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METROPOLITAN HOME NOVEMBER 2005

CREATIVE EYE



A creative eye sees the world from a unique perspective. Architects and designers, who possess this special sight, tend to leave the same mark on the homes they construct for others as they do on their own workspaces and play zones and on the shelters they build for their families. We've found that architects who have themselves for a client tend to be at the top of their game even though the structures may be modest and driven by pragmatic as well as aesthetic concerns. What an architect chooses to inhabit often gives you the best idea of his or her personal style. The half-dozen homes on the following pages—from a marvel of engineering in Washington, D.C., to a cleverly updated mid-century house in Los Angeles—have this in common: They have all been prepared with great care by someone who lives there. The houses we have selected for this issue represent a sampling of what is going on in the design world at the moment and offer up a multitude of good ideas. These creative individuals all have powerful vision—and their eyes sparkle. —*The Editors*



"We do a lot of entertaining," explains Alexandra Angle, which is why the open living/dining room opens even farther to a broad deck overlooking the wild landscape of Griffith Park. The Angles worked with the same palette of pale green, white and fuchsia for both the living room and the deck. Indoors, a glass-topped coffee table on a Lucite base has a suitably airborne appearance.



VIEW MASTERS

IN A MID-CENTURY HILLTOP HOME, A REFINED RENOVATION ENTERTAINS **FRESH DESIGNS** FOR INDOOR-OUTDOOR LIVING.

In the sun-drenched dining area, bracketed by a corner of over-size casement windows, an antique English oak table with barley-twist legs is set with a pair of Japanese-influenced wooden benches, designed and built by the Angles. The dining area's exposed rafters provide an expansive feeling to the otherwise smallish space. Opposite: The Angles, pictured, move easily from indoors to out.





Eliot

and Alexandra Angle were enchanted with a street: a narrow road atop a ridge that offered panoramic views of wild chaparral, the Los Angeles skyline and the surrounding mountains. So when they spotted this compact two-story modernist box hunkered into the hilltop, real estate kismet struck. Built in 1948 by architect N. Austin Ayers, the house was begging for renovation.

"When we first purchased the house, people walked in and felt uncomfortable because the architecture was just so angular," Alexandra explains without so much as a smidgen of self-consciousness. "The space had so many acute angles," she continues, "we knew we had to break it up, soften it and introduce more organic forms." For Alexandra, a partner with her husband in Aqua Vitae Design, the remedies to such harsh geometry were subtle and complex. "But what I don't mean by that is using a lot of circles," she demurs with amusement.

At the top of the couple's renovation agenda was eliminating the wall-to-wall carpet that crept through every room of the house, including the kitchen. The floors were replaced with polished concrete, lustrous bamboo planking and highly textured black slate tiles. In the living room, a dropped 1960s acoustic-tile ceiling was swiftly removed. "We wanted to keep the design spare and simple," remarks Eliot, "so as to lead the eye naturally outside." The open-plan top floor now flows freely from dining area to living room and out to a deck overlooking the wild landscape of Griffith Park. "When you slide open the glass doors," says Eliot, "the top floor becomes essentially one big room."

PRODUCED BY LINDA O'KEEFFE. PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEBORAH JAFFE.
WRITTEN BY SUSAN MORGAN.





Searching

Through microfilm records at the public library, the Angles looked for information about their house and its architect. "We located his daughter," recalls Eliot, "and we invited her over for tea." They learned that Ayers worked primarily on large commercial projects and that many of the building materials and elements used in his own house had been scavenged from those jobs, which explains why the windows are so enormous, the Angles reason. They also discovered that the master bedroom—a particularly large room that opens out to the small rock garden (now featuring a trapezoidal slate swimming pool)—had originally been two small bedrooms for the Ayers children.

The Angles' downstairs master suite, nestled into a verdant but essentially viewless corner of the house, is divided into three sections: a raised platform sleeping area, a sitting room

and a luxurious two-person soaking tub. A curvaceously backed chaise longue was rescued from Alexandra's New England family; reupholstered in a calming blue and white, it sits companionably bath-side with a collection of chinoiserie porcelain. A finely tuned counterpoint of aesthetics prevails: The heat of a fuchsia-tinted wall contrasts with the cool concrete floor, the minimalist atmosphere is tweaked by a pair of Jonathan-Adler-does-Hollywood-Regency lamps, and the overall design approach provides a serene backdrop for the contemporary Tokyo pop of a Takashi Murakami print that hangs over the bed.

"The house is small," Alexandra admits. "But it's perfect for two people and perfect for entertaining. So we decided to keep it all as simple and as lush as possible." ♦

See Resources, last pages.



Tibetan terriers Sturtevant and Augustus relax while in the master suite. White paint, with a subtle hint of green, offsets the deep fuchsia used for a single bedroom wall. Polished-concrete floors provide an ideal neutral background. "But it's the slate floor that I love the best," says Alexandra. "There really is nothing like walking barefoot on a cold slate floor in the L.A. heat." Opposite: The chaise came from Alexandra's family.