

\$33M Custom-Built Mansion in Portola Valley, CA, Is a 'Livable Work of Art'

BY CLAUDINE ZAP | DEC 18, 2020



An artful home in Portola Valley, CA, has landed on the market for \$33 million.

Located in Silicon Valley, the “livable work of art” took five years to build in one of the country’s wealthiest communities. The custom-built mansion was designed to show off the owner’s eccentric style, as well as her quirky decor and art collection.

Completed in 2014, the project was conceived by Nicole Vidalakis after she purchased the land in 2009 for \$3.7 million.

After what has been described as an exhaustive search, Vidalakis, a psychologist and daughter of the real estate developer Nick Vidalakis, tapped the architecture firm Swatt / Miers Architects to collaborate on her vision.

“I told the architect, ‘I don’t want it to look like a house, I want it to look like a beautiful object,’” Nicole Vidalakis told the Wall Street Journal.

The result is a concrete, glass, and wood structure that blends right into the surrounding semirural landscape and takes full advantage of the San Francisco Bay Area vistas. The property includes

a main residence, plus a home office, garage, and two guesthouses.

“It was definitely an all-in labor of love,” says the listing agent, Michael Dreyfus of Golden Gate Sotheby’s International Realty.

He notes that the attention to detail in the project—both inside and out—has resulted in a harmonious whole.

“The landscape, interiors, architecture, everything works. It all works together,” he says.

That includes site-specific art and furnishings, which the owner selected or commissioned for the home. If a buyer is interested, Vidalakis will entertain offers to keep any or all of the decor and artwork with the house, Dreyfus notes.

The agent adds that Vidalakis is selling because she wants to move on to a new project.

The dramatic 7,965-square-foot home is set on a sloped lot and features three levels, six bedrooms, and double-height walls of glass framed with wood that take in views of the bay.

Travertine floors extend from the inside to the outdoors. An eye-catching staircase ascends to all levels. A third-level roof deck offers views of San Francisco.

The main living area features a great room with a living area where a silver mannequin, salvaged from the now-shuttered I. Magnin department store, occupies a curved sofa.

The dining area looks onto the landscape, and the kitchen also takes advantage of the views. A ground-level bedroom suite is now being used as an office.

The property, indoors and out, features a wealth of sculptures and artwork. Up the wood staircase that mirrors the wood paneling on the ceilings, you’ll find the master suite, which includes a bed upholstered in a Missoni print and vintage Murano glass chandeliers.

Outside, the 3.7 acres are filled with mature oak, cedar, and pine trees, a 75-foot infinity-edge pool lined by a wood deck, and an outdoor kitchen. A giant blue sunshade provides coverage by the pool.

The mainly drought-tolerant plantings, which cover a large expanse of land, are easy to maintain. A landscaped courtyard also provides protected outdoor space.

Beyond the funky interior choices, the home has grabbed attention for what it offers on a grand scale: space, guest quarters, home offices, and gatherings without the need to leave the premises.

“People are looking at home in a whole different way, and are trying to improve their house on all levels,” Dreyfus says, noting how buyers’ priorities have shifted during the pandemic. “A house like this you can entertain in, have family in.”

Portola Valley was once a pastoral haven for artists and academics, and its real estate values have skyrocketed since the town incorporated in the early 1960s. It currently has 36 homes for sale, which spend a brisk 38 days on the market on average, with a median price of \$3,988,000.

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