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# OLD PORT

★ PORTLAND'S  
CITY MAGAZINE ★

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## Five-Story Style

DETAILS DEFINE A MUNJOY  
HEIGHTS TOWNHOUSE



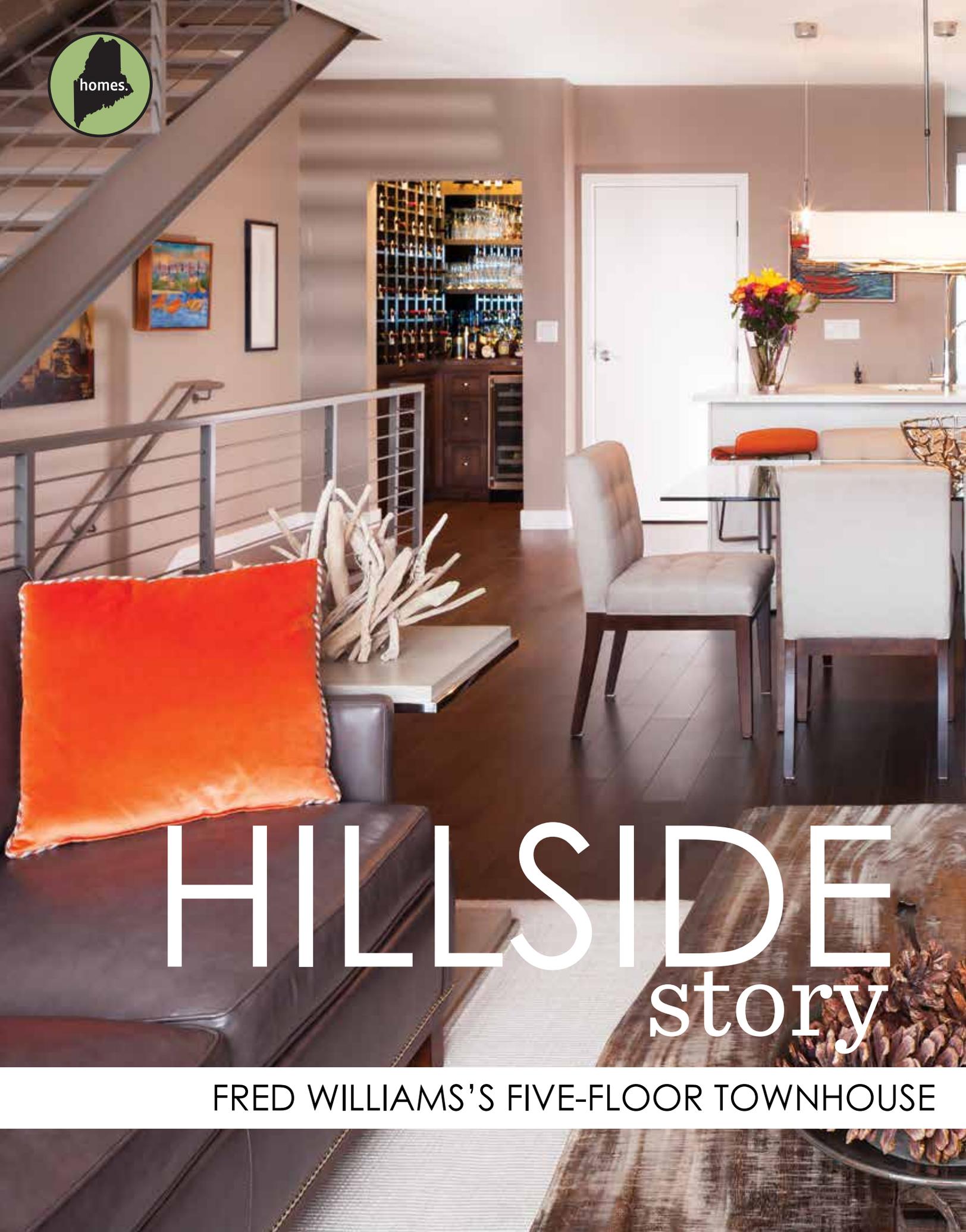
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# HILLSIDE story

FRED WILLIAMS'S FIVE-FLOOR TOWNHOUSE



Fred Williams's condo in Munjoy Heights has a grey, brown, and beige palette with pops of orange. An elevator was part of the original plan, but since Williams didn't feel he needed one, he had the shaft reconfigured as useable space. On this floor, the space (far left) became a custom wine room, built out of walnut. The living room paintings to the right are by the late Frederick Lynch (in the background) and by Joyce Grasso, who summers in Maine, in the foreground. The custom dining table has a glass top and U-shaped base made of the same walnut as the wine room.

REFLECTS HIS LOVE OF ART AND ENTERTAINING.

By DEBRA SPARK  
Photography by MYRIAM BABIN

**F**red Williams has gotten used to vertical living. For most of his many years in the Portland area, Williams lived in conventionally configured spaces—a passive-solar house he built in Gray, a condo on Chandlers Wharf in Portland, and a townhouse in North Deering. Now he lives in a five-story townhouse, one of 29 units in Munjoy Heights, an eco-friendly, passive-solar project developed by Redfern Properties, built by Wright-Ryan Construction, and designed by Ryan Senatore Architecture. Despite the townhouse's height, Williams didn't want the elevator that was part of the condominium's design. As his interior designer and good friend, Annie Kiladjian of Annie K Designs says, Williams enjoys physical exercise, so the stairs were an asset. (One big plus of moving into town? The Body Architect, which Williams thinks is the best gym in town, is nearby.) Williams asked Kiladjian to turn the elevator shaft into useable space.

This was possible because when Kiladjian came on board, the condos had yet to be finished. Indeed, when Williams first expressed interest in Munjoy Heights, the project was a mere clearing on a street that rises up a hill from Washington Avenue. He passed the dirt lot one day on his scooter, and since he intended to eventually return to the Portland peninsula, he inquired about plans for the land. The layout of his condo as it was built includes a garage, foyer, and storage on the first floor; guest bedroom, office, and laundry on the second; open-concept kitchen/dining room/living room with balcony on the third; owner's bedroom and secondary office area on the fourth; and a rooftop terrace with impressive views of the Back Cove on the fifth.

Affable, open, and hard-working, Williams is an art and wine connoisseur, successful investment manager, and philanthropist. He is the managing director and founder of Old Port Advisors, having founded its predecessor, IMCG, in 1994. But he has "zero bandwidth for looking at blueprints and what should be done in terms of design," he admits. Given this, he gave Kiladjian "carte blanche" on the

project, and she, in turn, created spaces that express his interests and personality. One example: Kiladjian turned the elevator space on the living room floor into a door-free wine room built of walnut. It stores 100-plus bottles of wine and includes a wine refrigerator, shelves for glassware, a counter for liquor bottles, and a temperature-controlled humidor drawer with cigars, an occasional vice. The bar arrangement wasn't super convenient for rooftop entertaining—all those sloshing glasses going up two flights of stairs—so Kiladjian added a second bar area in the elevator space on the rooftop level. On other floors, they were converted into closets.

In the design process, some choices were part of a catalog of options that the developers presented to all Munjoy Heights residents, including cabinetry, fixtures, and flooring. Others were part of the condo's basic design, as with the terrace decking and steel staircases, one of which is a floating staircase. Kiladjian was in charge of the rest. She tweaked the layout of the kitchen, owner's bedroom, and other areas, while outfitting the rooms. Williams has a fondness for grays and neutrals. Kiladjian honored his preference but adds, "I love orange, and I made him love orange. It's his personality. He's friendly, and he gets along with people, and it's fitting that he would have a color that goes with him." The living room includes a gray leather couch, a walnut frame for the flat-screen TV, greige walls, and walnut laminate flooring. Orange appears in armchairs, accessories, and pillows. The kitchen is off-white, and the counters are a light Caesarstone, but the stools are capped with orange leather.

On other floors, bright colors are used more sparingly, if at all, as in the guest bedroom, which is done in pale grays, tans, and blues. A friend from Vassar, Williams's alma mater, and his wife so love staying in the room with its big window, paisley bedspread, and off-white furniture that they hired Kiladjian to redesign their house in Irvington, New York. Williams's own bedroom has an upholstered headboard ornamented by nailheads, a tan linen duvet with a geometric border, walnut



furniture, and translucent white curtains with a chevron pattern. There is also a wallpapered accent wall. "My signature is to do one wall of wallpaper," says Kiladjian. "It's fun, and then you can change it anytime you want." Visitors often take note of the powder room's wallpaper, telling Kiladjian, "It's so you," as the pattern feels of a piece with Kiladjian's Armenian heritage.

The house's colors are also inspired by Williams's art collection. An abstract piece by the late Frederick Lynch has a subtle orange ground under a green, brown, and blue surface



Fred Williams in his kitchen. The countertop is Caesarstone and stools are topped with orange leather. To the immediate left of Williams is a painting by John Neville, and to the far left is one of several Haitian paintings in Williams's collection. In between is a framed and signed version of the poem that Richard Blanco read at President Barack Obama's second inauguration. Blanco and his partner Mark Neveu—as well as Pulitzer Prize-winning fiction writer Richard Russo and his wife Barbara—were the first guests to the condo, the night after Williams closed on the property.

“I love orange, and I made him love orange. It’s his personality.”

—Annie Kiladjian



**This page, from top:** The third floor of the condo with a floating staircase and a wall that exhibits some of Williams's extensive art collection. Appointments in the owner's fourth-floor bedroom include chevron-patterned, translucent curtains, a tan linen duvet with white geometric trim, and an upholstered headboard.

“After living all around Portland for the last 38 years, this townhouse and this community are exactly where I want to be.”

—Fred Williams

On the roof-top floor, a bar tucked into what would have been an elevator shaft, makes it easy to entertain.

of proliferating cellular forms. A large image of orange koi swimming with a single yellow koi is by Missy Asen, who summers on Little Diamond Island. In the foyer hangs a portrait by Fran Rodgers of an elderly woman of Gabon against an orange-yellow background. While there are a few pieces by Haitian artists—an interest Williams developed as a result of Vassar’s Haiti Project, which provides medical, education, and other assistance in Haiti—most of the walls feature local or regional artists. A piece by Munjoy Hill’s Wolcott Dodge makes use of patterned linoleum salvaged from house renovations. Canadian John Neville paints brightly colored, stylized depictions of North Atlantic fishing villages. Williams has one of the many Neville works that feature a red dory. At Coffee by Design on India Street, Williams saw paintings of iguanas that he loved. The vivid shades reminded him of Haitian art, but the work wasn’t for sale. Williams tracked down the artist—Nance Parker, a puppeteer and artistic director of Shoestring Theater. He commissioned “Iggy,” Kiladjian and Williams’s joking nickname for the six-foot-long



horizontal painting of a lizard that now hangs in the second-floor hallway.

Opting out of the elevator has presented a few drawbacks. Williams recently had ankle surgery. “I had two weeks of going up and down the stairs on my butt with my arms,” he reports. And, in the early days at the townhouse, he didn’t exactly love lugging dirt-filled planters upstairs to set behind the wicker chairs on the terrace. Some of the furniture delivery people weren’t pleased either. Now, however, all’s good. Having traded a 20-minute drive for a five-minute commute, Williams has embraced the urban lifestyle, as well as the ever-evolving Munjoy Hill community. He’s always accessed the city’s amenities, but he does so even more frequently, given the convenience. The Portland Trail system’s Jack Path runs through the Munjoy Heights condo complex. (The path connects the East End Community school with

Washington Avenue and has great views of the Back Cove and city skyline.) The food offerings on the hill please him, running the gamut from a traditional grocer like Hilltop Superette to the more upscale Rosemont Market and Grocery, as well as the new, community-oriented, locavore A and C Grocery on Washington Avenue. Silly’s restaurant is, as Williams says, an eclectic neighborhood institution that holds its own among the boutique barbecue at Terlingua, and the wine and small plate offerings at the Drifter’s Wife. But the people themselves, whether friends or just part of the general milieu, are also a big draw for Williams. He says, without any hesitation, “After living all around Greater Portland for the last 38 years, this townhouse and this community are exactly where I want to be.” ★



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# On The Block

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In the heart of the West End, this stunning, light-filled townhouse has been thoroughly renovated while retaining its period charm. Designer Jason Puiia of the New York City design firm Rees Roberts + Partners helped to plan the reimagined spaces for the current owners—his parents—opening up the rooms on the first floor to allow for better flow, creating a master suite on the second floor, and reorienting the entrance to the third-floor family room to take advantage of the abundant natural light. The four-bedroom,

three-and-a-half-bath home features a double living room, a dining room with a corner fireplace, and a modern, eat-in kitchen with a center island and high-end appliances. The master bath boasts Carrara marble on the double vanity and in the shower and floor tiles. Just off the kitchen, a new brick patio and pocket garden with antique lilacs offer a city oasis. Throughout the home, updates have been made with exceptional care, respecting its history and ensuring its value for future generations.

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