

# Space-Age Aerie

*A Bluff-Top Double-Wide Makes a Dramatic Landing*

BY ARNIE COOPER

PHOTOS BY BRENT WINEBRENNER



The living room's spare décor cedes pride of place to the spectacular view of Pt. Dume's lush landscape. The wall canvas disappears to reveal a flat-screen TV.

**B**ruce Abbott pushes open the living room's sliding glass pocket doors, revealing a panorama dominated by the Santa Monica Mountains and the azure swirls of the Pacific Ocean.

Together with architect George Keossaian, Abbott has converted an aging double-wide manufactured home into what they now describe as a "cross between a jewel box and a spaceship." More on the galactic bling later; for now it's best to focus on the drama of the 270-degree view.

"The breeze always kicks up in the afternoon, says Abbott, "and the flowing white curtains provide romance beyond belief."

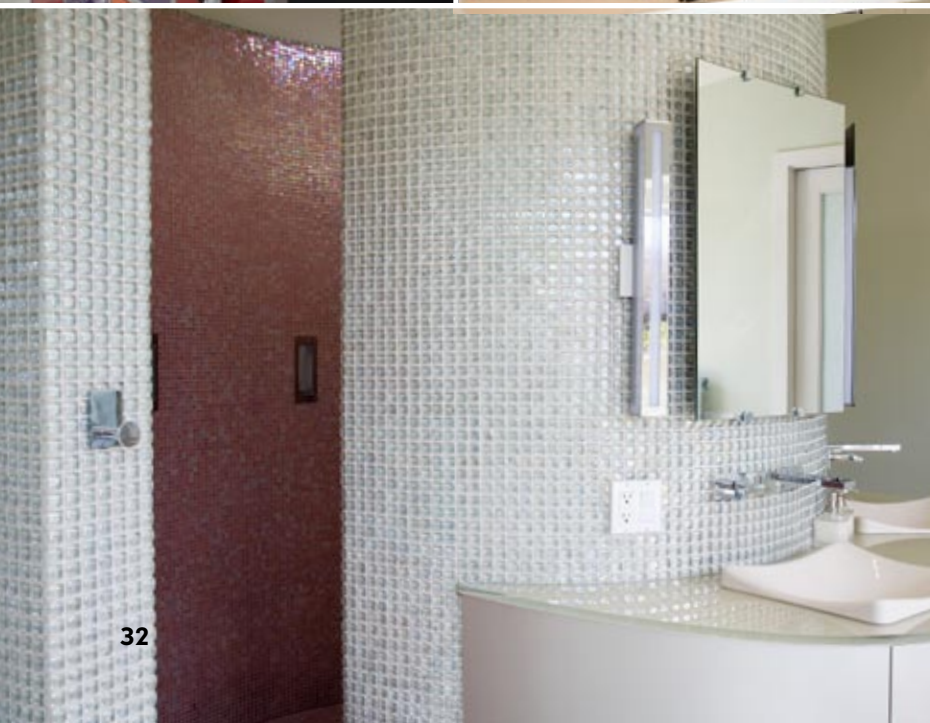
The designer and co-owner of Malibu Elevations, the design-build firm responsible for creating the Butterfly House, Abbott may sound like a frustrated poet. But standing at that seamless border between the airy indoors and the elements, it's hard not to get caught up by how perfectly this bluff-top mobile home fits into the aesthetics of "The Bu." That's the nickname locals use for L.A.'s premiere coastal locale, Malibu.

Malibu is home to the Point Dume Club, a gated mobile-home park whose perch overlooking Zuma Beach offers a unique combination of tranquility and affordability. This is where the Butterfly sits.

Says Keossaian, "Most of the homes here have the same view as the \$20 million homes across the road." Add to that amenities like tennis and basketball courts, a swimming pool, and spa and sauna as well as an annual Thanksgiving dinner free to all residents, and it's easy to understand why, as Keossaian says, "People just don't want to leave."

In fact, you'll be even more inclined to stick around if you spend just a couple of minutes inside one of Abbott's and Keossaian's creations—including this three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath remodel completed two years ago.

continued



From the opaque pink stained glass and slanted walls of the master bedroom to a one-of-a-kind shower inspired by a nautilus shell, the Butterfly (so named because of its roof angles) reflects both the team's attention to detail and their ability to transform a vision into reality.

"It's a joint effort," Abbott says, "to get to know your client and where they're headed so you can help them define the kind of place they want to live in. We designed this house for a young couple who are really kind of fearless. They're not afraid of color or design and they're not afraid of change."

It should be no surprise, then, that the entrance to the home features a privacy wall with an irregular pattern of circular cutouts that call to mind a wedge of Swiss cheese. Once inside you'll be greeted by an assemblage of faux-painted, customized candle boxes that, when viewed late at night, seem to be floating on water.

If you can turn away from the seductive outdoor vista to face the kitchen, you'll appreciate the spaceship reference. "Take a good look at the 'George Jetson' angles," Keossaian says, pointing to the sloping ceiling at the rear of the bright, expansive galley. Anchored by mother-of-pearl terrazzo floors and a silver and white palette, the sleek contours of the space exude a definite twenty-first-century modern sensibility. A stainless steel Thermador gas range reinforces the effect.

Despite the futuristic vibe, the room manages to convey an organic quality through natural materials such as luminescent mother-of-pearl tiles that set off CaesarStone crushed quartzite countertops. Glittering ceiling lights recall the star-filled nights so common on this section of the Southern California coast.

Moreover, thanks to the unusual use of pearlescent paint on the cabinets, the changing light throughout the day alters the kitchen "so much you would not believe," says Abbott. "As the sun starts to go down, it picks up the pearl essence and becomes otherworldly. You'll see parts of the cabinetry glowing and other parts in really



recessed shadow and it looks like "Wow! What is that?"

One might say the same thing about the rectangular fire pits a few steps away on the ample deck. "The flames just come up through the colored glass and you get what looks like a campfire. Everyone thinks fire pits have to be circular, but they don't need to be."

Part of the Butterfly's aesthetic appeal is clearly cutting-edge. appeal. And what better way to add a futuristic flourish than by installing a Crestron home automation system? At the touch of a button or two, the owners are able to control the temperature, the lighting, and the sound system. "They can even call in through their cell phone and turn on the exterior or interior lights or the Jacuzzi," Keossaian says.

Point Dume Club's 300 homes offer a diversity of architectural styles, ranging from Polynesian and Craftsman to mid-century modern and space-age.

The Malibu Elevations partners have remodeled over a dozen homes here, yet the Butterfly House stands out as their pride and joy. "You'll never see anything like that again," Abbott says.

The residents of Point Dume are as diverse as the architectural styles of the homes they live in, yet they've banded together to create a genuine sense of community. Says Abbott, "When you first move in here you think, 'I'm not really sure about this,' and then you start realizing how it's definitely a cool place to live."

He should know. Both he and Keossaian live and work here: Abbott in a beautiful Spanish revival and Keossaian in a California bungalow. The Butterfly's owners agree. "They're very happy," Abbott says. "They love being here."

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Opposite, clockwise from the top: The master bedroom features glass pocket doors that recede to provide wide-open access to the deck; custom-designed polished-steel lettering says "retro" with a capital R; owners and builders George Keossaian and Bruce Abbott in the kitchen; enveloping curves and intricate tile work highlight the master bath; a Parisian sink cabinet brings high style to the home's second bath.

Above: Indoor/outdoor living at its best. The deck features modular seating and a gas-heated, ultra-linear tile firepit.