

MAGIC CASTLE

Scott Gillen dreams up one of the most legendary Malibu properties to date.

By Abigail Stone // Photography by Cameron Gardner

The New Castle (scottgillen.com) may be designer-builder Scott Gillen's 23rd house in 15 years, but it's clear from the moment one glides down the driveway that the commercial director he used to be is still very much alive. Perched on a bluff in Malibu, the 11,000-square-foot house—and its 4,200-square-foot guesthouse—is designed for a swooping aerial shot. The cinematic moments don't end there. "Designing a house is just a series of shots," Gillen says. "It's all composition." And it's not just full-frame ones: This home is ready for its close-up. Gillen, who takes a hands-on approach, is intimately involved in every aspect of the process. That includes handpicking the books and pottery that come with the turnkey estate. "You'll only bring a toothbrush," he confirms. It's all in the particulars, and Gillen has a razor-sharp vision of what his clients want. It starts with the location. Gillen maxed out the footprint of the property and dreamt up plans that took full advantage of its setting's potential. "I never build a house that's not south-facing," he explains. "I want to know that when I'm making coffee, the sun is rising; and when I'm eating dinner, the sun is setting." Though these may seem like small things, they're what set a Gillen property apart. Even before the walls have been constructed, he's designed the interiors—deciding on the placements of things like a Minotti sofa. "People don't think about all the thought processes that go into a home and how it flows," he explains. The result is a space that astounds, surprises and works. There are wow factors, of course, such as the location and the view. There are also the luxuries, like a ventilated cigar room and a three-sided infinity pool. And then there are the features that elevate this home well above its brethren: the astonishing 120-foot-long first floor surrounded by glass, the meticulous stacking of the doors and windows, and more. If God, as they say, is in the details, this is what one would imagine heaven on earth—or at least Malibu—would be like. In Gillen's hands, it's the same thing. \$80 million is a small price to pay for nirvana.



Clockwise from top right: A look at The New Castle's open-concept kitchen and dining area; the home's designer-builder Scott Gillen; a custom unvarnished soaker tub leads into the master bedroom.