things to be too dark, and I knew it needed a big revamp for my taste." Actress Laura Dern referred her to architect Michael Kovac; Cox then hired her good friend Trip Haenisch to helm the interior design. "There was a good balance between Michael and Trip," says Cox. "Michael is definitely more modern; Trip tried to make the house look like it had been here forever." The result, she says, is "very simple, with bronzed-steel trim, white walls, and wood floors. Nothing too cluttered and not a lot of fancy details."

In the spirit of Monica Geller, the driven, perfectionist chef she played on *Friends*, Cox sure-handedly led the team through "intense" once-a-week planning meetings that lasted three hours. "I've been overseeing renovations of my homes for a long time, and I have strong opinions about what I want and why." She scrutinized every detail, down to the smoky color of the tennis courts. Kovac recalls a visit from the tennis court surface company representative, who displayed his 10 stock colors. None quite fit the bill. "Courteney got him to bring a sample of the pigments of every color they had, along with some paintbrushes and paper plates, and everyone on the building team worked on mixing the pigments into new combinations. She had to get it exactly right." That level of exactingness only impressed her collaborators. "She's passionate and clear about what she wants," says Haenisch, "but she's open to hearing what you have to say. She pushed us to give her the best we could. I think we taught each other a lot just going through the process."

Cox has fond memories of growing up with 20 first cousins and Sunday-afternoon family gatherings at her grandmother's house. "I've been carrying on that tradition of having a family-and-friends day for years," she says, with Sunday get-togethers built around dinner and karaoke.



A painting by Matthew Heller, vintage leather chairs by Charles Pollock, and a poured-concrete floor in the tennis house. **FACING PAGE:** In the master bedroom's sitting area, a painting by Matt Palmer hangs above a custom-made daybed; the throw is by Hermès, and the rug is by the Rug Company. See Resources.

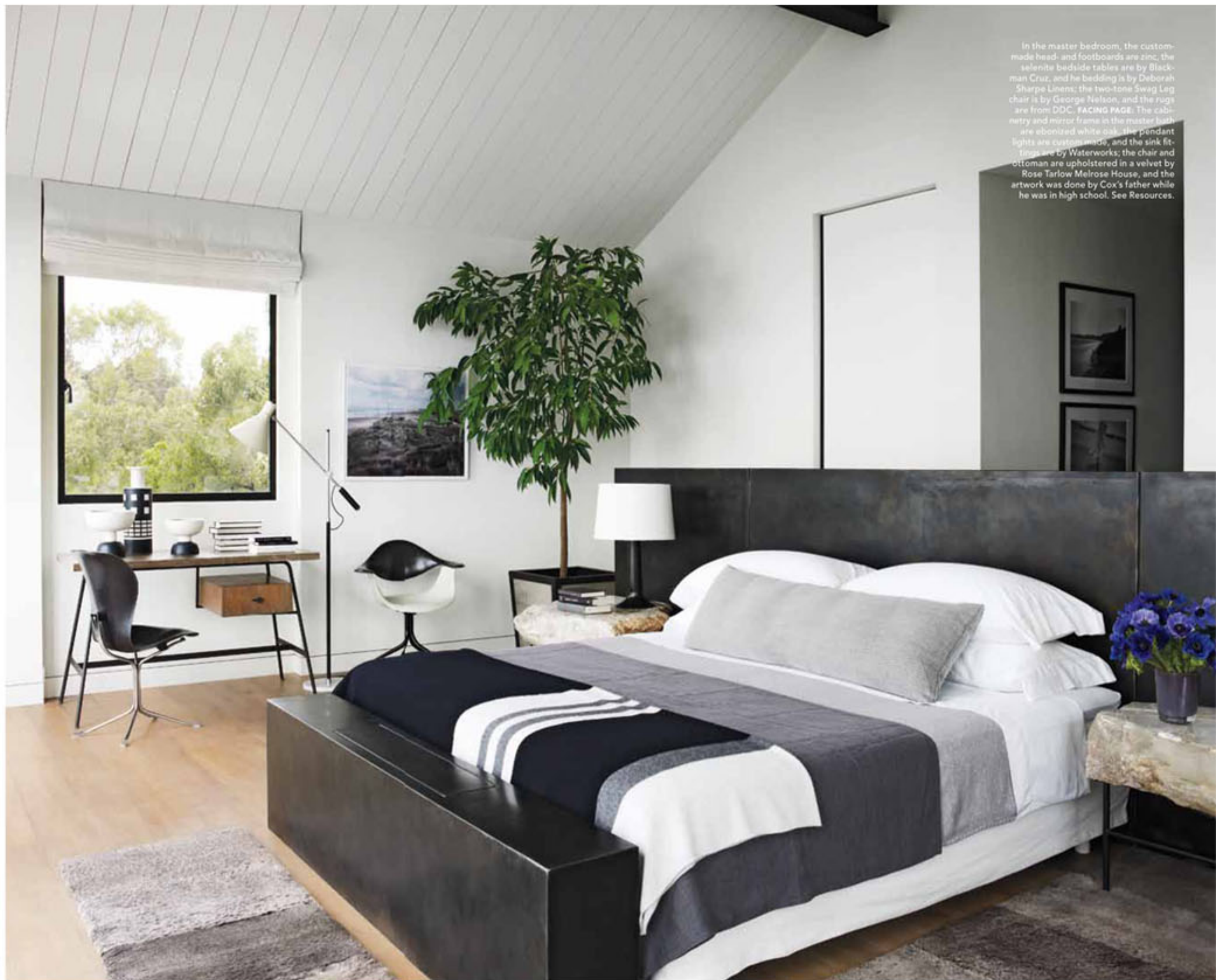


Cox cannily invited Kovac to a party at her former house so he could see how guests interacted and moved through the space. "The whole flow of that afternoon and evening really drove the design of the new house," he says. "We took everything that worked well there and made it better here."

The main kitchen looks out over the deck and pool and beyond, to the vast expanse of sea and sky. "With the doors open, you feel like you're completely outside," says Cox. The goal, Haenisch explains, was to have the ocean visible from as many parts of the house as possible. The whiteness of the interiors allows the majestic landscape to take priority. "The house sits on the property in a quiet way," he continues. The exterior and the outdoor deck were painted earth tones, to blend in with the surrounding trees.

"Malibu is all about being outside," says Haenisch. To that end, a smaller galley kitchen attached to the side of the screening house has a "hot-dog window" modeled after food trucks; from there, Cox's chef prepares snacks and serves drinks to guests gathered around the pool. (This also means that there's no after-party cleanup noise when it's time for Coco, Cox's seven-year-old daughter with actor David Arquette, to go to sleep.) A banquette surrounds a lava-rock fire pit that juts out over the descent to the ocean. "I have coffee there every day," Cox says.

The sense of openness carries throughout the rest of the house, where glass walls flood the rooms with light. In the master bedroom, French doors lead onto another deck overlooking the water. In the living room, oak floors and a flagstone fireplace further blur the boundaries between outdoors and in. Punchy artworks by Harland Miller, Massimo Vitali, and Kent Williams add color and humor. "Michael and Trip gave me everything I wanted," she says. "This is exactly how I want to live." ■



In the master bedroom, the custom-made head- and footboards are zinc, the selenite bedside tables are by Blackman Cruz, and the bedding is by Deborah Sharpe Linens; the two-tone Swag Leg chair is by George Nelson, and the rugs are from DDC. **FACING PAGE:** The cabinetry and mirror frame in the master bath are ebonized white oak, the pendant lights are custom-made, and the sink fittings are by Waterworks; the chair and ottoman are upholstered in a velvet by Rose Tarlow Melrose House, and the artwork was done by Cox's father while he was in high school. See Resources.