

My House



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My House

My house is a colonial-style villa in a noble residential area of San Francisco, with a magnificent view of the Bay. Originally, the facade of the house was painted in a light shade of yellow, but today, the side facing the street is now overgrown with wild roses up to the second floor windows. As you approach the house from the street, the carport comes into view. In the carport is a classic old-timer, still in very good condition, and ideal for leisurely drives along the coast.

First Floor

The front door opens to a tiled entranceway. Other than a coat rack and a few plants for decoration, there isn't much else to see here.

Artists in the hallway:	
Warhol	
Liechtenstein	
Hockney	
Mondrian	

In the hallway, it begins to get a bit more interesting. Both walls are lined with a collection of modern art from artists such as Andy Warhol and the like. An extravagant lighting system provides for the appropriate atmosphere. Halfway to the living room, a 200 year old crystal mirror accentuates the stark contrast to the Pop-art.

Four tall archways open up to the various rooms on the ground floor. The hallway ends at the foot of a wooden spiral staircase, which leads up to the second floor.

Living Room

Upon entering the living room, the first thing to catch the eye is a full-size panorama window. Visitors are always impressed by the grandiose view of the Bay the window offers.

The large room is very sparsely furnished. The stained hardwood floor is decorated only with a few small oriental carpets. The leafy palms next to the window lend a certain exotic ambiance to the room.

My House - First Floor

Providing the desired contrast between old and new, are several antiques such as the chandelier hanging from the high ceiling, and the colorful Tiffany lamps. Next to the modern black leather furniture and clear glass coffee table, the opposition is strikingly appealing.

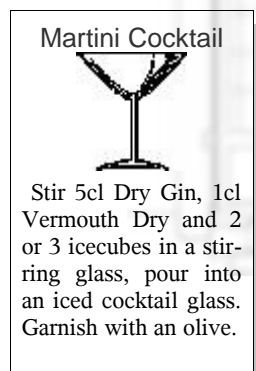
Fireplace

A crackling, burning fire brings a warm, cozy feeling into any room. The fireplace is a part of the original structure of the house, and its Early-American design also contrasts attractively to the modern furniture in the room.

Bookcase

My bookcase is filled with various works of literature. I still have the Dr. Seuss books from my childhood, and a whole series of Agatha Christie mysteries. On the other hand, "Cannery Row" from John Steinbeck is just two years old, a souvenir from my last trip down to Monterey. Many classics can also be found here: "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare as well as works by Ernest Hemingway and Edgar Allen Poe to name a few. Among the books are also a few board games, as well as various knick-knacks, such as a wooden xylophone from Africa.

Minibar



I love longdrinks and cocktails, and my minibar is accordingly stocked. Gin for a Gin and Tonic, Campari, various liqueurs and a few "hard" drinks make up the alcoholic portion. Grenadine and lime syrup are also available for non-alcoholic specialties. The necessary mixing utensils such as a shaker and an electric mixer for frozen margaritas are also close at hand. My favorite drink is the same as James Bond's: a martini. However, it doesn't matter to me whether it's shaken or stirred.

The showpiece in my minibar is a soda siphon made of turquoise-colored glass, which I came across years ago at a flea market in New York. It's a wonderful place to find treasures, and takes place every Sunday at the corner of 6th Avenue and 26th Street.

Kitchen

Cutlery in the Dishwasher

Especially people who fill a dishwasher for the first time in their life tend to do it wrong: Cutlery has to be inserted with the handles down so there won't be stains when drying.

My kitchen has all of the conveniences of modern technology. My most-cherished appliance is the dishwasher. I still remember with horror my college days and the mountain of dirty dishes to wash after parties. Nowadays the main use for my kitchen sink is the built-in garbage disposal.

In the middle of the kitchen is a massive wooden table which serves as a cutting block, with copper pots and pans hanging above within easy reach. It's very convenient and spacious enough for more than one chef to work at the same time. There is a small table in the kitchen as well, in a sunny nook, perfect for breakfast for two.

Next to the breakfast nook are the doors to the pantry and the laundry room. A large-faced quartz clock hangs above the doors. On the right side is a window and a sliding door leading onto the terrace.

Pantry



The pantry is a small compartment next to the kitchen, where all non-perishable foods are stored. This includes everything from canned goods to cereals, pasta, potatoes, etc. I like to keep a stock on hand so I don't have to run to the store at the last minute for something. There are conserves too, such as jams and jellies, and canned fruits and vegetables from my own garden. I also keep candles and a first aid kit here just in case of emergencies.

Laundry Room

Leading off from the kitchen is another door to the laundry room. In this room is a conventional washer and dryer, along with a washbasin and clothes-rack for hand-washables. Bath towels, dish towels and sheets are all stored here. The vacuum cleaner, broom and dustpan, ironing board, and other household appliances and cleaners are kept here as well.

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Guest Bath

Directly next to the pantry is a guest bathroom. Such comforts were not standard at the time this house was built, so a portion of the pantry had to be removed to make room for it. The room is quite small, and sparsely furnished with only a toilet and a wash-basin.

Dining Room

The most notable piece of furniture upon entering the dining room is a Victorian style table, bought from an antique dealer in England. Eight chairs, two of each of the four different styles, surround the large oval table. Since they are all from the same manufacturer, though, they match well.

You would expect to find expensive, antique porcelain to match the expensive, antique table. But I generally prefer the modern style of the unpretentious, white bone china, from England as well. The silverware isn't real silver, but timelessly elegant stainless steel cutlery. Real silver must be regularly polished, and is not particularly suited for the dishwasher either.

Second Floor

From the hallway on the second floor there are only two doors, one leading to the left and the other to the right. A wooden spiral staircase leads up to the attic.

Study

To the right, a hallway leads to my study. The most important piece of furniture in this room is the considerably large desk. Black and white photos of New York in the 20's and 30's hang on the walls. The Bay can also be admired from the window behind the desk. On the one hand, this can sometimes be distracting when I'm trying to work. But on the other hand, it can be exceptionally calming (and also promotes better concentration) to take

an occasional break now and then to simply watch the ships and numerous sailboats criss-crossing the bay.

Writing Desk

I deliberately purchased a very large desk, since I am admittedly an easygoing person, but not a clean freak. I need a lot of space to spread out all my papers. Therefore, I don't have just a normal shaped desk; my desk forms a "U" shape around me. In front of me is plenty of room to write and I also have free access to my writing utensils and the telephone. To the right, I have a PC and an Apple Macintosh. Since I have the computers networked together, and often must transfer documents from one to the other, the first office suite to come into consideration for me was this product.

The left arm of my desk can be used to heap, stack and pile papers to my heart's content. The actual color of the desktop can only be ascertained after a thorough excavation.

Bedroom

Further down the hall is my bedroom. This is the only room in the house that is carpeted. Hardwood floors are easy to care for and look nice, but carpeting is much more pleasant for bare feet.

In my bedroom is a queen-size bed and two night stands, which takes up most of the room. On each side of the bed is a door, one leads to a walk-in closet, and the other to the bathroom. I also have a television in my bedroom, especially for watching the late-night movies. It's also possible to listen to music in my bedroom, as my stereo system is integrated with the television. Using the remote control, I can operate the stereo system in the living room, and the tone is projected through the television speakers. A major advantage to this system is that all my CD's remain in one place, instead of being scattered all over the house.

Bed

Having a waterbed was always a dream of mine. However, because of various reasons and considering especially the energy

My House - Second Floor

use that goes into keeping the water heated at a constant temperature, I decided on a normal bed.

In summertime satin sheets are pleasantly cool against the skin. My sheets are dark blue, my favorite color. In winter I have normal cotton sheets on my bed, but I especially like the warm flannel sheets on very cold nights.

Night Stand

On my night-stand is just a single lamp, and nothing else. All the interesting things are kept in the drawers. In the top drawer are normal, everyday things such as aspirin or Kleenex. In the bottom drawer I keep various reading materials such as boring trade journals, to put me to sleep at night.

Walk-in Closet

The walk-in closet is spacious enough to actually walk around in, and even has a window, as well. The closet is about 6 ft. wide and 8 ft. long.

On the right wall are two clothes rods, one above the other. On the left side, one rod runs along the entire length of the wall. Underneath is a cabinet of large drawers for storing sweaters, shoes, accessories or whatever. Next to the window is a full-length swivel mirror and in the corner is a hat and tie rack.

Master Bath

The only way to get to the master bathroom is through the bedroom. Therefore, it is a completely private room which is generally not used by guests.

Marble tiles in the bathroom certainly look elegant, but are rather difficult to maintain. Therefore, I chose to tile the floor and walls with conventional ceramic tiles.

The floor is terra-cotta and the walls are plain white. At about a height of 4 ft. there is a terra-cotta-colored border along the walls to match the floor. Of course, there are also two bath mats on the

floor to keep those bare feet warm. The bathtub, shower, toilet and washbasin are all white. The fittings are black, adorned with a tasteful gold streak.

Bathtub

This is no ordinary, run of the mill bathtub here. The huge corner tub is also a whirlpool, complete with water jets. The perfect way to relax after a long day at work in front of the computer.

On the edge of the tub are the usual things such as soap, shampoo, shower gel and bath salts. My rubber ducky keeps an eye on everything when I'm not there.

Mirror

Only a few years after its completion, the title "World's Tallest Building" went from the Chrysler Building to the Empire State Building.

Above the washbasin I have a huge mirror, 4 ft. wide and 5 ft. tall. On it's left side the Chrysler Building from New York is applied as an additional mirror made from tinted glass cut into the appropriate shape and glued onto the main mirror.

I thought about having the shelf at the foot of the mirror shaped like Brooklyn Bridge but with wires it's difficult to access items on the shelf and without wires the bridge looks kind of naked. So the shelf is made of plain gray glass

Gallery

A wooden spiral staircase leads upstairs to the gallery. On the second floor, the hallway does not go the whole length of the house as it does below, but instead covers only the back third of the house. This allows you to be able to look down onto the ground floor.

An artistic spiral banister forms the edge of the loft. There is a pool table here and a full-functioning jukebox which makes for a lot of fun when friends come over to visit.

Attic

The attic has not yet been renovated, although I would like to expand it someday to include a guest room. It would also be nice to add on a roof verandah overlooking the San Francisco Bay. But for the time being, it is mainly used to store luggage and Christmas decorations.



My Garden

The garden does not appear at first sight to be very big. But although the actual vegetable garden is quite small, it's amazing how much I'm able to produce from it. Furthermore, there are fruit trees lining the edge of the backyard which provide me with fresh apples, pears and even cherries.

Herb garden

Tending to the herb garden is one of my favorite hobbies. It is situated near the terrace leading from the kitchen. I have basil, rosemary, thyme, dill, oregano and many more wonderful spices used in cooking and baking. I allow these plants to grow wild and I especially like the look of the herbs sprouting up between rocks and next to wildflowers.

Vegetable Garden

The vegetable garden is not at ground level, instead I have raised the garden beds to make the weeding and harvesting easier. In my garden, I have only planted vegetables which are not used in large quantities, thereby I'm able to produce more than enough for my needs. For example:

- Radishes
- Zucchini
- Onions
- Rhubarb

Fruit

Next to the vegetable beds are a few redcurrant and blackcurrant bushes. Next to the rhubarb I have also planted a strawberry bed, covered with net to keep the birds and insects from sampling the

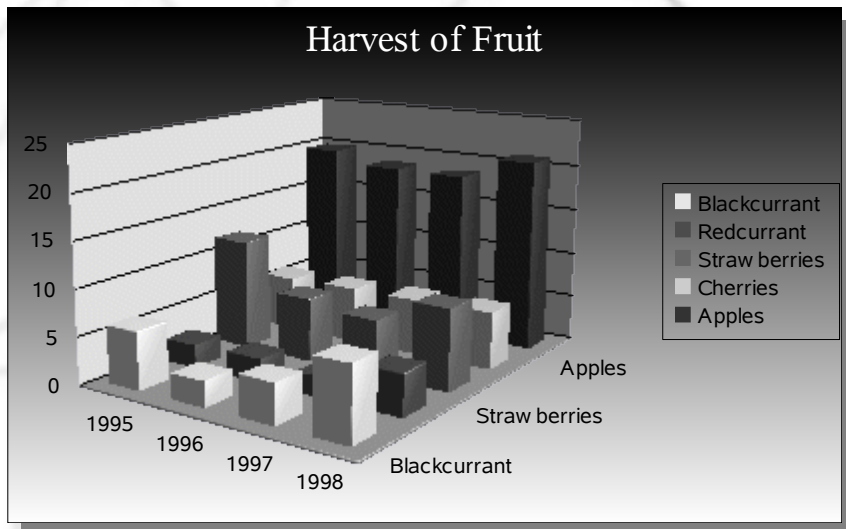
My House - Fruit

delicious berries. On the far end of the yard there are also a few wild blackberry bushes.



An overview of the fruit harvests from previous years (pounds):

<i>Fruit</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Blackcurrant	6,2	2,8	4,4	8,0
Redcurrant	2,5	2,6	2,2	4,5
Strawberries	12,0	6,9	6,1	8,8
Cherries	6,0	6,1	6,2	6,3
Apples	19,8	18,5	18,4	21,0



Trees

Besides the above-mentioned fruit trees, I also have several ornamental trees and plants to create a decoratively landscaped yard. Following are some of the types of trees planted here:

Coniferous Trees

Pines
Douglas Fir
Spruce

Deciduous Trees

Oak
Chestnut
Beech

Garden Shed

Behind the carport, on the left side of the house, is a garden shed. The carport and the shed are both made of dark wood. It's big enough to store the tools, garden furniture, lawnmower and bicycles.

Tools

All my tools are kept together with small parts such as nails, screws and bolts in a toolbox. Among other things, the toolbox contains diverse pliers, screwdrivers and wrenches. Larger tools such as saws or the drill hang on the wall or from the workbench, such as the hammer and ax.

Garden Tools

The lawnmower, hedge-clippers and rake are necessary tools for maintaining the lawn and the trees. A small pick and shovel complete the collection of garden tools.

Greenhouse

A small greenhouse is also part of my garden. This is where the tomatoes and seedlings are grown. The greenhouse is very small, just big enough for one person to enter, but not big enough to stand in.

Flowers

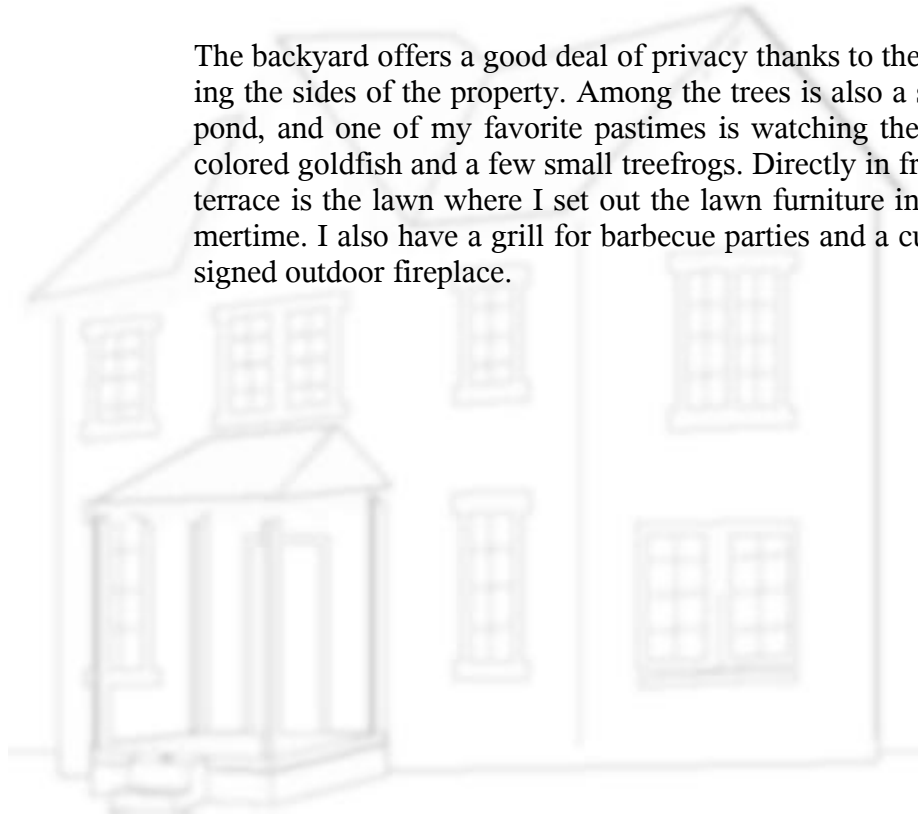
Various types of flowers are planted in the garden. In each flowerbed I have planted an assortment of seeds which bloom at different times of the year. This creates a colorful arrangement and is, in my opinion, more pleasing to the eye than distinct rows of each type of flower. Some of the flowers which can be found here are:

My House - Flowers

- * Irises
- * Dahlias
- * Daffodils
- * Rhododendrons
- * Chrysanthemums

Yard

The backyard offers a good deal of privacy thanks to the trees lining the sides of the property. Among the trees is also a small fish pond, and one of my favorite pastimes is watching the brightly-colored goldfish and a few small treefrogs. Directly in front of the terrace is the lawn where I set out the lawn furniture in the summertime. I also have a grill for barbecue parties and a custom-designed outdoor fireplace.



Fitness

Although the garden is rather large, it's certainly not big enough for jogging, or many other outdoor sports. But my house is only minutes away from the numerous city parks in San Francisco, my favorite of which is the Golden Gate Park, ideal for jogging, roller-blading or biking.

Swimming Pool

I have a small, covered swimming pool on my property. It's only about 12 ft. long, but has an integrated cross-current which makes it possible to swim and get a good workout. The speed of the cross-current system can be adjusted to different levels. For a diving board though, the pool is naturally much too small.

Tennis



I recently added a tennis court behind the pool, with the idea of additional exercise in mind. I even began taking lessons, just to get down the basics. Unfortunately, I still miss more than I hit. And with my tennis elbow, I prefer to watch the pros on television. However, if I improve enough to avoid making an embarrassment of myself, I would like to invite my other tennis-playing friends over for a tournament. Plus, it would be a great opportunity to show off the house!

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