

## How to Maximize Your Home's Views

Lighting, furniture layout and large format windows are key

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*Designed by Phillip Thomas, founder and principal of Phillip Thomas Inc., this Miami home features a neutral color palette that lets the colors of the ocean take center stage.* [ ]

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*Each week, Mansion Global tackles a topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week we look at how to make the most of your views.*

A scenic vista has the power to inspire an interior. It can provide a focal point, set the tone for your home or simply be a beautiful backdrop. Whether you're looking at mountains, beach, greenery or a cityscape, what you see outside can be just as impactful as the views within. The trick is to know how to make the most of them. Here are tips from the design pros on how to enhance a room with views.

## Let the Views Inform Everything Else

“I love indoor/outdoor living areas, especially in a home that has amazing views. One of my favorite ways to maximize a home's view is to install custom glass doors that fold open or slide all the way open. It's a great way to bring the outdoors inside and the indoors outside. It also makes a space feel larger and grander. Another great way to maximize a home's view is to strategically place windows that provide a ‘wow’ factor—floor-to-ceiling windows and solid glass walls can create a stunning visual effect that showcases the environment. Large balconies with glass enclosures can also help to maximize the effects of a home's view. If the home doesn't already have an amazing view, a great option is to create a peaceful backyard environment with beautiful olive or citrus trees, lush furniture, a gorgeous fire pit and/or a custom water feature.



Large screen doors create an easy indoor-outdoor flow and unobstructed views of the pool in a living room designed by Laura Brophy, principal designer of Laura Brophy Interiors. *Hugo Landa Garcia*

“Placement of furniture is key, as is the scale of the furniture and decor. This should be the top priority for any room with a view. It is critical to take the orientation of the space and location of the view into consideration when space planning.

“I always look to the environment first for inspiration—the natural surroundings, landscaping and architecture. From there, I develop a color palette and build the design around that. The goal is to capture the essence of the view and to enhance the home’s overall design.

“I’m a sucker for natural lighting; the more the better. I also love the ambiance of evening lighting—candlelight, outdoor lanterns, chandeliers or pendants on dimmers; mood lighting that creates a cozy vibe.”

— **Laura Brophy, principal designer of Newport Beach, California-based Laura Brophy Interiors**

### **Orientation is Everything**

“Designing around a view is always a treat and should be a primary focal point. We love to bring the outdoors inside and let it take center stage. Most importantly, the house should be oriented to take full advantage of the view in as many rooms as possible. Using as many large-format windows and doors that have as few mullions as possible also helps to frame and maximize the view. ... Window treatments should be minimal and not detract from the view.”

“The furniture layout should also speak to the view with as much of the seating arrangement as possible facing it. Any furniture that is in front of a window should be low profile or easy to move. Swivel chairs are a great choice when you might want extra seating in the conversation areas—and they give you an easy option to swivel the chair around to face the view. Fabrics and finishes also play an important role in enhancing the view. We like to choose a neutral palette that echoes what you see outside. In the Hamptons (in New York), that usually means creams, beige, soft blues or greys.

“Lighting is always a key element. Layers of lighting are important, but make sure any hanging fixtures don’t interrupt the view. Exterior landscape lighting is as important as interior lighting. Light a few trees with up lights or beautiful hanging lanterns, so that you can bring the outdoors in after dark year-round. There is nothing prettier than watching the snow fall while cozying up on a cold winter’s night. A well-designed house can enjoy beautiful views and bring the outdoors in throughout the seasons.”

— **Allison Babcock of Allison Babcock Design in Sag Harbor, New York**

## It's All in the Details

"I am a big fan of mirrors in my work, particularly when I am trying to capture beauty inside and outside of my clients' homes. I particularly like mirrors near windows. Not only do they help to push natural light into a space, but they also help to amplify the landscape/view outside the house by allowing you to see straight ahead and from the sides.



Low-profile furniture keeps the spectacular views outside this waterfront home uninterrupted. The house was designed by Allison Babcock Design. *Tria Giovan Photography*

"Windows should be enhanced to draw attention to the beautiful vistas. For that reason, I often rely on window treatments or millwork to help frame and bring more attention to the view beyond the interiors.

"While your initial inclination would be to put the furniture directly in front of the view, sometimes the best views are achieved by creating moments within a space that draw your attention to the views. In my experience a beautiful view can be enhanced and appreciated in both a traditional or

contemporary interior. Do not fear that a loud interior could overwhelm a beautiful view; it's all about balance and framing.

“I always make sure to create a lighting story that changes as a view changes. By raising and lowering lighting levels, you can capture important aspects of a view. For example, by dimming lighting at night, you'll highlight the twinkle of a cityscape.”

— **Phillip Thomas, founder and principal of Phillip Thomas Inc. in New York City**