

# CÔTE D'CARPINTERIA

ACCLAIMED INTERIOR DESIGNER TOM STRINGER FUSES ELEGANCE  
AND INFORMALITY IN A BEACHSIDE FAMILY RETREAT

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PHOTOGRAPHY **KARYN MILLET**

Located in Carpinteria's prestigious Padaro Lane neighborhood, the property enjoys 120 feet of beachfront.

**LEFT** Stringer collaborated with the project architects to ensure a resort-like indoor-outdoor lifestyle.





**C**HICAGO-BASED Tom Stringer Design Partners has mastered the art of waterfront interior design, whether on Lake Michigan or the Pacific Ocean. “Water is the source of my inspiration, and the vehicle for my freedom,” reports founder and president Tom Stringer. That passion is evident in a recently-built home in Carpinteria’s exclusive oceanfront enclave of Padaro Lane.

The property, with approximately 120 feet of coveted beachfront, consists of four structures surrounding a courtyard anchored by a Moroccan-tiled pool and fountain. Stringer infused their spaces with a sophisticated style while retaining enough informality for a weekend escape from the city. “We design spaces personal to our clients’ needs and interests, while presenting a genuine sense of place,” explains Stringer, who was commissioned by a prominent but unpretentious Hollywood couple.

The main house’s foyer is evocative of an intimate inn, complete with a “lobby bar” tucked beneath the skylit staircase, with two colors of Santa Barbara limestone underfoot and eight Moroccan lanterns suspended over this natural gathering place. The living room—its own stone accents further reinforce a connection to nature—entirely opens up to the courtyard or beach, and is furnished with a Bright Chair Company sectional, Edelman leather-wrapped cocktail ottoman by Christian Liaigre and Steinway grand. One end of the expansive room features a distinctive star-legged table-and-chair set from Holly Hunt, conceived by renowned midcentury modern designer Vladimir Kagan.

The antique-accented, ocean-view dining room, with an elliptical walnut table by LCMX illuminated by a minimalist, asymmetrical chandelier from Bone Simple Design, also opens to the outdoors. With its retro beach blue refrigerator and matching oven hood, the kitchen oozes the fun, vintage charm desired by the clients. A pair



**ABOVE** In the library hall, a handcrafted African stool is juxtaposed with a cityscape by artist Christian Vincent, reflecting the eclectic, multicultural art collection showcased throughout the property.

**LEFT** Throw pillows in the kitchen’s breakfast nook, with a salvaged oak table by Jonathan Field, suggest the festivity of a Mexican cantina.

**OPPOSITE** Stringer cleverly tucked a “lobby bar” under a staircase, evocative of a boutique inn, illuminated by Moroccan pendants from Tazi Designs.

Tom Stringer's approach to design is rooted in classicism, with a deft eye for order, balance and symmetry, but he eschews a predictable trademark style because his overriding consideration is complementing his clients' diverse lifestyles.



The lady of the house's study, featuring a chaise lounge from A. Rudin with Sanderson fabric, side table from Arteriors and floor lamp by Kalmar Werkstätten through The Future Perfect, is a serene hideaway.

Among the original art in the living room is a nude by acclaimed painter John Currin.



The oceanfront retreat is designed around a courtyard anchored by a Moroccan-tiled lap pool and fountain.



Guest suite with bed from Martyn Lawrence Bullard, 19th century French chaise from Judy Frankel Antiques and floor lamp (circa 1880, repurposed from an Indian ceremonial music horn) from FS Henemader Antiques.

of dramatic handblown Murano glass pendants hang over a waterfall-edged island clad in a richly-veined slab, with coral-hued stools injecting additional color into the space. Similarly, a banquette's vibrantly-patterned throw pillows add a playful Mexican cantina flair to the kitchen's breakfast nook.

A hallway leading to the ocean-facing guest suites doubles as a library and amenity bar, consistent with Stringer's philosophy of accommodating multiple uses within a single space. The primary suite, located on the second floor with a fireplace and generous beachfront deck, features a Baker chair with Jim Thompson fabric and vintage nightstands by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings (for Widdicomb Furniture Company). The suite's

alluring bathroom showcases a custom-made wooden soaking tub set against a wall of soothing fish scale tiles, accompanied by matching teak water basins and an original cityscape by prominent artist Christian Vincent. The guest house offers two additional bedrooms and a living area enjoyed by the clients' sons.

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The primary bathroom features fish scale tiles from Blue Slide Art Tile, custom-made teak soaking tub with matching sink basins by UK furniture maker William Garvey, Waterworks fixtures, and original art by Christian Vincent.