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THE NEW WAVE

L.A.'s leading green architect builds a beach house that has it all: super-cool décor, dead-on ocean views and enough environmental cred for the ultimate eco trip

BY CHRISTY HOBART | PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDWARD DUARTE

When it comes to being environmentally responsible, a home by architect David Hertz is equivalent to a Toyota Prius. Both do their part to save the environment, and both tell other in-the-know do-gooders that their owners are fighting the noble fight. But when it comes to looks, Hertz's inspired metal-and-glass aesthetic beats the Toyota gas-saver every time.

Thomas Ennis, the owner of a prime lot on the Venice boardwalk hired Hertz because he wanted something "dramatic." With an immediate view of crashing waves, the jutting pier and palm trees, a simple box could have done. In fact, it sort of did. Hertz took his cue from refrigeration buildings. "I've been fascinated for years with meat lockers, like the kind you find in the back at Costco," Hertz says.

While his design is much more complex than any walk-in refrigerator, the aluminum panels he used for the two long sides of the house are the same. They resist outside heat and noise, keep inside heat stable, and can be assembled off-site and brought in, thus avoiding scaffolding, extra construction time and waste. "Walls this size in concrete would weigh about 75,000 pounds," Hertz says. "These walls are a couple hundred pounds. It took two men two days to put them up."

Placed at skewed angles with vertical panels of glass between them, those walls allow in light and beach views, while blocking the sight of neighboring buildings. Pivoting windows within the gills draw in ocean breezes and funnel air throughout. "The owner wanted air-conditioning," Hertz says. "I fought it." It gets hot at the beach, he admits, but with insulated walls and good design, "you can have free air-conditioning."

The strong panels and innovative design also eliminated the need for interior weight-bearing walls, making possible unobstructed views of the beach and beyond—from almost every room in the house. A stunning, 10-foot-tall by 15-foot-wide glass window that drops open almost completely into the floor was designed by Hertz and the owner, an inventor of state-of-the-art car-washing systems.

Left: Designers Joe Lucas and Parrish Chilcoat focused on furniture that would not compete with the bold architecture. The Cal-Moda sofa, purchased at Thomas Lavin, is 100-percent polyester and totally kid-proof. The walnut and chrome coffee table is from Lawson-Fenning. Photo art by Olivier Pojzman.





The immense window is gorgeous, but it posed a problem for the interior designers on the job. "We struggled over the window treatments," says Parrish Chilcoat, who, with her business partner, Joe Lucas,

In the bedroom, a lacquered root-wood table rests at the base of a tufted platform bed from Eastman Furniture. The pillows and throws are designed by John Robshaw and available at Tim Clarke. The 'Open Plane' rug is from S & J Biren. *Left:* In the kitchen, 'Elite Eclipse' bar stools from Plummers Furniture keep company with Ralph Lauren's dining chair in David Sutherland's outdoor fabric. The kitchen cabinetry and stairs are designed by Hertz and built by Cliff Spencer Furniture Makec

eventually figured them out. "Our client needed privacy, and we wanted to add warmth," Chilcoat says. And everyone wanted to keep the ocean views. The designers eventually chose a sheer curtain by Rogers & Goffigan's Delany and Long line of outdoor fabrics.

The design team, whose tastes run toward traditional, worked for years with Michael Smith before branching out on their own almost two years ago. "This house was a challenge," Lucas admits. Instead of the crown molding, paned windows and hardwood floors they generally work with, here it was all clean corners, entire walls of glass, aluminum and cool concrete. "We didn't want to offend David's sensibilities," Lucas



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says, noting the extreme consideration taken in selecting the furnishings. "His details are so beautiful."

But perhaps the designers' biggest challenge was creating sophisticated décor that would also be indestructible at the hands of the owners' two young children. "Everything had to be bulletproof," says Chilcoat. The rattan dining chairs, for example, are covered in an outdoor fabric from David Sutherland's Perennial line. In the living room, the two paired a sturdy, chrome-legged walnut coffee table by Lawson-

Fenning with a custom sofa from Cal-Moda. Washable linens cover comfortable armchairs of their own design that easily swivel from kitchen to sunset views. And in the media room, an enormous, U-shaped sectional sofa—covered in a microfiber that's "beyond bulletproof," Chilcoat says—gives the owner exactly what he wanted: a "huge, comfy place" for friends and family to watch movies on his pull-down screen.

In the end Hertz has created another striking building that is environmentally sound and efficient. (He got his way with the AC and also installed solar-powered radiant heating, rooftop photovoltaic panels and a system for reusing water.) And as for the designer's mission to decorate a home that respects the work of a great architect and in which the owner—and his children—feel comfortable and relaxed?

Ennis answers it best: "I never want to leave this house." 

A Manzanita tree branch dominates the solid teak dining table from Burbere Imports. Opposite: David Hertz's metal-and-glass design focuses on dead-on ocean views via a 10-foot-tall by 15-foot-wide window.