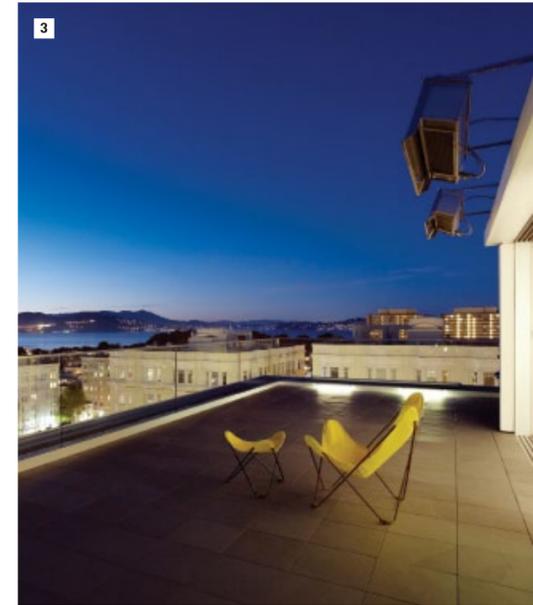
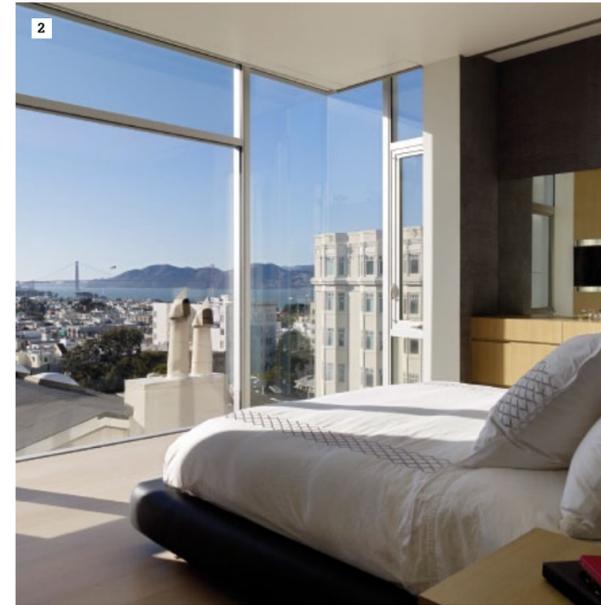


## Corner View, at a Cost

A CONTROVERSIAL RUSSIAN HILL OVERLOOK

BY LAUREN MURROW

ONE NEED ONLY SURVEY SAN Francisco's Jenga-like crop of impending high-rises to glean that space is a scarce commodity here. So when a local investor came across a Russian Hill two-flat nestled into a 50-by-55-foot lot on a private cul-de-sac, fully detached from surrounding buildings, he knew that he'd discovered an urban gem. "It's really an island of sorts," says architect Ross Levy of Levy Art & Architecture, who oversaw the project, "which makes it a fantastic place to be." >



The owner bought the building solely for its location and view, knowing that he wanted to build his new home from scratch. But his plan to convert the two-unit building into a single-family home turned out to be a sticking point for the San Francisco Planning Department and his future Russian Hill neighbors, resulting in drawn-out negotiations—so drawn out, in fact, that from the time he purchased the spot in 2000 to move-in day in 2012, he went from being a bachelor to a husband and father of three.

At first glance, one would never surmise the presence of toddlers—now one, four, and six years old—in this three-story expanse of concrete, whitewashed oak, and glass. In fact, the kids' bedrooms are among the few departures from the austere aesthetic.

"The owners envisioned this super-crip, hard-lined space," says Levy, all anchored by the living room, where a mitered glass corner affords unobstructed views to the north and west. "We started from that corner and worked our way out." The result is sleek and nearly seamless. There's no jutting hardware, no doorjamb interrupting the glass, and no visible shades. Even the garbage is hidden: With the push of a button, a sophisticated trash-sorting chute channels waste into compost, landfill, and recycling bins two floors below.

For all its starkness, the hilltop glass box appears to glow from within. A 6-foot fireplace spans the living room, its flames reflecting off glass walls. Upstairs, industrial-strength heat lamps warm the 50-by-20-foot roof deck. And at night, the Bocci chandelier—an artful feat of cast glass and braided metal that dangles three stories—gleams from the home's core. □

1. "We had this notion of an elevated cube," says architect Ross Levy. "The band of glass separates the heavy concrete, making it appear to float."

2. The master bedroom offers views of the bay and surrounding historic buildings.

3. Overhead heat lamps warm the spacious roof deck.

4. Sunset views from the northwest-facing living room.

