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DECORATIVE POOLS, FOUNTAINS AND INDOOR STREAMS ARE THE NEW WORKS OF ART
A house in Venice relies on the elements to tame the heat

Photographs by João Camizani

The architect David Hertz's client wanted to make a statement with his new home on the Venice boardwalk. His mandate: “Design something dramatic.” Hertz, known for his sustainable architecture, obliged by creating a two-story home with a walkout basement all clad in prefabricated metal refrigerator panels—“the kind used for ice boxes and meat lockers,” he explains. But the signature piece of the “Panel House,” as it is now called, is a triple waterfall that cascades from poured-in-place concrete wets into a reflecting pool, then over a spillway into a catch basin even with the boardwalk. An ingenious 16-by-15-foot living room window, made of three pieces of glass silicided together to form one giant picture window, lowers to capture incoming breezes. They cool as they flow over the reflecting pool, eliminating the need for air conditioning. The water feature is a visual and sensual experience as well: Boardwalkers often stop to run their hands through the cool water on hot summer days or regard themselves in the mirror-finished windows, while their animal companions sharpen water from the catch basin. “Very few people walk by,” says Hertz, “without reaching out and touching it.”

SEASON: Water flows from the reflecting pool into a catch basin by the Venice boardwalk. The one-way mirror-finish on the windows above, lets the homeowner see out but keeps passersby from peering in. The solar panes on the roof help conserve energy.
TAKE THE AIR: Santa Monica architect David Hertz looks out over the main window, lowered to rail height, which allows for natural ventilation of the seaside home. The water below cools the breezes, making air conditioning unnecessary.
ARCHITECT: David Hertz Architects
Studio of Environmental Lecture, Santa Monica.
879-9932.

FUNCTIONALITY: "Cools incoming breeze and makes air conditioning necessary; photovoltaic panels offset any negative electrical.
—David Hertz

AURAL: "Sound is very lush—it's hard to compete with the waves."—D.H.

LIGHT: Water cascades from weirs on both sides into the reflecting pool, then slips down its face for a triple waterfall. The reflecting pool also bounces light onto the ceiling of the master bedroom, creating a rippling water pattern."