

SEA TOWER IN THE TREETOPS

Reaching for the sun on the Pacific Coast

The famed Sea Ranch on northern California's Mendocino Coast encompasses a small world of topographical variety in its narrow, 14-mile stretch of spectacular sea-edged terrain. Soft, sun-swept meadows etched with dark cypress hedgerows rise from surf-racked cliffs to merge with the upland forests of the Pacific slope.

Standing high in these coastal foothills, this lithe, one-room tower of California redwood was designed by Architects Marquis and Stoller to demonstrate the amenities of vacation living in steep, tree-filled surroundings. An extremely compact house, it contains only 700 square feet of interior living area, including the open, mezzanine bedroom and the stairs (the living-room balcony and the serendipitous rooftop sun deck are bonuses). But it teems with the space dividends, both real and implied, that usually accrue from perceptive architectural solutions.

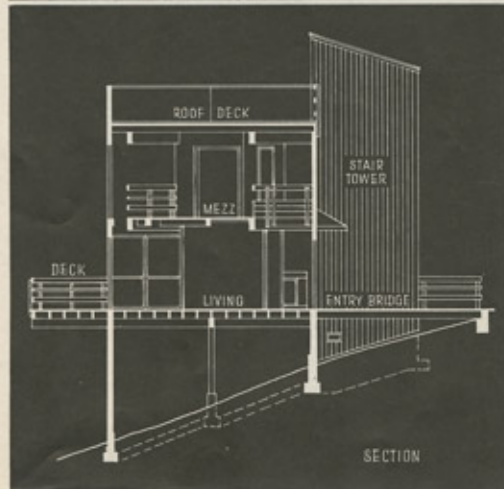
In keeping with their client's stated policy of "dynamic conservation"—to spare the trees and foil the bulldozer, and develop the Sea Ranch land without spoiling its natural assets—the architects chose this slender tower as the least intrusive human element that could be put into one of the great playscapes of the western world. *More*

By JAMES DE LONG

Every view of this multifaceted, forest-grown house, opposite, is filtered through mossy stands of native redwood and fir. The tall, vertical design fits easily between the trees. A section, lower right, through the living tower—the stair tower is a lean-to attachment—shows how house lifts away from the steep hillside contours. The entrance bridge, center right, connects the graveled parking ramp with the elevated main floor. Hexagonal, wood-decked roof, upper right, is protected by a parapet and looks out to the sea through the trees. Reached from the interior stair shaft, it turns the house into a sun tower.

EXTRA STOLLER

CROSS-SECTION BY SUEWAN WARD

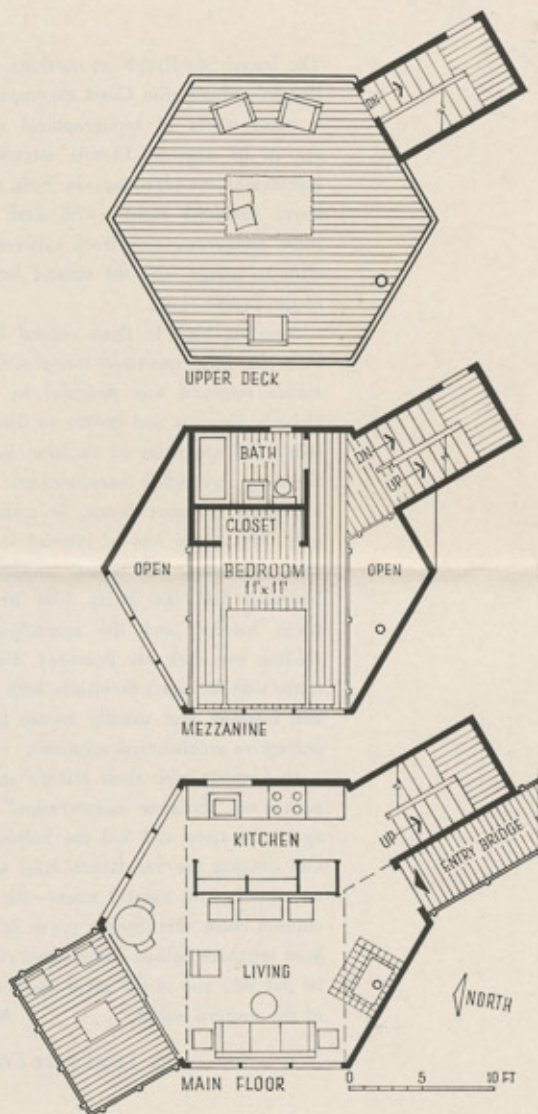


SEA TOWER *continued*

The yacht-galley kitchen, below, is self-contained but opens freely to the living-dining area and shares its view-filled windows. The floor and walls are of stained plywood. The soaring rectangular stair tower, bottom, seen from the living area, is handsomely decorated with the abstract, rough-timbered necessities of the open-stair framework.

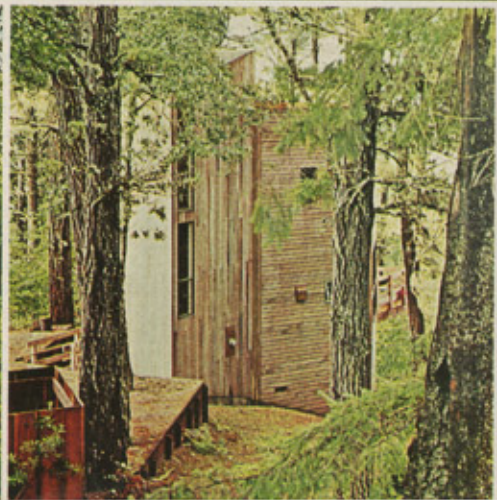


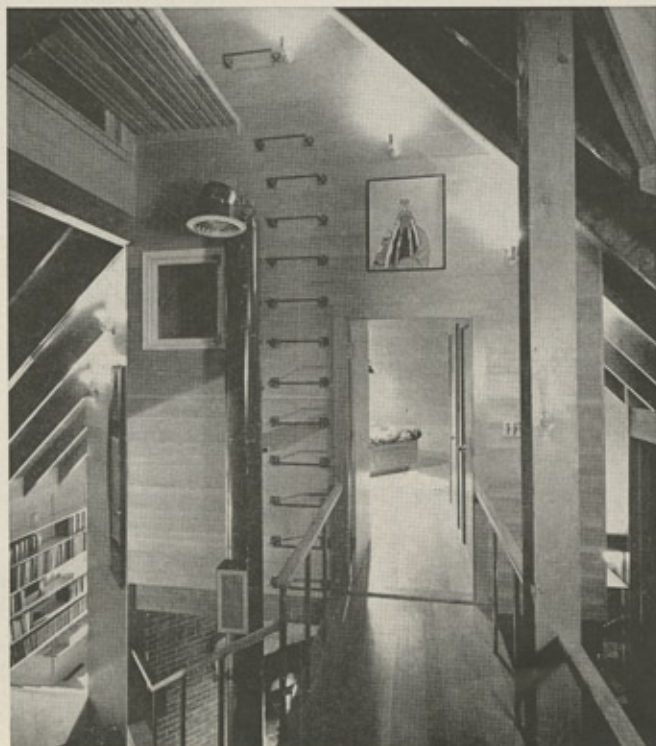
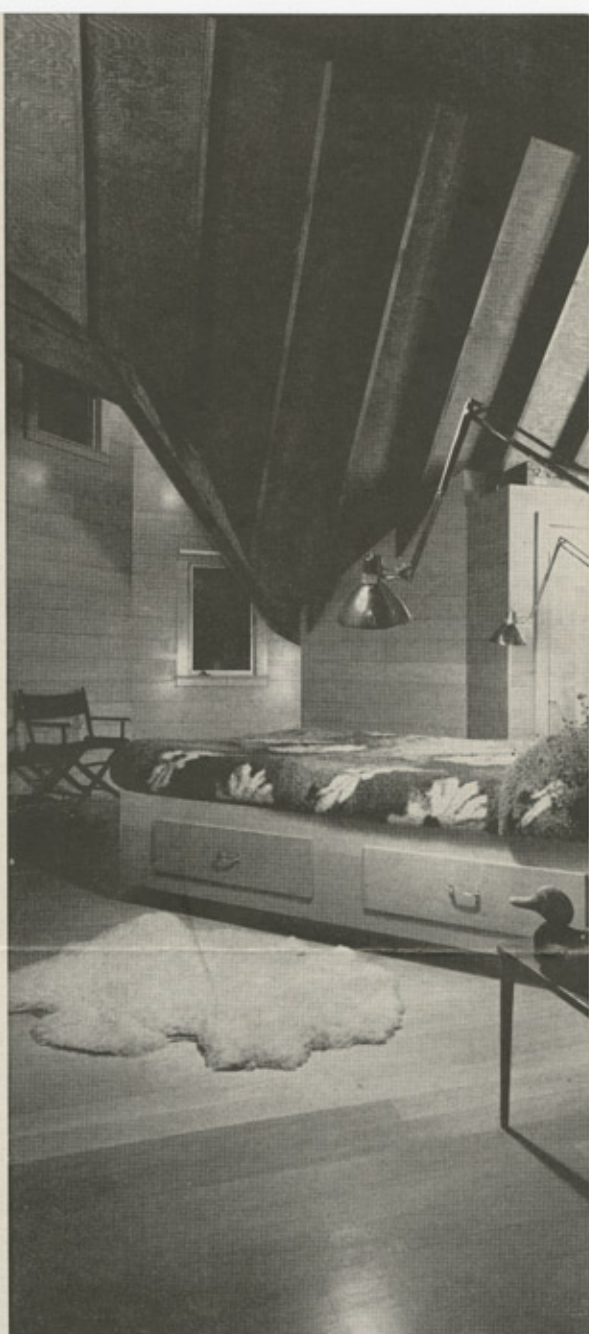
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SIGMAR WARD

The hexagonal shape of the tower gives it a faceted, crystalline character. And when this form appears in the floor plans, as seen above, it becomes a simple, logical diagram for the elimination of sharp-cornered living. This little house is a prototype for others to come. Its present one-room format can be expanded into infinite combinations just by addition of other hexagonal units.





Privacy and seclusion—cunning accomplishments in this house of open areas rather than tight partitions. Core of the plan is the chimney. Around this the architects manipulated space in marvelously changing planes and levels, creating pockets of coziness, lofty ceilings, mysterious duskiess and bright daylight—chiefly by fooling the eye into imagining divisions where none exist. **Kitchen, dining, and living areas** rise to two-story height. Living-room fireplace, above left, becomes a snugery, bridged by the bedroom floor. Primary decoration—colors and textures of brick, bluestone, and fir. In the living room, leather chairs by Mario Bellini from Atelier International, and a suspended weather balloon, found on the beach. Bedroom ceiling hangs like a canopy to accommodate windows, forming a trapezoid in the roof. **A cat ladder**, left, leads to a “perch” under the eaves—a get-away-from-it-all nook for reading or naps. Next to ladder, a pipe, painted red, brings in warm air in winter.

DOWN
TO THE SEA

View from two-storied dining portion of the living room, below, looks out across cantilevered wood deck to sea beyond, and up into swaying treetops. Bedroom, upper right, is a floating space-within-a-space, its planked flooring creating a structural bridge between outer walls of the building. Living room, lower right, is canopied by wood deck of bedroom above.

