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L.A. Real Estate: Silicon Beach Millionaires Turn Playa Vista Into the Anti-Palisades

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Abramian



Kim Gordon

Ringo Chiu via ZUMA Wire

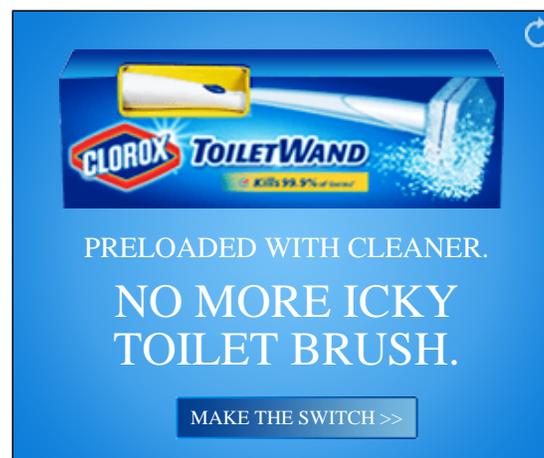
Developers are drafting off the tech boom with residences near Yahoo and YouTube's offices tailored to startup moguls: "The kids here don't want that crappy Cape Cod style."

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The tech-creative office boom in and around Silicon Beach has spawned an explosion in the residential market, with developers, architects and interior designers rushing in to decipher and deploy tech execs' specialized home requirements.

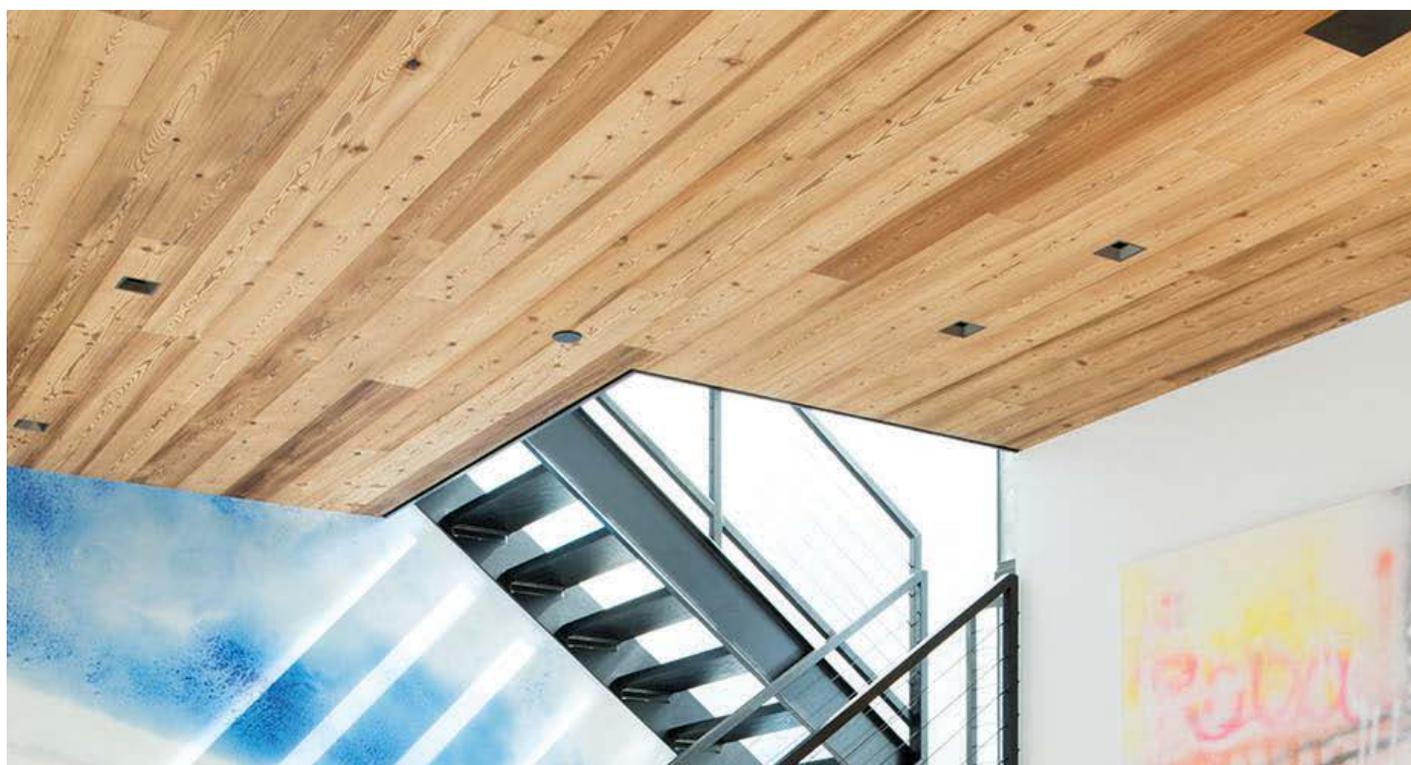
In Playa Vista, the 1.3-square-mile hotspot that hosts offices for some of the world's biggest companies (Facebook just signed a lease for Playa Jefferson, a nearby five-building, 35,000-square-foot office), homes are getting larger and more luxurious. Brookfield Residential has opened the community's latest neighborhood, Marlowe, which includes 30 family homes with prices ranging from the high-\$2 millions to more than \$3 million — the highest-priced in the community, where other new single-family homes run from the low- to mid-\$2 millions.

Marlowe was built with tech executives in mind: category 6 data wire for phone lines and high-speed data connection in all bedrooms, the kitchen, the great room and family room, with terrace views skillfully trained toward headquarters of Yahoo (which is closing its Burbank offices and consolidating at its Playa Vista location, where it moved from Santa Monica in July), YouTube and IMAX. "It's not like it used to be, when you could attract talent to Los Angeles and then expect them to drive an hour to work," says real estate agent Lee Johnson. "These are people who want to live near work, so they can bike there or walk or whatever. Many of my clients don't even care about things like parking, but they'll care deeply about a specific design element. In some ways, tech home buyers are the opposite of normal."



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\$2.1 million | Bush designed this home in Venice for a startup founder. His tech clients look for natural materials and bold graphics, he says.

Designer-developer Kim Gordon, who has collaborated with such high-glam decorators as Mary McDonald and Kerry Joyce, now focuses on "high/low" style to serve the "beard and flannel" tech brigade who make up the bulk of her clientele. She recently built a modern farmhouse-inspired home on one of Venice's coveted walk streets. The 3,200-square-foot home, with oak floors, hand-troweled walls and artwork from now-closed Hal's Bar & Grill (Gordon also is designing the new Hal's on Abbot Kinney in the previous Primitivo space), sold last month to a Google exec for \$4 million. Gordon currently is at work on a pair of spec homes half a block from Gjelina, both "specifically made with the kind of fluid flexibility" tech clients seek.



\$4 million | “Coming from Northern California, woods and warmth make them instantly feel at home,” says Gordon of tech clients like the one who purchased this house she built in Venice.

Interior designer Jamie Bush (who has worked with Beats president Luke Wood and Chamath Palihapitiya, formerly of Facebook and a current venture capital investor and part owner of the Golden State Warriors) says tech homeowners in and around Venice "are interested in building on a storied history of surf and skate culture. The vibe is a clean, modern architecture built with natural materials, bold color and graphics." Cue the Hans Wegner steel and rope chair with shearling seat (\$11,000) that Bush purchased for a client who wanted a "casual beach culture vibe."

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\$3 million | Marlowe homes range in size from about 3,100 to 3,400 square feet, with four or five bedrooms.

Like Bush, interior designer Peter Dunham has seen his clientele shift from mostly industry (Jessica Biel, Jennifer Garner, Steve Tisch) to new media. These clients' must-haves? "Pimped-out wine rooms, karaoke rooms, vegetable gardens, as well as deformed room layout and open kitchen/living rooms," he says.

Robert Thibodeau of DU Architects sees a major contrast with other moneyed L.A. areas. "High-tech folk lean toward contemporary design with that organic feeling, like Edison lights," says the architect, who is completing offices for animation and visual effects firm Animal Logic on Abbot Kinney. "The kids here don't want that crappy Cape Cod style you get in the Palisades."



Campus at Playa Vista | More than 1.5 million square feet of creative space in historic and new buildings; houses Yahoo, The Honest Company, IMAX and more.

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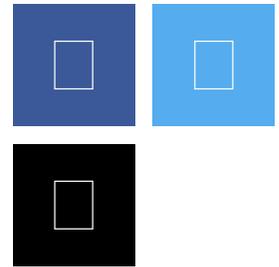
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More than 1.5 million square feet of creative space in historic and new buildings; houses Yahoo, The Honest Company, IMAX and more.

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