

Diligently designed

Owners were picky about home's layout

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View of the house from the water

There are people who have designed a dream home. And there are people like Andras and Julie Hites, who went to great lengths to design every tiny detail that went into the sleek five-bedroom, 5.5-bath home on Sandpiper Spit in Point Richmond they built in 2001.

The couple went so far as to create closets with enough room for a specific number of shoes and build living areas large enough to fit certain pieces of furniture.

When they drew up designs for the home, which was originally supposed to occupy one lot, they realized there was no way it would be as big as they wanted it to be.



The street elevation offers little about the views. The exterior materials are stained resawn red cedar and verdi-gris corrugated copper siding.

So they bought the lot next door and proceeded to build a home that gives new meaning to the phrase "custom built." The 7,257-square-foot home hit the market last week, priced at \$4.695 million.

"When we first designed the home, we had it set for a three-car garage, but then we were like, that's not going to work, we're really going to need a four-car garage," **Andras Hites** said. "And it just so happened that day the lot next door came up for sale; I immediately bought it, too, and then we started construction."

The home's secluded drive is now an exclusive patch of land, but when Hites first discovered the property while boating in the area in the late 1980s, it was a vacant foreclosure lot. "There were no homes on the lot or anything, but I was just amazed by the location," he said.

Hites, an avid boater, was intrigued by the idea of owning a piece of property in what is considered one of the best sailing spots in the Bay Area. He hired award-winning architect **Robert Nebolon Architects, AIA** in Berkeley to design a home to accentuate the property's expansive water views.

The architect convinced the Hites to conceal the view until well inside of the home instead of revealing the view with large glass front doors or even from the entry hall. "We didn't want to give anything away to early." says Nebolon. Also, the architect

specified stained rough-sawn red cedar and verdi-gris corrugated copper siding—both exterior materials designed to age gracefully in the harsh marine climate. “Any other materials would simply age poorly and require constant maintenance to keep a tidy appearance,” says Nebolon. “Also, we all liked the California fishing town vibe that one found once down Monterey’s Sardine Row or on piers up and down the California coast—all in the 1920’s—mostly painted wood-sided buildings—some with corrugated roofs. The Monterey Bay Aquarium uses a corrugated cement board siding in places. We used corrugated copper wall panels and stained red cedar siding instead. Then, once inside the house, the entire back of the house explodes into glass walls to showcase the incredible water views.”



The water side of the house has vast expanses of glass and decks. Powder-coated aluminum trellises provide solar protection as well as a computerized interior shade system

And that it does. Huge sets of floor-to-ceiling windows look out to the 134 feet of water frontage the home occupies. The views are best showcased in the main living area, which has soaring ceilings and room enough for a billiards table. There are also two sets of gliding glass doors on both levels and expansive outdoor patio areas.

The property's views include the San Francisco skyline, the bay, the Bay Bridge, Point Richmond Marina, Angel Island, Marin County, Mt. Tamalpais and the San Rafael Bridge. Hites said they're the best views he has seen in the entire Bay Area.



The kitchen has incredible view of San Francisco, Angel Island, and Mount Tamalpais.



The tall windows in the game room provide more views. The glass corners expand the room across the bay.

"My wife and I laugh about the fact that so many people buy homes on the water on the other side of the bay [in highly sought-after Marin County communities], and they get to look at Oakland and Berkeley ... but I think I get the better view when we get to face Marin and still get the San Francisco skyline."

Other highlights of the home include Hites' office, which has mahogany desks with multiple work stations, and a kitchen that would make **Gordon Ramsay** blush. Larger than some restaurants, the home's island kitchen has Brazilian granite countertops, three sinks, two built-in

refrigerators, a dishwasher and two cooktop ovens with eight burners.

"We designed the kitchen so that four to five people could be cooking in it at the same time," Hites said.

"Part of the reason we did it was because my wife was always saying that we'd be in the living area watching TV and football, while she'd be in the kitchen getting the food ready, and we wanted the whole family to be able to be together.

"So whether you're watching TV or playing pool in the living area, we're within vision of each other. We don't feel compartmentalized."



The house has a large raised yard (also on piers) that afford access to the docks below.

The property has a private, 58-foot deep concrete boat dock, an outdoor barbecue with gas burners and an eight-person hot tub, as well as a play structure surrounded by child-safe ground padding.

Pacific Union International agent **Josh Burns**, who is listing the home, says the outdoor amenities make the property appealing to multiple types of buyers.

"It appeals to boat lovers, people with families and people that just like to entertain," he said. "I've never seen anything like it since I've been an agent."

After occupying the home for the better part of a decade, Hites and his family have decided to move up into the foothills in Calaveras County and live on land where they can have farm animals.

While Hites is excited about the change of pace, leaving the home on Sandpiper Spit will be emotional. "It brings tears to my eyes thinking about selling this place after we spent so much time designing the house," he said. "And I'll miss having all those views, because the home is basically all glass. We obviously won't have the water views we did with this home, but it'll still be an interesting experience."

(Note: the house was sold to All-Pro NFL running back and local Cal legend Marshawn Lynch)



The entry courtyard leads to stainless steel doors. The curved corrugated copper wall contains the shell-shaped stairs