



*Italian restaurateur Paolo Sacco, owner of Tosca, infuses his new home in the Palisades with modern élan*

# WINE AND DINE

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In the foyer, a work by Georgetown artist Dale Loy celebrates nature. Paolo Sacco (opposite) devised the dramatic, glass-enclosed wine tower (this page) with help from restaurant designer Jim Kefalos.

## private tour

Phillip Jeffries wallpaper defines the entry (below), while raw silk warms the dining room walls (right and opposite). Martha Vicas discovered the Roll and Hill fixture in Brooklyn and upholstered the Century chairs in Castel fabric. Spare seats in a Pierre Frey stripe and a Hwang Bishop lamp brighten the palette. A painting by Paris-based Ruben Alterio above the sideboard adds a finishing touch.



Just back from his restaurant, Tosca, on a Friday afternoon, Paolo Sacco has traded a Canali suit for jeans. He and his life partner, interior designer Martha Vicas, chat with guests in the sleek kitchen of Sacco's new home.

The fading sun dapples pale white-oak floors and stone countertops with light. Interiors are crisp, full-bodied and culled from nature, just like the Rhone blend Sacco and Vicas are pouring. Surrounded by furnishings in soft, neutral shades, visitors can't help but feel an urge to linger.

Perhaps it's the wine? After all, a centerpiece of the home's main level is a glass-enclosed, temperature-controlled wine room that displays bottles of red from floor to ceiling. "I didn't want the wine to be in a dark cellar in the basement; I wanted it to be visible," Sacco explains. "It inspires me and makes me smile every time I come home."

The design team was initially skeptical about giving the wine tower such prominence. But Sacco won them over with his vision and attention to detail. Like Tosca, his venerable mecca for Washington power brokers, his home serves up hospitality and style *con brio*—with a vivacity that Italians somehow pull off without trying.

Architecture: **Mark Giarraputo**, AIA, Studio Z Design Concepts, LLC, Bethesda, Maryland. Interior Design: **Martha Vicas**, M.S. Vicas Interiors, Washington, DC. Kitchen Design: **Vincent Sagart**, Poliform | sagartstudio, Washington, DC. Lighting Design: Illuminations, Washington, DC. Builder: **Geoffrey Kuck**, FWI Development LLC, Washington, DC. Styling: Charlotte Safavi.



***"I wanted to keep the kitchen minimal. The colors and joyful aspects were also important to me."*** —PAOLO SACCO

Sacco, who previously lived in a Kalorama condo, decided to build a new house because he couldn't find what he liked on the market. "I wanted a stucco house because stucco brings me back to where I'm from," he reveals, adding that in Italy, most people live in apartments or small houses and therefore he longed for open interiors where he and his 16-year-old son could entertain guests with ease.

After purchasing a property in the Palisades, he put together the team who would make his dream a reality. Architect Mark Giarraputo of Studio Z Design Concepts drew up the plans. Also onboard was builder Geoffrey Kuck of FWI Development. Kuck first introduced Sacco to Martha Vicas, who orchestrated the interiors.

"We came up with a casual, European country house," says Giarraputo. From the foyer, the open layout leads past the dining room to a great room facing the kitchen and a casual breakfast area, which spills out to a loggia. "It all flows together and gives Paolo the ability to entertain year-round," the architect notes.

Vicas helped Sacco articulate and achieve the interior look he was after. "Paolo wanted it to be homey, which first I interpreted as more traditional," she recalls. "But soon it became clear that he's a contemporary person at heart. Paolo is drawn to earth colors so we kept things toned down, adding bright accents here and there."

Rich, elemental materials and refined textures convey an aura of calm and

authenticity. Phillip Jeffries wall coverings, one featuring nail head-trim and the other in raw silk, bring subtle definition to the foyer and dining room, respectively. A custom fixture by Roll and Hill adds an industrial edge above the dining table. "All of the main-floor spaces encourage gathering and are certainly not formal," says Vicas.

The lower level includes a guest room, media/game room and gym where, Sacco says, "I try to keep up with the food and wine." The second floor houses another guest room, his son's bedroom and the master suite. The latter features a luxurious bathroom, a sitting room and a dressing room designed by Vincent Sagart of Poliform | sagartstudio, who also collaborated on the kitchen.



From opposite, far left: The kitchen centers on a powerful Lacanche chef's range—a colorful contrast to the Poliform cabinets in a Cenere Oak wood finish and the honed rhodonite countertops. The kitchen flows into a casual bar/breakfast area, where Vicas and Sacco enjoy a vintage selected from the nearby wine refrigerator. In warm weather, bifold doors open to the loggia; a Holly Hunt table and JANUS et Cie chairs accommodate outdoor dinner parties in style.

## private tour



“As a restaurateur,” Sagart observes, “Paolo understands how a beautiful environment can affect your mood.”

While planning the kitchen design, Sacco discovered Lacanche ranges. “I fell in love with their colors and vivacity, so I ordered one,” he relates. In the finished space, Italian-made Poliform cabinets in an oak finish and honed rhodonite countertops let the classic stove in pale blue-gray take center stage. “I wanted to keep the kitchen minimal,” Sacco notes. “The colors and joyful aspects were also important to me.”

In lieu of a typical breakfast nook, a high table next to the kitchen invites guests to gather while Sacco cooks. “On a nice day,” he says, “you can have a drink first, then move outside for dinner. I wanted the flow to be open.”

Sacco’s dinner parties are “almost an extension of Tosca,” he reveals. “I try to bring the same flavors home. I want people to relax, enjoy good food, good wine and good friendship.”

Born in *Caserta* near Naples, Sacco



worked at restaurants in Milan and London before venturing to New York in his 20s. He arrived in the capital after employers offered him a position at Bice in DC; in 1997, Sacco opened his own place, Terrazza, in Friendship Heights (both have since closed). He launched Tosca in

**Earth tones dominate the great room (above and top). Leather-bound side chairs by Poltrona Frau flank a Holly Hunt cocktail table. Along the fireplace wall, Vicas designed low storage units, which were fabricated by Walkers Creek Cabinet Works.**

## private tour



2001—and presidents and politicians have flocked there ever since for enduring hits such as radicchio, poached pear and Gorgonzola salad and braised short-rib ravioli.

Sacco attributes Tosca's staying power to consistency and an understanding of boundaries. "We've probably had every member of Congress in the restaurant and they get treated like everybody else," he observes. "We try to stay true to our mission to serve good, fresh food in a nice environment, with a great sense of hospitality."

A self-described "history buff," Sacco considers Bob Dole his most extraordinary patron. The former senator, who was wounded in action during the liberation of Italy, tells Sacco war stories whenever he dines at Tosca. "At 95, Dole fondly remembers the people, the towns and his experiences," Sacco marvels. "It warms me because this is somebody who fought for my country and 74 years later I'm *here*, talking to him. I have a personal connection with him; he's very special to me." ■

A restful retreat, the master bedroom (top) features a Cameron House light fixture, a Stark carpet and a chaise and ottoman by Hickory Chair. The serene vibe carries over into the master bath (above, left and right), where Vicas combined Ann Sacks flooring and wall tiles with custom vanities and fixtures by Waterworks.