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In California's Silicon Valley, an Architecturally Striking Home Asks \$33 Million

The seller interviewed 200 architects before hiring a firm to design the modern, sculptural house

BY KATHERINE CLARKE | DECEMBER 9, 2020



In California's Silicon Valley, a modern home with a distinctive mahogany and poured concrete facade is coming on the market for \$33 million.

Located in Portola Valley, one of the country's wealthiest towns, the house sits on nearly 4 acres and offers views that stretch all the way to the San Francisco skyline. The more than 8,000-square-foot main house, completed around 2013, tapers down the hillside with large, rectangular walls of glass framed by mahogany. The interior of the large structure has travertine and walnut floors and mahogany wood ceilings. A custom blue sunshade by the entrance was designed to serve as the property's architectural "exclamation point," said the owner, Nicole Vidalakis.

Ms. Vidalakis, a psychologist and Utah native, is the daughter of real-estate developer Nick Vidalakis. A longtime fan of Modernist architecture—in particular, the work of architects like John Lautner, Frank Lloyd Wright and Oscar

Niemeyer—she purchased the land for about \$3.7 million in 2009 and planned a home that would be "like a piece of sculpture that someone happens to live in," she said.

A self-described "demanding client," Ms. Vidalakis said she interviewed about 200 architects before tapping Robert Swatt of Swatt | Miers Architects for the project. "I told the architect, 'I don't want it to look like a house, I want it to look like a beautiful object,'" she said.

Ms. Vidalakis has filled the house with mid-century furniture and colorful and quirky art. In a living room, a metallic mannequin rescued from a bankrupt department store reclines on a custom walnut bench designed to look like a series of matchsticks that fold into a curve. A colorful row of smiley faced portraits by artist Donald Baechler are displayed on the wall. In the master suite, 1960s Murano glass chandeliers hang over the Missoni-patterned bed.

"I wanted a house that kept me company so a lot of my art is people. I have a really active imagination," said Ms. Vidalakis, who might be willing to sell most of the art and furniture with the property if the buyer was interested. "In my opinion, it's site specific so I would love it if someone appreciated it."

The property also has an infinity edge pool, an outdoor kitchen, a garage and two separate guest facilities. The land includes mature 100-year-old oak trees, olive trees, wisteria and Japanese maple trees. Pomegranates, limes, avocados, apples and lemons also grow there. Ms. Vidalakis said she also planted some rare fruits from Asia.

Ms. Vidalakis said she is selling because she is ready to move on to her next project. "I've lived here and it's fantastic and I'm sad but I don't want more than one boyfriend," she joked. "I'm the kind of person who's into whoever I'm with."

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