

HAUTE LIVING

Charlot Malin Builds Luxury Residences with Body, Soul and Environment

BY KELLY E. CARTER

WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE

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You'll find eye-catching art and unique light fixtures in the tastefully-decorated Pacific Heights home of award-winning interior designer, businesswoman and philanthropist **Charlot D. Malin**. What you won't find is a microwave.

"I personally never wanted a microwave, never had a microwave, never understood why I would need it and never missed it," she asserts, "but I have friends coming—not to this house, but our previous home—saying, 'Oh my god, you don't have a microwave. How can you survive without that?'"

You *could* chalk up the exclusion of the kitchen convenience to the fact that she's from Oslo, Norway, except that she moved to the U.S. in 1988—long enough ago to become hooked on the appliance like the majority of this country's population.

With Malin, her lack of said kitchen electronic has more to do with her principles. After all, the 46-year-old mother of two and her husband, Gregory R. Malin, do own Troon Pacific, a San Francisco-based boutique real estate development company known for its efforts in wellness and sustainable design of luxury residences. Several Troon Pacific homes—including the Malin's—have attained LEED Platinum status, the highest level possible for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, a green building certification program that recognizes best-in-class building strategies and practices.

Mothers often talk about having an 'aha' moment after they give birth, and start to think about the environment's future in regards to their offspring. "A lot of [her eco-friendly practices] has to do with it," says Malin, who also credits living in a city as green as San Francisco. "Also coming from Norway, people were a lot more environmentally friendly earlier than it caught on here."

In Oslo, she was influenced by her real estate developer father Tore Christian Diskerud, who founded Scottsdale-based Desert Troon Companies in 1980 as a way to explore opportunities in the U.S. Growing up, she also loved to draw, and was obsessed with urban planning and all things design from architecture to industrial to fashion.

Arizona State University's top notch architecture program drew her to Tucson for grad school. From there, it was on to the south of France to work for an architect in Cannes then to San Francisco for a job with the intention of staying for just a short while. Those plans changed when, in 1992, she met the man she would marry three years later.

In 2000, she and Gregory, who had a former career in property management, formed Troon Pacific. Malin is the COO and director of the firm's overall design team; he's the CEO. Together, they knew they wanted to focus on high-end luxury design—they simply had to figure out how.

“One day we were sitting around and coming up with ideas of what we could do to make this house the most luxurious,” she says. “[We asked ourselves] ‘Why would people want to live here?’ Health is the ultimate luxury, so [we decided to] focus on that rather than focusing on a whole bunch of other things.”

Tron Pacific homes, built on spec, sell for \$7 to \$25 million. The Malin’s own home, three years old and Energy Star rated, is proof there’s no need to compromise design, luxury or a commitment to health and wellness to do right by the environment. Their solar-paneled house incorporates natural light into every detail, including glass stairs and balcony floors. There are skylights, an air filtration system, drought-tolerant plants, sound attenuation, a downstairs shoe closet which prevents dirt from being tracked in, greywater to water plants and a steam oven, which Malin says “is a lot healthier, cooks vegetables and cooks everything much better almost at the same speed as a microwave and is a much better product.”



Recently, Malin began incorporating a wellness factor into the homes she designs with gardens, exercise and yoga rooms and lap pools.

“I can’t dictate to people how they’re going to live, but at least you have the options,” Malin says. “I tend to think that most people would like to take care of themselves so [we’re] making that easier and more viable for our buyers.”

Finding alternatives for sustainable and wellness design forces this environmentally-conscious patron of the arts to be more creative and come up with new solutions which, luckily, is her forte. The known problem solver uses said skill in philanthropic ways, including in her new, two-year position as President of the San Francisco Opera Guild, a non-profit organization that reaches about 50,000 students annually throughout the Bay Area.

As a pre-teen, she was first bitten by the opera bug after becoming mesmerized by *Aida*, which was, coincidentally, the scheduled opera when she co-chaired the Opera Ball in 2010. She’s been involved with the San Francisco Opera since 1994; her second public event as Guild president is March 25 when her organization and Saks Fifth Avenue San Francisco present “Fashion Forward: An Evening with Erdem.” [Her first was an onstage dinner honoring Dede Wilsey on Dec. 1.]

As excited as Malin is to feature Erdem, the haute British-Turkish fashion designer, in his first San Francisco showing, she is quick to note that, “We need to raise money, but we also need to bring it down to our opera education.”

The music lover takes all of her philanthropic work seriously. In addition to the Opera Guild, she also chairs the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s Artist Circle and serves on the board of directors for the Norwegian-American Cultural Foundation, Norway House Foundation and the Voss Foundation.

Despite her many commitments, she still finds time to ski frequently with her husband and 12-year-old twins, Benjamin and Sebastian, and prepare the family’s meals—that is, when Benjamin is not whipping up Vietnamese dishes from Charles Phan’s cookbook. The youngster must have inherited his mother’s culinary skills for Malin calls herself a “fabulous cook.”

“I love cooking,” she says, “because I know exactly what we’re eating.”

At least no one in her home has to worry about anything being microwaved.

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