

# MATERIAL WORLD

ALAN AND JOY OHASHI OF OAKLAND'S OHASHI DESIGN STUDIO BALANCED MINIMALISM AND GREEN ARCHITECTURE IN THEIR RENOVATION OF A HOUSE IN THE EAST BAY HILLS. BY JEAN VICTOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN SUTTON



In the living room, the polished concrete floors soak up warmth from an abundance of windows and skylights. A black-granite plinth and glazed ceramic Heath tiles add drama to the original fireplace.



**T**ypical is a knock in the design world, synonymous aesthetically with suburban ranch-style houses and tall juniper hedges. So when architects Alan and Joy Ohashi were asked by an East Bay couple to make a typical suburban ranch-style house more contemporary and eco-friendly while keeping with the neighborhood fabric of 1950s homes, it required more than a nudge to move the design vocabulary away from *typical* and toward *harmonious* and *refined*.

"Our main objective was to 'clean up' the existing house, which had a lot of Swiss-chalet tweaks like peaked roofs and brackets," says Alan Ohashi. "But it also had these gorgeous, dead-on shots of the Bay and Golden Gate Bridge, and we wanted to capture the views in a better way." Although much of the original footprint remains, maximizing the view involved replacing solid walls with glass and demolishing more than half the house to create a roof that rises from 8 to 14 feet in height. A metal roof, custom aluminum windows and a mix of cedar and stucco siding add a fresh face to the suburban street.

Inspired by the view, the architects blurred the boundary between inside and outside by using the same materials on the interior and exterior. "Our goal was to create a place where there was almost no division between house and garden," says Joy Ohashi. "I think that

ABOVE: The entry's glass was partially sandblasted but left clear on the top and bottom to highlight the continuation of materials from the inside to the outside.