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Julian Edelman's Oasis

New England's own
Super Bowl MVP shares
his Back Bay home

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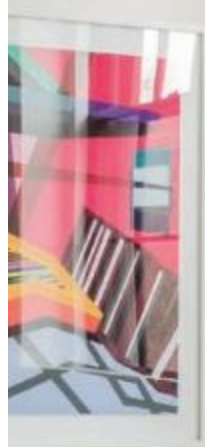
the home team

Super Bowl MVP
Julian Edelman
touches down—
and stays
grounded—in a Back Bay
brownstone.

Text by Bob Curley | Photography by Michael J. Lee



Sunlight streaming through restored nineteenth-century windows and modern artwork, such as *Cherry Bomb!* by Matt McKee, brighten the living room with its sturdy midcentury furnishings in a variety of natural textures.







LEFT: New England Patriots wide receiver and Super Bowl MVP Julian Edelman teamed up with designer Duncan Hughes to create a home that reflects the owner's fun-loving personality and his California roots. **BELOW:** A vaguely Egyptian bar unit covered in architectural vellum in a natural stone finish serves living room guests. **FACING PAGE:** Photos of golden-age Hollywood starlets adorn a bold Farrow & Ball Raddichio-painted powder room that serves the home's spacious roof deck.

CREATING a home for an NFL football player is a whole different ballgame than your average design project. Client meetings must be booked around games, practices, and the team's travel schedule. Furniture needs to be rugged enough to stand up to 300-pound linemen. And an elevator is a must for post-play mornings, which come with inevitable bruises and not-infrequent injuries.

PROJECT TEAM

Interior design: Duncan Hughes,
Duncan Hughes Interiors
Builder: Dellbrook | JKS

Portrait of Edelman and Hughes by Daniel Hennessy



Above all, the home needs to be a sanctuary from the 24/7 scrutiny that goes with playing the most popular sport in America. That's why one thing you won't find in Super Bowl MVP Julian Edelman's Back Bay condo is a trophy case.

The scrappy Patriots wide receiver, who in nine seasons in the NFL has gone from a converted college quarterback to Tom Brady's favorite passing target, has spent most of his career in rented apartments, some shared with other players. When the time came for the thirty-two-year-old, three-time Super Bowl champion to finally purchase a home of his own, he had distinct preferences. "I could be living in the Mandarin Oriental or the Four Seasons, but I didn't want that," he says. "I'm always in hotels on the road; I needed something that felt like home."

And while he chose to put down roots in his adopted city, he also wanted a space that connects with his upbringing. "I'm a northern California kid where everything is Mission style, and when I first came to Boston and saw these brownstones on Commonwealth Avenue, that was all new to me—it looked

"There was a **lot of cool stuff** we looked at, but we also had to consider—if **Rob Gronkowski** sat in a chair, **would it break?**" says Edelman.



LEFT: Framed photos of palm trees above the high-backed banquette remind Edelman of his West Coast upbringing. ABOVE: Opening the space between the kitchen, living room, and dining area permitted the addition of an expansive island. Subway tiles, bronze cabinet hardware, and a rolled-steel range hood add an urban feel. The steel and wood staircase leads to the loft.



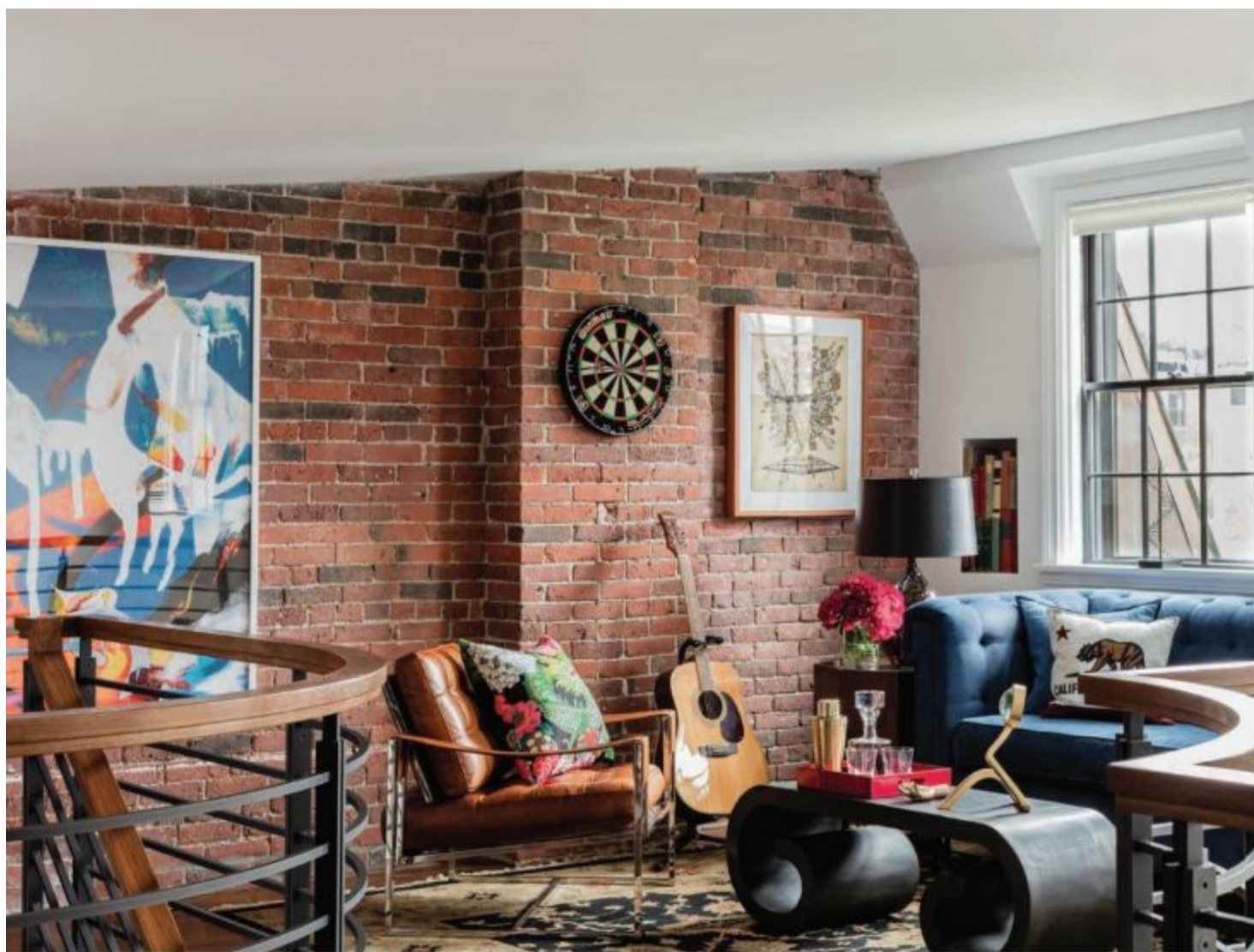
like Europe," he says. "I said, if I'm going to live in Boston, I want to live in the Back Bay, but being from California, I also wanted some open space."

The Victorian townhouse with views of Fenway Park and the Lenox Hotel had a dark and dated 1980s decor when Edelman bought it, but also some hidden surprises, like an open loft space overlooking the living room and an expansive roof deck accessed by a spiral staircase. Interior designer Duncan Hughes used those positives as a jumping-off point for a redesign incorporating midcentury-modern elements and natural textures and materials. "He didn't want a bachelor pad, but he wasn't ready to have it look like his parents' house, either," Hughes says. "He wanted something playful and full of fun, like his personality."

Hughes was the furthest thing from a fanboy ("I didn't know who he was at all; I know a lot more about football now," he says with a laugh), so rather than focus on Edelman's on-field accomplishments, designer and client connected over a shared sense of style. "He knows what he wants and has a good eye," says Hughes. "He's a fashion-forward guy, and that translated into the space well."

The designer started with an almost entirely clean slate: the only things Edelman brought with him were his clothes and a dartboard that now hangs on a brick wall in the loft. "It was an easy move," Edelman deadpans.

Functional and fashionable aptly describe the first-floor living room, the central gathering space for Edelman and his friends and teammates. A collec-



"I grew up in Silicon Valley **playing video games**, and I'm still **a big kid**," says Edelman. "There's **some dope artwork** in the loft, so it's young and fun **but also respectable** when you walk by."

tion of colorful pop art is accentuated by white walls and the natural light from the restored nineteenth-century windows. Contemporary chairs, couches, and tables are sturdy without feeling bulky, and Hughes employed natural materials like leather, zebrawood, and cowhide in muted earth tones. A round swivel chair by the fireplace is where you'll often find Edelman curled up with his laptop.

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Opening up the space between the living room and kitchen (designed by Boston's Venegas and Company) was an essential part of the renovation: not only is the spacious, sky-lit island demarcating the two rooms a place for drinks, dining, and casual conversation, it's also an active workspace for Edel-

man, a passionate cook who frequently shows off his homemade meals on social media and in his quirky series of *Burger Tyne* videos.

The dining area's high-backed banquette has upholstered channels that echo the trim on the custom range hood and an orange hue that complements the distressed paint on the industrial-style island stools. Hanging above the banquette is a series of framed photos of palm trees, a subtle West Coast touch-point. "You are what your roots are, and a lot of my roots are displayed in this house," says Edelman. "It keeps me anchored."

Two existing bedrooms were flipped and reconfigured to create the master suite, which has a decidedly masculine design with its navy and teal grasscloth wallcovering. "A lot of people want to design bedrooms for the morning, but most of the time you



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT:
Exposed brick adds warmth to the playful loft lounge. The custom wet bar crafted from reclaimed pine has a copper countertop and sink and an antiqued mirror reflecting the bottles and glassware. For Edelman, games aren't limited to the football field: this video gaming area is announced with eight gaming-themed metal art prints. The lush longwool rug encourages sprawling during epic Xbox or PlayStation battles.





Walls, floor, and ceiling in the master bath are covered in Marone Toscano travertine field tiles, lending an outdoorsy atmosphere to a space starlit by dozens of dangling LED globe lights. The enormous single-pane mirror was carefully maneuvered into place before the rest of the bathroom was built around it. **FACING PAGE:** Natural denim wallcovering and soft, stone-hued fabrics give the master bedroom its restful mood. Walnut and polished-nickel lamps and a teak lounge chair are masculine touches.

"This house is **my dojo of comfort and peace**. Football is my **work and my passion**, but this is where **I can get away** and let my mind rest," says Edelman.



spend there is at night," says Hughes, explaining the darker hue.

The master bathroom is tiled from head to toe in a pattern resembling tree bark, lending an outdoorsy feel to a room whose sense of space is enhanced with a seamless, eight-by-nine-foot vanity mirror.

A custom open staircase, gracefully turned from metal and wood, leads from the living room to the loft. Even average-size humans have to duck to enter the loft space, cleverly reclaimed from a former HVAC closet. Once inside, however, it's a cozy spot to play video games or watch TV.

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On the three-level roof deck, Edelman can serve drinks to his houseguests from a copper-topped bar in the head house covering the spiral stairway leading up from the loft. Here, too, is one of the house's hidden gems—a bathroom with boldly painted red walls covered in framed photos of twentieth-century screen sirens and starlets.

As for his Super Bowl MVP trophy and other swag, most of that goes to his parents' house. "This house is my dojo of comfort and peace," Edelman says. "Football is my work and my passion, but this is where I can get away and let my mind rest. When you get home from work, you want to be happy, and there's no better place in Boston for that to happen for me than here." ■

RESOURCES: For more information about this home, see page 209.