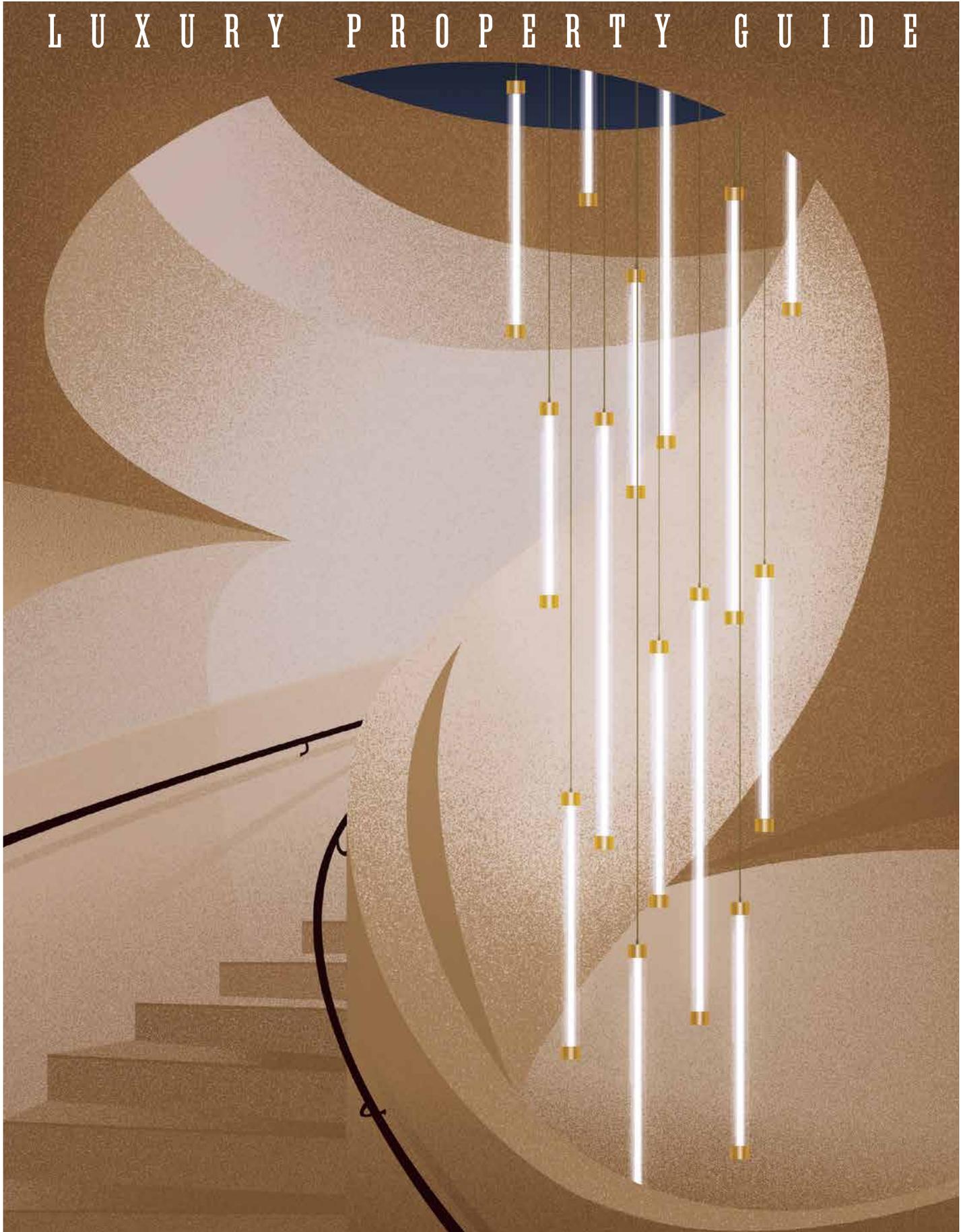


# Robb Report

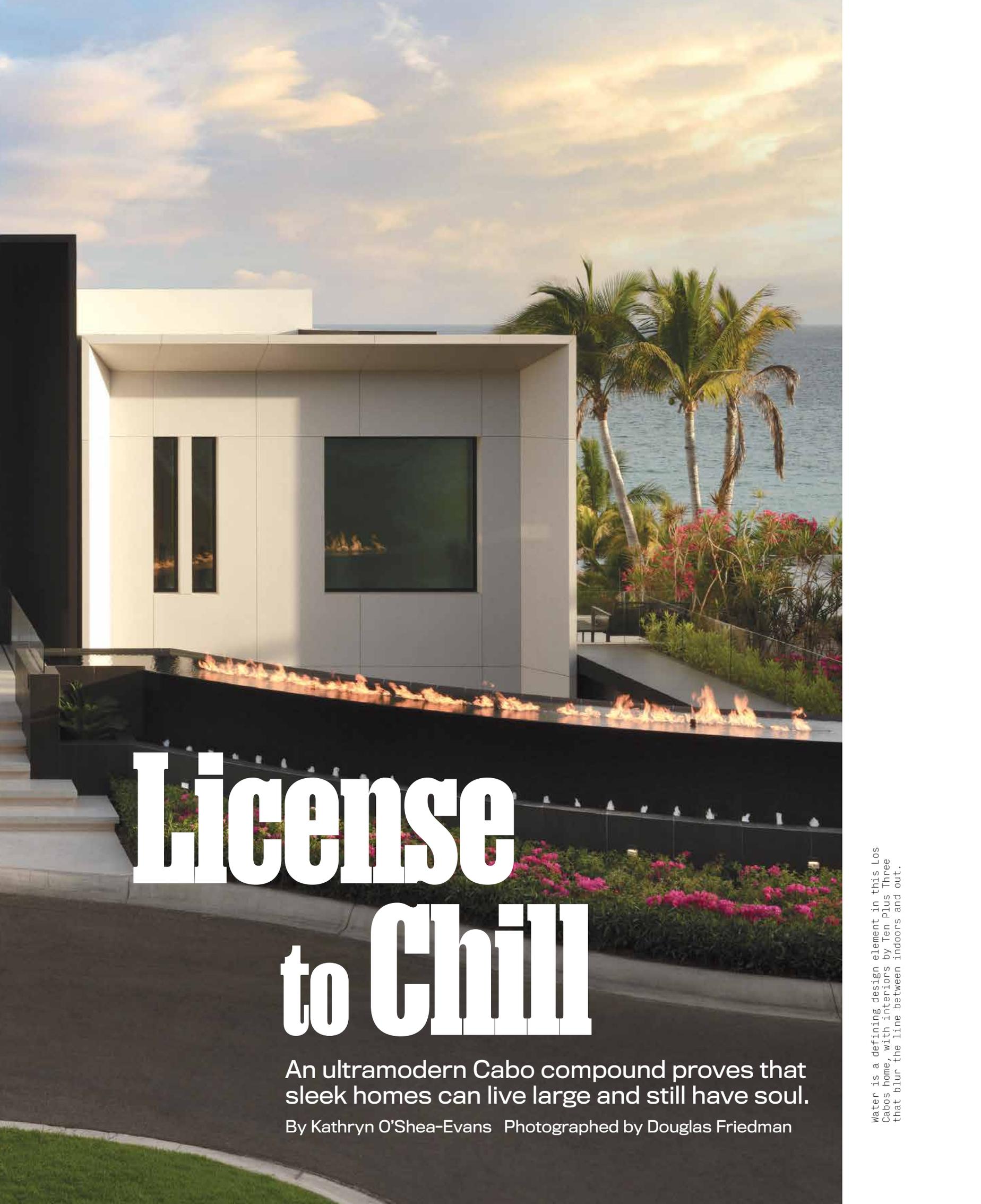
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# License to Chill

An ultramodern Cabo compound proves that sleek homes can live large and still have soul.

By Kathryn O'Shea-Evans Photographed by Douglas Friedman

Water is a defining design element in this Los Cabos home, with interiors by Ten Plus Three that blur the line between indoors and out.

A lounge area built into the pool can make guests feel like they're suspended above the sea.

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nyone who has ever been married knows that lessons in compromise are doled out with the marriage license—or should be. For one of designer Gonzalo Bueno's clients, achieving entente happened on a grand scale.

"We've done a couple homes for them in Colorado and he was like, 'Okay, those can be my wife's. *This* has to be mine,'" says Bueno, the cofounder of Ten Plus Three, an architecture and design firm based in Dallas.

Who needs a man cave when you can have a man paradise? This particular retreat sits in the ultra-exclusive El Dorado Golf & Beach Club, an oceanfront enclave in Los Cabos, Mexico, where these clients—parents with a flair for modern spectacle—have created a showpiece home that redefines masculine luxury south of the border. "He kept telling his wife that he wanted to do in this home what *he* would love," recalls Bueno.

The husband, an avid golfer, longed to welcome the friends he tees off with by day and toasts by dusk. "He always wanted to have a bigger and better place," says the designer, who first worked with the client many years ago on a previous Cabo home. "We wanted to really make it perfect for him and his wife when they're entertaining, but also for their kids."

But the property itself posed an unusual challenge. "El Dorado is basically built into a mountain," he says, and this homesite sat on a steep slope. The architectural solution was achieved with the firm Berglund Architects and the architect Adam Gilmer. "We carved into the mountain and did a light well in the front part of the house," Bueno explains. "We had many conversations about how to make that aesthetically pleasing and dramatic at the same time." The answer became a hallmark feature: waterfalls cascading down the cut face of the mountain, a gleaming oculus above, and natural light pouring







These pages, from left: Embossed acacia-wood cabinetry gives the kitchen a decadent look; the island is hewn from Waterjet Nero Assoluto stone; the U-shaped sectional is nearly 19 feet long, ideal for hosting a large group; a sculptural bench juxtaposes the clean lines of the architecture.



through the well into the home's three levels like a beam of golden sunlight in a cenote.

The result is both monumental and surprisingly serene, a sculptural three-story structure that feels as if it's etched into the rock and is oriented entirely toward the Sea of Cortez. "He wanted really tall ceilings and a lot of technology in it," the designer says. "He definitely wanted this to be like a show house." Building regulations in El Dorado are notoriously strict, but the team managed to push the height limits to achieve 12-foot ceilings and sweeping floor-to-ceiling windows. Every pane of glass on the main and middle levels is motorized, hidden inside the walls to seamlessly merge the interior with the exterior."

This uninterrupted indoor-outdoor flow of fresh, salty air defines the experience of the house. "Since most of the time when people are in Cabo, the weather is really, really nice, we wanted to marry whatever we do outside with what we're doing inside," Bueno explains.

On the main level, a formal living and dining area spills out to a pool connected to a bar—an ideal adults-only perch for sunset cocktails, while a deeper swimming pool and a hot tub anchors the middle floor where the children's bedrooms are located. Inside, the home's luxe minimalism is defined by monolithic materials and near-invisible technology. "The format of the floors was very important to me," the designer says. "We did grade four-by-eight-foot slabs." The kitchen is by Eggersmann, a German company known for its integrated stone cabinetry. Fabricated in Germany, the entire island is carved from real stone,

concealing appliances within cabinetry that makes it read like sculpture—a natural extension of the open dining and living space. Even the infrastructure feels cinematic. "The mechanical room for this house—it's gigantic," he says. The technology here isn't just high-end; it's practically sci-fi. "Even the shower doors in their primary and guest bathrooms are clad with full pieces of slabs and motorized," he adds. "You just wave in front of the motion sensor and the doors to the water closet open up."

Surfaces match that ambition. The kitchen stone is custom-sourced quartzite—"stronger than granite," Bueno notes. "You can use it freely without worrying about any stains." Paired with fumed eucalyptus wood, the material palette captures both the masculine sophistication the husband craved and the seaworthy lightness of its surroundings. "We wanted contrast and lows," he says. "He's very drawn to masculine finishes, which is what the kitchen is."

Anchoring the interior is a spiral staircase that serves as "another kind of work of art," according to the designer. "You have the stretcher going all around the circular staircase in dark bronze, but all the floating steps are in a light-color stone."

The flooring there, though light as beach sand in tone, is no delicate limestone—it's an Italian porcelain chosen for its kid-proof durability. "We've used those floors in Vail in one of their homes and he loved it," he says. "He's like, 'It makes no sense to use anything else when you can cook, spill drinks, have kids running around in wet swimsuits—and you can just so easily clean the floor.'"

**"Since most of the time when people are in Cabo, the weather is really, really nice, we wanted to marry whatever we do outside with what we're doing inside."**





Below: Custom frameless glass doors by Otiima are fully motorized, opening to expansive ocean views.



Because porcelain chips easily when mitered, the staircase steps were made from engineered stone instead, precisely cut to mimic the floor's porcelain look. "That way we could miter the corners and give it the full effect of a solid piece," Bueno explains.

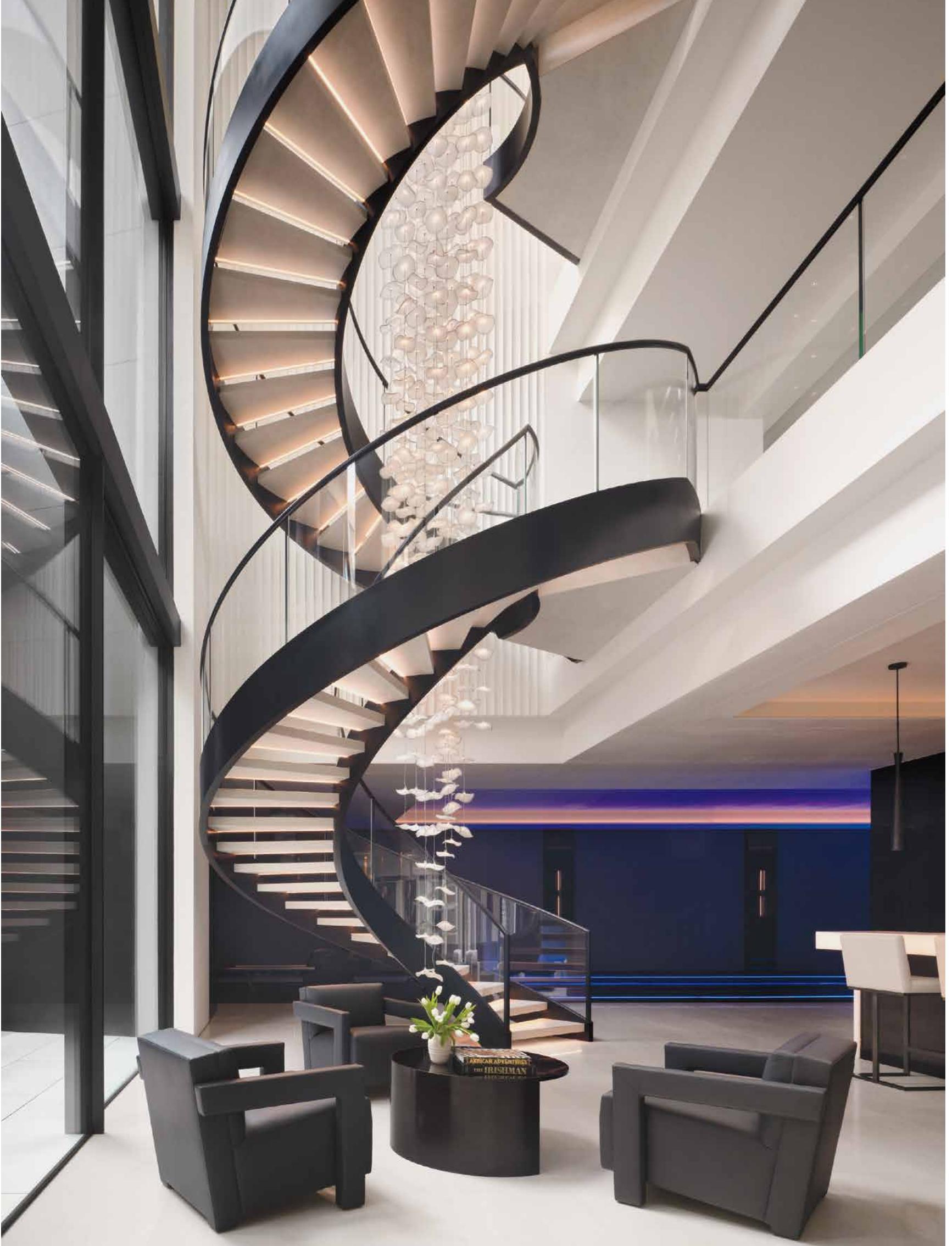
If the three-story staircase is the daylit showstopper, the 30-foot Murano-glass chandelier that cascades through its triple-height volume takes over at dusk. "That was also a custom piece by an atelier in Venice, Italy," the designer says. "It took a lot of effort to get it done because we were dropping down three levels."

By nightfall, the installation—hundreds of suspended discs, each individually illuminated—becomes a kind of vertical constellation, echoing the movement of the waterfalls outside. Lighting was a "big component" in this home, Bueno says, "to make the design sing at night and have the right effect." Note the glowing bar in cristallo quartzite—a focal point that has become something of the home's signature. "We've done it in several projects," he admits. "We have a lighting system that comes in tiles, and each little light is half an inch apart, so it gives you the perfect diffused light. At night, the glow that comes through the quartzite is just beautiful—it's cozy and inviting." To create the effect throughout, it was also executed in the bars and main powder room. Beyond its dazzling surfaces and technological bravado, the house is, above all, a place to play, exuding a warmth that only family life can bring. "It is definitely a home to have fun," says Bueno. There's also a bowling alley, a home theater, multiple bars—"basically one on every level"—and endless vantages for watching the ocean. Case in point: There are so many windows, the art collection inside had to be concise. "We didn't have as many walls as we would've wanted," he concedes. "The views of the ocean kind of make up for that."

Ultimately, Bueno gave his client everything he asked for—and something more elusive: a sense of ease amid the beautiful chaos of domestic life. "I think he got what he wanted, but they truly enjoy it as a family." And what does the wife think? "Yes, she does love it."

Top: Acoustic wall coverings from Holly Hunt keep bowling-alley clatter to a minimum. Bottom: Ambient lighting transforms the theater into a cocoon. Opposite: Some 650 glass elements adorn the 30-foot chandelier.







Blond wood wraps the walls. *Opposite:* The primary bedroom has floor-to-ceiling windows from Otiuma, also motorized for ease.

