

B E Y O N D

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C O M F O R T Z O N E

A designer-and-architect team persuades a Palm Springs homeowner to explore unfamiliar territory.

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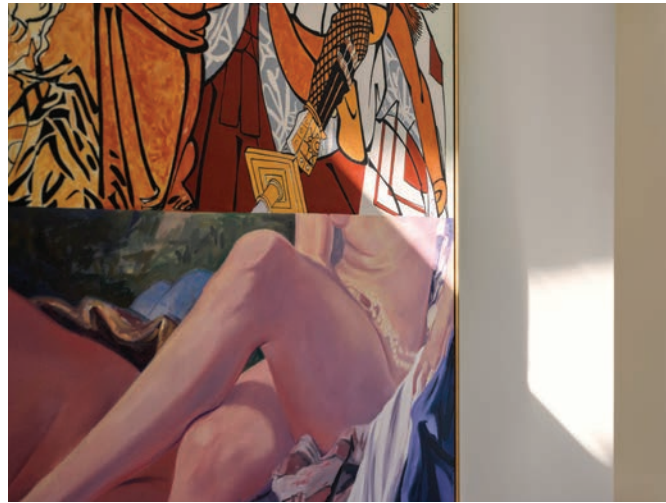
MARC

Marc Walters and Yannis Bourodimos' house easily accommodated 200 people for Palm Desert Food & Wine's Celebrity Chef Reception in March. Yet the abundant space seems just as comfortable in its skin when the scene is intimate. Much of its savoir-faire results from the confident dialog taking place between architecture, interior design, and a museum-worthy art collection.

Though the placements bring out the best in dynamic sculptures, paintings, and photography, Walters states that the house "was not designed around" the art.

"I wanted to keep [the process] flexible for Sean and Sam," he explains, referring to architect Sean Lockyer of Studio AR&D Architects and interior designer Sam Cardella. That said, Walters acknowledges a predilection for big and bold creative statements — thus his "one wall, one piece of art" approach.

Walters worked with Cardella on his previous home in Palm Springs' Deepwell neighborhood: a 1965 "bachelor pad" by architect Stan Sackley that *Playboy* featured in 1966. This time, Walters sought the designer's assistance for ground-up construction in a south Palm Springs neighborhood.



Above: Oil on canvas by Jay Backstrand. Opposite: Marc Walters and Yannis Bourodimos next to "Untitled Head," a glazed ceramic sculpture by Jun Kaneko. Page 44: Carved wood "Silla De Pie y Mano" chair by Pedro Friedeberg.

"He knows me. He knows my taste," Walters says. "There's a 'look' Sam provides. I have seen his other projects. They're uniformly sexy, warm, and inviting." Cardella encouraged his client to move beyond his personal comfort zone and embrace the unexpected.

"Sam is great at nudging me to consider materials and elements that are new to me," Walters says, acknowledging his initial rejection of a major component that decorates the exterior and key parts of the interior. Lockyer and Cardella convinced him to take a chance on walls of board-formed concrete, which imparts a wood-grain finish to the aggregate.

"Sam and I felt strongly about it," Lockyer recalls. "We had thick walls dividing spaces, and [that technique] lends an organic look and texture."

Walters previously had built a Rocky Mountain lodge-style house in Central Oregon with an abundance of orange-toned Corten steel. He didn't want his sunny Palm Springs residence to "look like it was on fire" but simultaneously worried about the visual coldness of gray concrete. Cardella and Lockyer convinced him that an incorporation of brown tones would warm up interior spaces.

"A lot of elements make that journey toward warming up the grays," Walters says, pointing to brass strips in the gray terrazzo floor's saw cuts as a prime example. Brass also trims the elongated fireplace above a granite hearth along the board-formed concrete wall that divides the living room and primary suite and continues to the exterior as the main spine of the home.

"Interior finishes are warm and tactile," Cardella says. They include teak for walls, cabinetry, and the pivot front door, charred Douglas fir ceilings that contrast the teak's smooth grain and introduce more brown, and area rugs in varying piles.





A “floating” teak wall separates the living room from a TV room with lounge-style seating and teak display shelves. To the south, past a glass-fronted chiller that cradles wine bottles in leather slings, sits an office.

An expansive space enveloping living, kitchen, and dining areas serves as the home’s physical and functional core. Walters admits that he uses the office space “more for storage than work” and instead favors a barstool at the kitchen island for work on his laptop. The Molar stools by Blackman Cruz were essentially the only items of furniture Walters kept from the Deepwell residence, which he sold furnished.

“I like to entertain and cook, so the kitchen was one of the most important parts of the house for me,” he says.

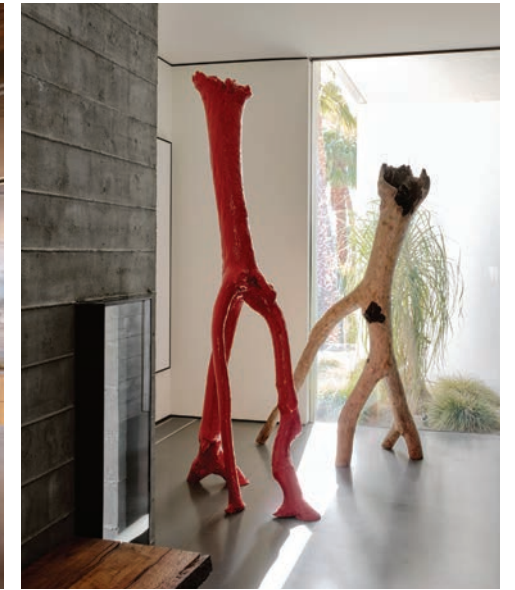
“It has good circulation and is intuitive,” Lockyer remarks. Unlike in a traditional design with countertops anchored to walls, food preparation and cooking take center stage here, with ample gathering space surrounding two islands — the larger of which accommodates barstools and two cooktops beneath a hood.

A dozen leather Cab chairs designed by Mario Bellini for Cassina surround a custom, live-edge, teak table. Above it, a handmade Nana chandelier by Aqua Creations in a trio of silk fins provides an ambient glow. For smaller parties, a marble-topped table in the living room accommodates five for dining and games. Above the fireplace, a triptych of drapery, partially unwoven canvas sculptures by Ko Kirk Yamahira adds a punch of tactile red and complements the courtyard’s spiraled black-and-silver ceramic head by Jun Kaneko, seen while inside through a west-facing wall of glass. Walters’ collection also includes two of Kaneko’s “Dango” sculptures, both taller than 7 feet: a triangular piece in the courtyard and, in the entryway, a rounded column that counterbalances a horizontal, wall-mounted, clay sculpture by Joanna Poag.

In the primary suite, a teak bed cantilevers from the north wall, while a ceiling-suspended hammock by Jim Zivic for Ralph Pucci invites napping or lounging.

Both sides of the home’s second spine (dividing the primary bedroom and bathroom) feature an embossed and vertically raked, black matrix granite with shimmering silver and gray highlights that, from a distance, resembles a textural-fabric wallcovering. Here too are brass inserts that match those in the terrazzo flooring.

The sweeping walls of glass continue in the primary suite, offering more exterior focal points: a cross-legged figure in stone by Boaz Vaadia and a tall prickly pear cactus set in a pool of water amid smooth stones. The latter installation was another design element requiring persuasion.



Clockwise from top left: Kitchen counters float away from walls to take center stage in the home’s core space. A pair of Joshua tree sculptures. “Storm at Sea #4” by Jay Mark Johnson hangs in a guest room. “Sphere Lena 23” by Martin Herbst.

“I didn’t like the idea, but I am so happy we did this,” Walters says.

Stretching the full length of the bedroom on the opposite side of the granite wall, the bathroom features an open, rainfall shower area. Set at an angle, a flat-topped “boulder” made of fiberglass suggests a freestanding bathtub.

“Without the boulder, the shower would look like a big box,” Walters says, also pointing out detail elements like brass drain inserts that match the strips in the matrix granite wall.

Outside, an overhead trellis extends west from the bathroom to a cabana at the north end of the swimming pool.

The guest wing provides a corridor for more art, including a large-scale oil-on-canvas diptych by Jay Backstrand. Beach-themed panoramic photographs on aluminum by Jay Mark Johnson (11 and 12 feet long) claim attention in guest bedrooms. Walters notes that they successfully defy an instinct to let the length of a headboard limit the width of an artwork above it.

“That’s something I love about Sam. He is willing to do something different from what you would think,” Walters says. He points out “surprises” that Cardella incorporated into the primary suite’s walk-in closet and the guest bedrooms: parallel mirrors that create an infinity illusion. In the bedrooms, the mirrors stand perpendicular to exterior glass walls so that their



One of three works by Kaneko sits outside the guest wing. Opposite: "Pacific Coast," another panorama by Johnson, hangs above a guest bed.

A World in Motion

Given his inclinations toward the visual realm, it makes sense that Marc Walters subscribes to design magazines. His primary activities, however, lean toward those that require a bit more energy than reading: hiking and sport climbing.

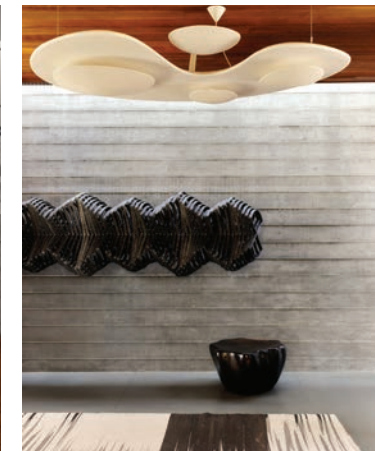
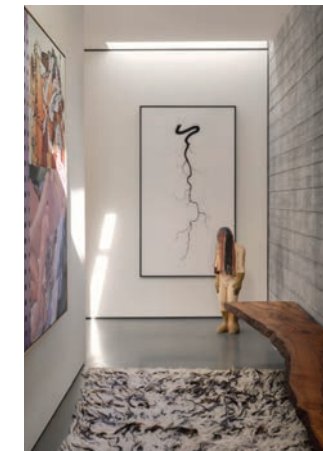
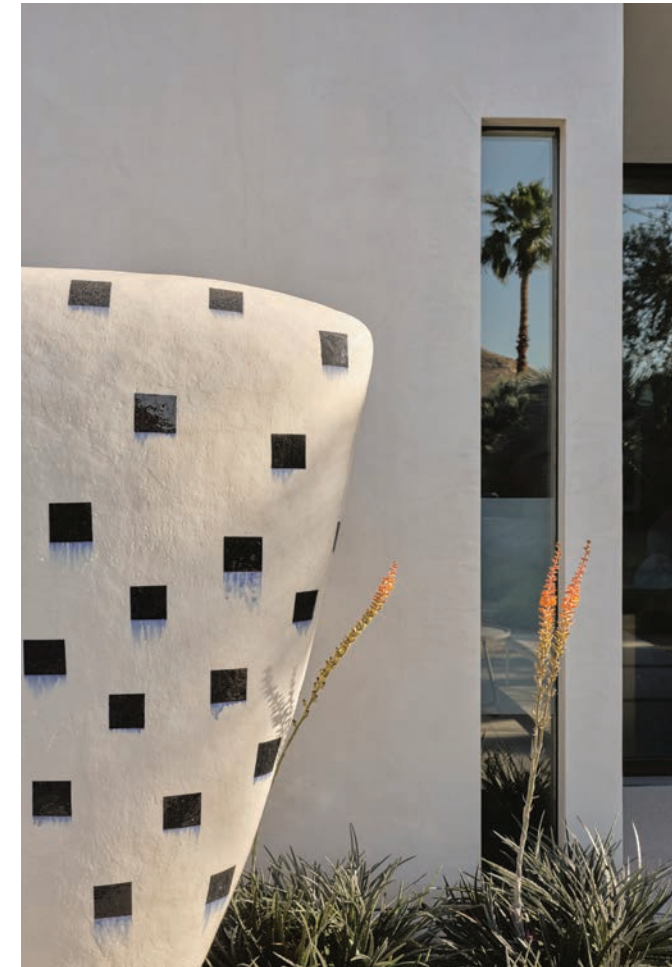
He has undertaken the challenging trail from Palm Springs Art Museum to Palm Springs Aerial Tramway 15 times and twice continued on to the San Jacinto summit before descending to the tram's mountain station. He climbed Yosemite's El Capitan in the 1980s and Half Dome in the '90s. He climbed in Kentucky's Red River Gorge this spring, and, more locally, hits the rocks in Lucerne Valley's New Jack City.

"I like sports," Walters says. "I was a ski racer in high school and have gone snow mountaineering in the United States, France, and Switzerland. I have been scuba diving all over the world: Fiji, Indonesia, Egypt, Mexico, Bonaire, Palau."

As much as Walters loves living in Palm Springs, he officially remains a resident of Washington, where he has a house and family members in Gig Harbor. His ties to that state also relate to the Tacoma-based HVAC wholesale supply company begun by his father more than 75 years ago.

Walters had not yet met his future husband, Yannis Bourodimos, while planning the south Palm Springs home. But the dream kitchen suits their common interest in cuisine and entertaining.

"As Yannis is a super-talented food photographer and food stylist, we anticipate cooking wonderful meals together in our home," Walters says.



Clockwise from above: "Triangle Dango" by Kaneko. The couple relaxes fireside. A wall-mounted clay sculpture by Joanna Poag. A black-and-white root by Brian Borello hangs above a figurative sculpture by J.D. Perkin.

reflections of the outdoors give the impression they are floor-to-ceiling windows.

"I always use mirror in an architectural rather than decorative form," Cardella says.

Glass walls and skylights bathe the house in sun. Though a 70-foot-long overhang extends up to 15 feet beyond the glass wall, only the section running from the indoor dining space to an outdoor dining table continues the ceiling uninterrupted.

"One of the key things Sean and Sam did is the gap that lets in light," Walters says. That space for open sky also preserves mountain views and accommodates a tall yucca plant near the Kaneko head.

Amid plantings, a line of boulders — including a particularly elongated one that had to be installed before the house structure precluded access — highlights the courtyard. But the black granite-lined, infinity-edge pool — with a separate but matching spa outside the primary bedroom — truly commands the exterior space. Its mirror-like surface suggests a reflecting pool. Even the underwater shelf and steps remain cloaked without close inspection.

"The pool itself is a work of art," Lockyer says.

It is worth mentioning that Walters had his neighbors' interests in mind during the architectural design process. "We lowered the ceilings," he says, noting that original plans would have blocked mountain views of the few homes east of his property. "We put up story poles [at the planned height of 13 feet 8 inches]. I am not interested in wrecking a neighbor's views. That is not a good way to make friends." So they chose to lower the ceilings to 9 and 10 feet.

Walters points out that the roofline, which he wanted to be flat to impart a "Zen-like serenity to the architecture" appears impossibly thin.

"That was pure magic," Lockyer says, though he acknowledges it goes beyond that. "It looks effortless but was far from effortless to achieve." The engineered combination of steel and laminated timber is structurally sound and waterproof, even tapered to 1½-inch thickness.

The home certainly has and will continue to impress guests. Next up will be members of Bourodimos' family, who will fly in from Greece when the happy couple weds there this November.