

**804 S Bay Front**  
**The “Jaws” House**  
**Barbara & Dan Abbott**  
**(John Lautner, Architect)**

- In 1978, philanthropists **Robert and Marjorie Rawlins** commissioned their residence after visiting exhibit at Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco in 1976 featuring work of famed architect John Lautner (apprentice with Frank Lloyd Wright for 4 years).
- Built in 1979. 2,100 square feet, 3 bedrooms, 2½ bathrooms and an elevator.
- Became known as the "Jaws house" because shape of balcony reminded some of a shark's open mouth.
- Its architectural design earned it a place on the National Register of Historic Places and Newport Beach's list of historical landmarks.
- After the Rawlinses died, **Michael LaFetra**, a film producer and preservationist who restores architecture, bought the house. Made plumbing, electrical and heating improvements.
- **Barbara and Dan Abbott** had watched builders work on the house from the ground up and admired it from afar for 37 years! They wanted to downsize and have an oceanfront view – bought the house earlier this year.

This landmark house was built in 1979 by famed architect John Lautner (apprentice with Frank Lloyd Wright for 4 years from 1944-1948). In 1978, **Robert and Marjorie Rawlins** commissioned their residence after visiting an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco in 1976 featuring Lautner’s work. Lautner built the two-story house for the late philanthropists Robert and Marjorie Rawlins in 1979. It is 2,100 square feet and has three bedrooms, 2½ bathrooms and an elevator. It became known as the "Jaws house" because the shape of the balcony reminded some of a Great White shark's open mouth. Its architectural design earned it a place on the National Register of Historic Places and Newport Beach's list of historical landmarks.

**Information about Lautner:** Like Wright, his work shows a strong preoccupation with essential geometric forms — the circle and the triangle are dominant motifs in both his overall designs and his detailing — and his houses are similarly rooted in the idea of integrating the house into its location and creating an organic flow between indoor and outdoor spaces, use of non-linear, open-plan and multi-level layouts, shaped and folded concrete forms, skylights and light-wells and panoramic expanses of plate glass.

**Fun facts about Lautner's work:** Lautner's architecture has been featured in films, TV, novels: James Bond's *Diamonds are Forever*, Brett Easton Ellis's *Less than Zero*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Charlie's Angels*, and as a reference in design of *Iron Man* sets. Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin purchased a Lautner house in Point Dume. Lautner's Sheats-Goldstein House was donated to the LACMA.

**Quote from Janet Eastman, LA Times Staff Writer:** "On the Balboa Island site, Lautner had to build a home that could withstand whipping salt air, shifting sandy soil and airplane noise. He achieved solidity and privacy with a mix of formed [poured in place] concrete walls, exposed steel supports, Douglas fir ceilings and a copper balcony and roof."

"Neighbors scratched their heads as the home was going up in 1979. They couldn't understand the mouth-like gap between the copper pieces that cap the rounded roofline and balcony. Someone said it recalled the great white shark in the movie "Jaws." A few days before Halloween that year, one of the workers in the building crew cut ragged teeth from plywood and filled in the "mouth." When the owners saw the prank, they made him take it down, but it was too late: The nickname stuck."

After the Rawlinses died, **Michael LaFetra**, a film producer and preservationist who restores architecture, bought the house. He said he took on the project because he was afraid it would get torn down. It needed new plumbing, new electrical, and the passive radiant heat system had failed. He replaced the roof and added solar panels. In 2010, he put it up for sale.

**Barbara and Dan Abbott** had been casually looking to downsize from their 4,800-square-foot home of 39 years after their three kids moved out. They wanted a house with an oceanfront view, but none they viewed left an impression quite like the landmark house at 804 S. Bay Front. The Abbotts, both 70, had watched builders work on the house from the ground up and admired it from afar for 37 years. They never imagined they'd hook it. They assured LaFetra that they would preserve the house and that the only thing that would change would be the furniture!