

Forbes

Malibu Meditation House Chills With Sunsets, Gardens, Treehouse And Living Room Swing

By Keith Flamer • February, 2020

Photography: Mike Helfrich



Malibu's First Point offers ocean views, living room swings and an adult zen treehouse.

As the saying goes, "everyone's first Malibu home is on the beach." If you can afford it. But when the Pacific Coast Highway traffic and beach crowds wear you down, it's time to retreat into the hills, like a hibernating bear chilling. But this is the land of sun. Going uptown needn't be a stone cold hassle—especially when you go zen.



The rebuilt home has sweeping ocean views, a 50-foot infinity pool and spa and a living room swing.

Such an escape is available, courtesy of developer Jaman Properties, the husband-and-wife team of Michael Manheim and Janus Cercone whose boutique company sold houses to comedian Conan O'Brien and producer Casey Werner, and luxuriated President Ronald Reagan's former estate.



Listed for nearly \$11.5 million, First Point connects with nature—be it sunlight, the ocean or gardens.

This time, the former Hollywood producers-screenwriters tone it down (intentionally) so the future owner will find inner peace high above PCH. First Point is a new three-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath perch that offers some serenity in this chaotic world. The sleek single-family home offers 270-degree ocean views, a 50-foot infinity pool and spa, a living room swing, an adult zen treehouse, 10 parking spots, and nearly an acre of private meditation gardens—for nearly \$11.5 million.



Expansive outdoor deck.

The ample parking alone is worth the price. But the minimalist design is what makes this house a contemporary gem. First Point is located on a private cul-de-sac known as "Musician's Row." Grammy-winning musician Frank Ocean is a neighbor. Chris Cortazzo of Compass has the listing.



50-foot infinity pool with Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island vistas.

"What makes this estate special is its direct connection to the sun and the sea," says Cercone, who designed the house. "A lot of thought went into the position of rooms and furnishings to allow you to participate in what's happening with the weather—without being assaulted by it."



The primary bedroom, with skylight faces south so you can wake up with a gentle morning sun and garden views.



The entire home is designed for indoor-outdoor living.

"The bed in the primary bedroom faces south, so you can wake up with the sun, but not have it shining in your eyes," she adds. "The public rooms also face south, so they get all-day sun without the glare. Every room but one has head-on views of the Pacific and we've provided every opportunity for indoor-outdoor living."

Cercone imaginatively curated indoor-outdoor lifestyle amenities in pairs—connected via automated pocket doors. There's an indoor chef's kitchen (with an amethyst geode sink) and an outdoor kitchen (with a wood burning pizza oven). There's an indoor bar and an outdoor bar. There's an indoor shower and outdoor shower. There's an indoor great room/living room with music, seating and a fire element as well as an outdoor living room with a sound system, seating and double fire pits—allowing the area to functional year round.



Contemporary bathroom.



Meditative zen garden.

First Point can be a place of contemplation, partying or both. The home's grand opening featured a wellness festival where guests practiced yoga and indulged in organic fare. It's apropos for a residence designed for recharging, personal empowerment and entertaining.

Scattered around the property are mystery paths that guide you to destinations, including a hammock hung between two trees and a zen clubhouse hidden among the treetops.



View of the beachfront along Pacific Coast Highway,



Janus Cercone and Michael Manheim of boutique development company Jaman Properties.

"We are huge fans of the Aman resort chain," says Cercone. "We emulated its ethos of creating minimalist but sybaritic luxury with a reference to the local culture and spiritual life. You're literally living in nature.



Ceilings and furnishings were bleached and tinted blonde for this airy, summer vibe.

Skylights bless the house with natural light, connecting to nature's chief energy source. Sunsets over the ocean are best viewed from the infinity pool and large deck.



The home's amenities are paired—indoor-outdoor kitchens, bars, showers and sound systems.

"There's a time we refer to as 'the crow hour'—just after sunset, when the sky turns a Maxfield Parish blue and the crows head back to their nests," says Cercone. "You can soak in the tub and watch hundreds of birds flock home above you. It's pretty special."



Twin fire pits on the expansive deck.

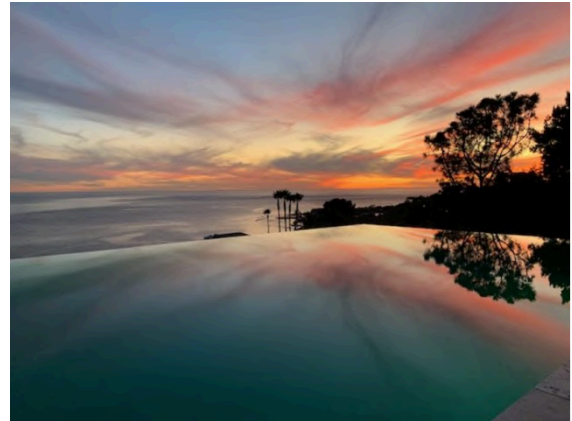
Since the project was a rebuild, Jaman Properties blended parts of the old home with the new—the great room ceiling is crafted from brand new Douglas fir on one side of the ridge beam and 70-year-old pine on the other side.

Over a three-month period, master faux finisher Dean Ruiz's crew bleached and tinted the wood throughout the house. "Instead of giving Dean a swatch, I showed him my hair and asked him to match it," says Cercone. "The result is a color I've never seen on a ceiling before: sun-tinted blonde."



Pier view from First Point.

Blonde and sun-drenched Malibu go well together, like Ken and Malibu Barbie. Malibu is a perceived paradise of attractive Hollywood celebrities and executives but it's so much more. It's also hamlet where nature, serenity and barefoot luxury rules.



"The crow hour", just after sunset when the sky turns a blueish and birds head back to their nests.

"People think Malibu is about a bunch of rich people dressing up and going to Nobu, but it's actually a very rural, small town community," says Cercone. "Most people live here because having a connection with nature is so important and spiritually rich. So we created a very emotional house that inspires that acknowledgement of nature, exploration, appreciation and gratitude. People have walked into this house and burst into tears. For us, that's like winning an Oscar."

Not bad for an Emmy-winning producer (Manheim, *Roe vs. Wade*) and a Tony-nominated screenwriter (Cercone for *Leap of Faith*). First Point is quite a trophy.

