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Architect Richard Landry, AIA, designed this Mediterranean-inspired house to take full advantage of ocean and hillside views. The loggia in front overlooking the waterfall is the owner's favorite spot for relaxing with its fireplace, piped-in music and comfortable furniture.

A Clear Vision

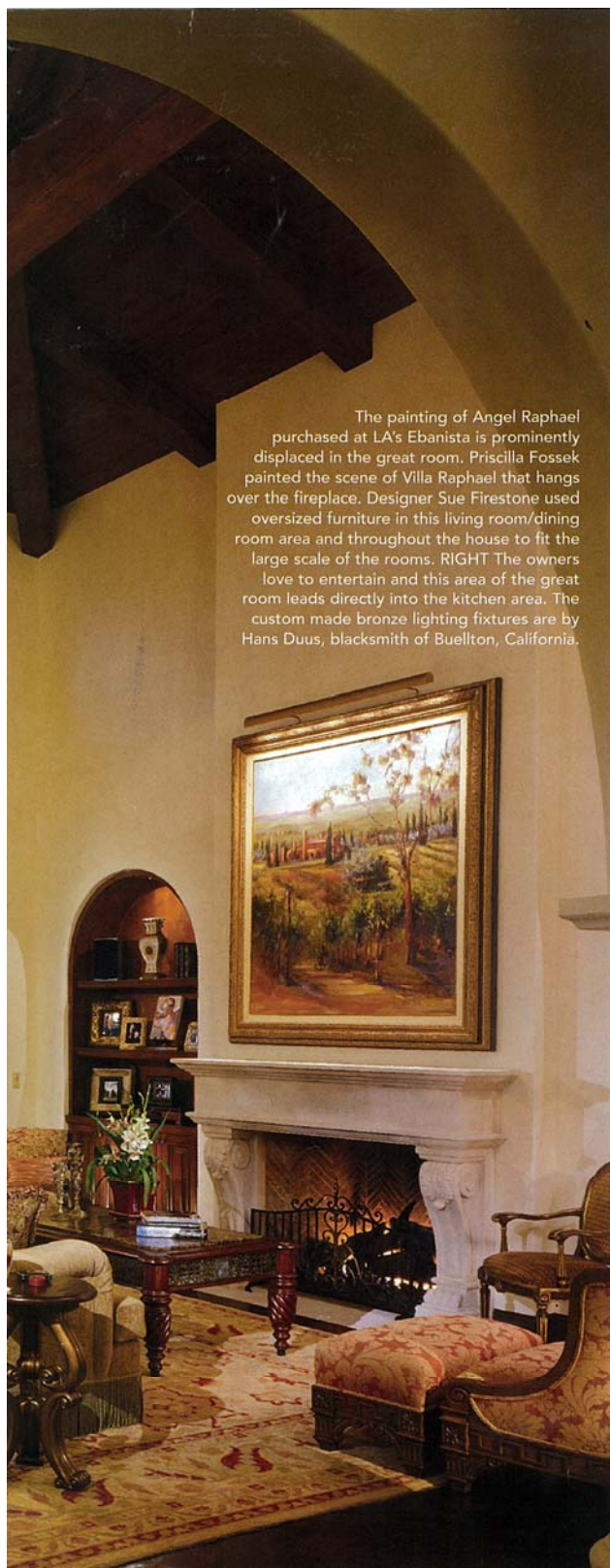
A Montecito Couple Working With
Architect Richard Landry, AIA Build Their
Dream Home With Views To The Sea

TEXT BY KATHY BRYANT PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERHARD PFEIFFER



Large arched windows look out on different vistas,
from the ocean to the verdant hillsides.





The painting of Angel Raphael purchased at LA's Ebanista is prominently displaced in the great room. Priscilla Fosseck painted the scene of Villa Raphael that hangs over the fireplace. Designer Sue Firestone used oversized furniture in this living room/dining room area and throughout the house to fit the large scale of the rooms. RIGHT The owners love to entertain and this area of the great room leads directly into the kitchen area. The custom made bronze lighting fixtures are by Hans Duus, blacksmith of Buellton, California.

Not every couple feel that building their dream house was so much fun that they'd like to repeat the experience. But that is the case for the owners of a recently-completed Montecito estate. They couldn't be happier about their experience with Los Angeles architect Richard Landry, AIA of Landry Design Group, along with associate-in-charge Todd Riley and Santa Barbara interior designer Sue Firestone of sfa design.

The Italian design inspired the name Villa Raphael. "When my husband recovered from an illness we asked ourselves what had we not done in our lives. The answer was "build a dream house." We call it Villa Raphael because Raphael translates to 'God has healed'." The Italian influence comes from her background and their many trips to Italy.

The house is sited on ten acres that overlook Montecito's hills and the Pacific Ocean beyond, with half of the acreage environmentally protected so it can never be built. "This is a great property," says Landry. "We spent a great deal of time walking it to identify the best vistas to site the rooms in order to take full advantage of all the elements. We positioned the rooms to relate to the views." The tree-lined winding road leading up to the property creates a dramatic entry to the hilltop estate. "We studied the approach to the house, making sure there was a sense of drama to it," says Landry. Large arched windows look out on different vistas, from the ocean to the verdant hillsides.

"This house looks so different at night because of all the special lighting inside and out," says the owner. All the lighting was custom designed.



The library is important to both the owners since they love to read. They bought the painting by Matthew Peak that's over the fireplace and then designed the room around it. OPPOSITE The master bedroom looks out over the reflection pool that creates a serene setting and is one of three water features on the estate.



The owner's input was important to the whole project. "I wanted the roof line to look like a village, so all the ceilings are different heights," she says. With the varied roof lines, the newly planted chardonnay vineyard, the citrus orchard, colorful agapanthus and the gentle waterfall, Villa Raphael could have been plucked directly from Tuscany.


"Our former house had an Asian theme, so for this house we started from scratch," she says. All the furniture was chosen by Firestone with input from the owners. The Mediterranean-style interior has distressed hardwood flooring and wrought iron fixtures.

"The greatest challenge of this project was the grand scale of the rooms, particularly the great room. We needed to make the living and dining areas distinct, yet fluid. We did this by filling the areas with luxurious furniture pieces to bring a human scale and to make the room both elegant and livable," says Firestone. "I picked furnishings that were rustic, yet elegant. The color motif features rust, bronze, gold, teal and other rich hues to complement the medium-to-dark woods used throughout the house." Scale was particularly important here, so the furniture is oversized to balance the high ceilings.

"I wanted a place where family and friends can gather, be with me when I cook and enjoy a part of everything this house has to offer," the owner says about the great room with its adjoining living, dining and kitchen areas. Cabinetry with beautiful wood inlays is found throughout. Over the fireplace in the living room is a painting of the Villa by Santa Barbara artist Priscilla Fossek, complete with its vineyard. The painting can be electronically raised, revealing a widescreen television. An oil painting of the Angel Raphael found at Ebanista in Los Angeles is on prominent display in the living dining area. The black walnut floor balances the beamed ceilings, with its wrought iron chandeliers.

A Venetian carnival puppet dressed in antique pastel beaded fabrics is placed in a sculptured niche leading to the master bedroom. A small reflecting pool, rather than the predictable patio, adjoins the room and adds an element of tranquility. "We had so many patio areas that we decided to create a pond instead, which complements the waterfall in the front yard near the library windows. The ponds create the illusion that water flows through the house," says the owner.





At night the house takes on a whole new look. Outdoor lighting is by Mike Gambino of Gambino Landscape Lighting. From the front doors, a view of the ocean is clearly visible.

OPPOSITE LEFT The wine cellar is a favorite spot, with the mural on the far wall extending the horizon.

OPPOSITE RIGHT The loggia is the perfect place to read, relax and enjoy a casual meal.

"There are three water features on the property," says Landry. "Since the owners didn't want a swimming pool, we added a stream in the front court that ends in a pool near the library window. When you near the house, you pass over the stream on a bridge that establishes a serene atmosphere. The major water feature cascades downhill on axis with the loggia. Then there's the pool near the master bedroom."

"We both love to read, so we had to have this library," says the owner. So important is reading to them, that her husband even has all the books cataloged according to the Dewey Decimal System. "We bought the oil painting by Matthew Peak titled 'The Ring' and designed the room around it," she says. The fireplace adds warmth on cool evenings and the dramatic chandelier from Fine Art Lamps helps tie the room together.

"We placed the library near the master suite because the owners both read all the time," says Landry. "We made sure all the rooms were in areas that were easily accessible to our clients. This was a house for a couple who understand their lifestyle and were wonderfully receptive to ideas on a level that is truly rare."

A spiral staircase leads downstairs to a rustic foyer where guests can sample fine wines from the adjacent wine cellar and take a peek at the owner's eleven hundred square feet model train room. The work-in-progress miniature village with trains, houses and landscaping will be a master work when it is finished. "This room is the largest room in the house," laughs the owner. Next to that is a windowed room with a large worktable, counter space and cupboards for her projects. Although the main house has only two bedrooms, there is a separate guest-house for their children and grandchildren on the property.

The owner's favorite spot is the loggia that opens directly from the great room. It has indoor/outdoor furnishings for entertaining or just relaxing. Here she can sit outside, listen to the piped-in music, enjoy the fireplace on cool days and knit her shawls. The water feature not only adds a soothing sound, but also can be protection from fires if needed.

"Every room in this house makes perfect sense for the way we live," she says. "We have designed this house specifically for us and use all the rooms. There is no wasted space. It's wonderful to live in the dream we envisioned." 41

