

# FLOATING

## A DREAM HOUSE REALIZED

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MICHAEL KREISS  
ARCHITECTURE BY FLEETWOOD JOINER  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY BILL VICIK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARY NICHOLS  
TEXT BY ALEX ADAMS

# MONUMENT











“I would like to live in an ancient pyramid,” says Michael Kreiss, “if it had modern plumbing and electricity.” His new home in San Diego, California, is as solid and serene as Egypt’s defining landmarks, and like the monolithic facade that safeguarded a pharaoh’s treasures, the Kreiss residence encloses its owner’s collection of art and *objets de vertu*.

“I wanted the juxtaposition of a solid, permanent building that appears light enough to float,” continues Kreiss, who as president and CEO is the third generation of the family involved in Kreiss Enterprises, which produces the Kreiss Collection of furniture, fabrics and accessories.

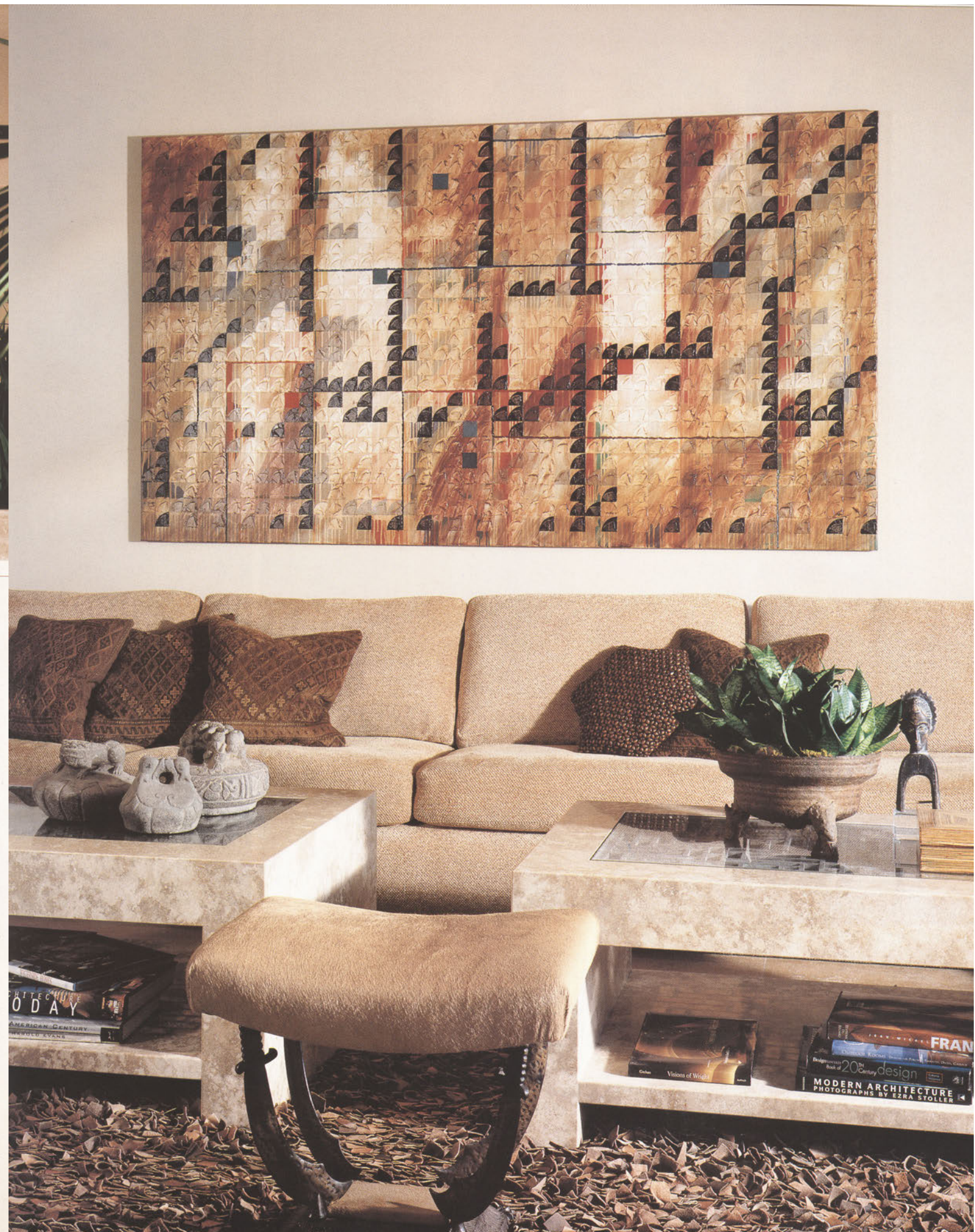
“Contemporary with ancient accents” was another of his criteria for his dream resi-

OPENING PAGES: Michael Kreiss worked with architect Fleetwood Joiner in designing a series of cubes that appear to float in a tranquil lake. Antique Indian temple doors lead inside. PRECEDING PAGES: Except as noted, all fabrics and furnishings, including a rain drum table, are from the Kreiss Collection. Antiques include fabrics for pillows and a Chinese rug. Greek amphoras, Tang dynasty horse and other artwork accompany *Innocent*, a painting by John Belingheri, and a large collage of copper and handmade paper by Susan Singleton. ABOVE LEFT: Another area of the living room overlooks the pool. Fortuny pillow fabric. Antique stone temple artifacts rest on mantel. ABOVE: Sculpture by Archie Held adds a modern note to antique vases, armor and temple stones collected by the homeowner.





Malcolm Sussman's *Mu* sculpture presides at the top of a hallway leading to the den dominated by *Trellis*, an oil painting by Ann Thornycroft. Kreiss Collection furnishings include Z bar stools, custom coffee tables, sectional sofa, fabric and tribal rug pillows. Antique saber ottoman stands on leather rug. Turkish travertine floors unite all the rooms.







dence. "Objects such as a Greek klismos chair appeal to my love for neoclassical design in a casual setting." Completing his list of desired attributes is "as much warm color and texture as possible."

Kreiss' confidence in his choices comes from a diverse background. "My brothers and I grew up in design. We did our homework in the factory and went around the world with my parents on their buying trips. After my brothers and I became profession-

al tennis players, my father, who was our coach, arranged their travels to coordinate with our tournaments at Wimbledon and in France and the United States."

While Kreiss has kept his tennis skills keen—he is Grass Court Champion in his age group—he hones his corporate responsibilities with similar dedication. "Working with my father and mother before she died, I designed all of the furniture and accessories we sell," he explains, "and in the last



Antique Indian temple doors open to the master bedroom. All furnishings and fabrics, including linens and leather rug, from the Kreiss Collection. Luc Leestemaker's *Sky* complements the serenity of the decor. OPPOSITE: In bedroom alcove, Spanish chairs were a gift from the homeowner's mother. Antique terra-cotta figures on table. Charles Arnoldi artwork on wall.

twenty years I also designed home interiors for about 500 people."

All the while he kept a file of ideas for his own family residence. "There was even a vial of sand I took from a beach in Cabo San Lucas because I knew it was the perfect color for the house. Color is terribly important."

To make that perfect color a reality for his home, Kreiss had Turkish travertine ground into powder and added to the exterior stucco. Individual pieces of the marble were se-





lected by Kreiss to surface floors, kitchen and bath countertops, and the top of the dining table, which has a built-in planter.

Kreiss had an equally dedicated partner in the project. Fleetwood Joiner of Newport Beach, California, wasn't the first architect to be interviewed, just the one who got it right. "I talked to twelve architects including one who said, 'This is going to be *my* house.' Joiner could set ego aside to collaborate on what I knew I wanted."

"Mike's a good designer," says Joiner, who does contemporary and old-world designs. "He was very clear about wanting the house

to look like it was floating on water. From there I came up with concepts. The house feels like it is surrounded by water because there is water on two sides of the living room and three sides of the dining room. There is the sound of water from the spa and aqueduct cascading into the pool. In as many places as possible, I put fire and water together by having fireplaces adjacent to pool and waterways."

"Geometry defines the interior," Kreiss says. "The house is one big space: All the rooms open to each other without doors, except the bedrooms. And with our mild cli-

Swimming pool aqueduct lends scale. The monumental-style architecture is given human proportions in the loggia. All furnishings and fabrics, including towels, are part of the Kreiss Collection. FOLLOWING PAGES: The illusion of a floating dining room is complete as night falls on the reflecting pool. Custom dining table features a planter insert. The study overlooks the living room and pool. Built-in travertine chaises and a swimming pool walkway add sculptural detail to the rear of the house. Beyond the living room, a pair of paintings, *Cloud Transfigurations* by Luc Leestemaker, bring the sky and pool colors indoors.

mate, we were able to use exterior doors that fold into walls to make indoors and outdoors one space as well."

Kreiss travels extensively, and the trips provide the opportunity to collect beautiful artifacts, prominently displayed in lighted niches created especially for them. Confident interior design brings together a mix of natural materials such as woven leather, raffia and bouclé, much of it dyed for this house. Modern art completes the setting.

Kreiss defines the result. "Up-tempo in color, optimistic in spirit and not too serious. The realization of my dream." □







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