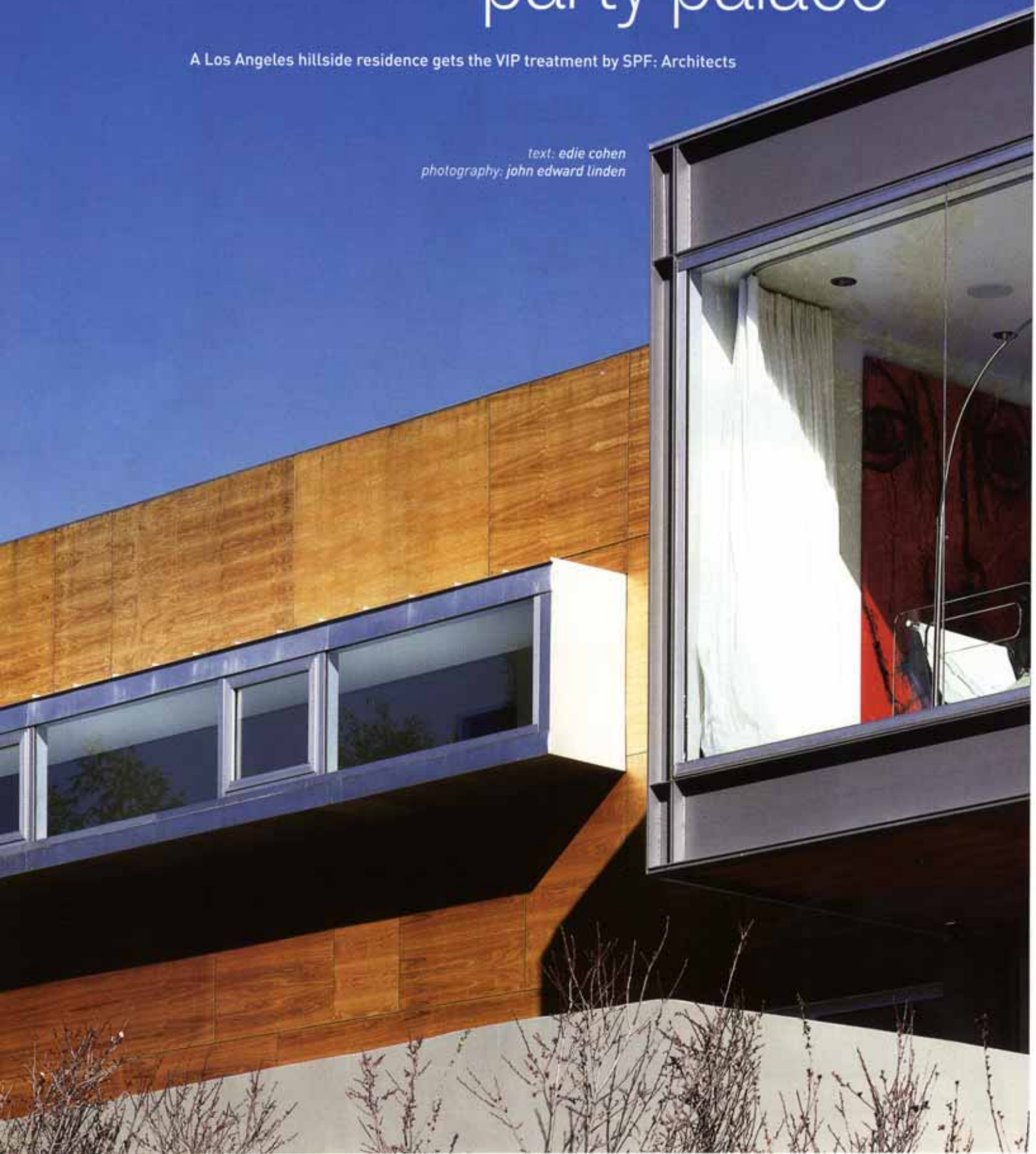


party palace

A Los Angeles hillside residence gets the VIP treatment by SPF: Architects

text: edie cohen

photography: john edward linden







Previous spread: For a Los Angeles hillside residence, SPF: Architects built out a glass-and-steel box to accommodate the master suite's study. The overhang acts as a canopy for the main entry. The cladding is oiled marine-grade teak.

Above: A limestone block separates the main-level dining and living areas. SPF: Architects designed the 14-foot-long walnut dining table. *Below:* Sliding glass doors open the kitchen to the wraparound concrete deck.

For a recent residential project, architect Zoltan Pali faced few constraints from his client, Jeff Beuth, a real-estate developer in his 30's. Beuth cared only that the end result be marketable as an "entertainment house," one that would appeal to Hollywood's three A's: actor, agent, athlete. This creative freedom, as any designer knows, was a thrill for Pali, design principal and founder of SPF: Architects and a die-hard modernist. He ran with it.

The 9,200-square-foot residence is set high in a hilly Los Angeles enclave known locally as the bird streets (this house is on Blue Jay Way). Though rooted in the modern movement's tenets of clean planes, open spaces, and easy connection to the outdoors, the structure soars.





Technically, it's a renovation, as Pali retained the footprint and foundation of the existing structure, built in 1985. In reality, the house is all new construction, shored-up foundation included.

The site presented a decided challenge. Its steep 45-degree slope meant that the seemingly simple plan had to be fitted into the hillside. From the front, the house is two stories: the main living space on the ground floor and the bedrooms above. At the rear, though, Pali went two levels below grade. Under the main living expanse, he found space for screening and exercise rooms, a library, and an auxiliary kitchen. Lower still, underneath the garage, he put in a lounge—a decadent yet masculine retreat with a 27-

foot-long sofa, bar clad in white Carrara marble, disco ball, white shag rug, and teak-paneled walls.

Essentially, the house consists of two 120-foot-long rectangular volumes upon which Pali imposed his own layering. "I broke down the mass and made the house more appealing, more human," he says. The two distinct faces lighten the looming presence.

Cladding in oiled marine-grade teak warms the upper level; two punched-out glass and-steel forms break up its horizontal span. One encases the study for the master suite, →

Above: Custom felt-covered seating flanks a pair of low tables in powder-coated aluminum. The floor is walnut, the draperies linen. **Below:** The steel-and-walnut staircase lies between the living-dining area and the kitchen.





a hipster aerie with white-leather chairs and a copy of the iconic Arco lamp. The other is a continuous window that runs from the master bedroom along the corridor to three additional bedrooms.

"The main level is super-transparent," the architect continues, with three glass elevations providing sweeping views of downtown L.A., the Getty Center, and the Pacific Ocean. A concrete wall hiding the pool and deck from the street tempers perceptions of a monolithic glass block.

Inside, a 16-foot-square stairwell surrounds a steel-and-walnut staircase at the center of the house and connects the four levels. The 3,600-square-foot main floor is a great combination of architecture and furnishings, so much so that one hardly notices the seven-foot-high ceiling.

On one side of the staircase is an open, walnut-floored space for the living and dining areas. Separating the two is SPF: Architect's low 19-foot-long limestone block, fitted with a stainless-steel trough and black river stones, from which soothing sounds of water are emitted. A pair of custom sofas upholstered in pale-gray felt are on one side of the block; the firm's 14-foot-long walnut dining table is on the other. Clear-acrylic zigzag chairs and a sputnik-style chandelier provide a shot of mid-century cool. →

Opposite: Beneath the main floor and belowground, the library with pool table acts as an antechamber to the screening room.

Top: An intimate seating area adjoins the kitchen with custom cabinetry, two stainless-steel islands, and Shin and Tomoko Azumi's LEM bar stools. **Center:** From the front, the house presents as two levels when it's actually four. A pool lies behind the concrete wall. **Right:** The stairwell is 16 feet square.





On the other side of the stairwell, a smaller sitting area precedes the kitchen, defined by a polished-concrete floor and a steel-banded canopy. In addition to ample storage and work space, Pali equipped the area with two islands topped in stainless steel; custom full-height, ebonized-veneered cabinetry; and lower cabinets clad in aluminum laminate. For access to the outdoors, two sets of stacked, sliding glass doors here and in the living-dining area open to the wraparound concrete deck.

Upstairs, the master suite surely suits the Ben Afflecks of the world. The bedroom and bath—in limestone, glass tile, and walnut—are virtually one; the glass-enclosed shower butts against the platform bed.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's white-leather Barcelona daybed and chair accommodate non-horizontal activity. This level is wrapped with an ipé deck.

The recipient of an AIA California Council 2005 Merit Award, the project has brought more than peer recognition to SPF: Architects. "I received six leads as a result of the first open house," Pali reports. "It struck a cord with people who love modern architecture." And the A's who love to live in style. 🏡

PROJECT TEAM: WILLIAM BEUTER; ED OGOSTA. CHAIRS (STUDY), TABLES (LOUNGE): THROUGH DECADENCE HOME DECOR. LAMP (STUDY), VASES (LIBRARY), LAMP'S (MASTER BEDROOM): THROUGH BLUEPRINT. CHAIRS (DINING AREA): THROUGH TWENTIETH. CHANDELIER (DINING AREA), TILE (POOL): THROUGH ROOM SERVICE. VASES (LIVING AREA, MASTER BEDROOM): THROUGH UNICL. CUSTOM SOFAS (LIVING AREA, SITTING AREA, LOUNGE), RUG (LIVING AREA,



MASTER BEDROOM, LOUNGE, PILLOWS (LIVING AREA), TABLE BASE (DINING AREA), BED, SIDE TABLES (MASTER BEDROOM), DAVINCI, SOFA, FABRIC (LIVING AREA, SITTING AREA), ARC-COM FABRICS, CUSTOM WATER TROUGH (LIVING AREA), TABLE TOP (DINING AREA), MILLWORK, (KITCHEN, LIBRARY, MASTER BATH), COUNTER-TOPS, SINK (KITCHEN), PANELING, BAR (LOUNGE), RICK LABORICO, CHAIR (LIBRARY), THROUGH BLACKMAN CRUZ, DIAMOND FOAM & FABRIC (FABRIC), POOL, TABLE: AMF, STOOLS (DITCHEN): LA PALMA THROUGH DESIGN WITH-IN REACH, FAUCET: DORNBRACHT, PENDANT FIXTURE (SITTING AREA), THROUGH LIGHTWAVE LIGHTING COMPANY, SCONCE (MASTER BATH), ARTEMIDE, LIMESTONE, SOUTHLAND STONE U.S.A. TILE: ANN SACKS, TUB: KOHLER, SINK: THROUGH HOME DEPOT, PLATFORM FABRIC (MASTER BEDROOM): MAHARAM, CARPET: BENTLEY PRINCE STREET, STOOLS (LOUNGE): KARTELL, SHELVING: MAIN GLASS & MIRROR, CUSTOM RAILINGS (DECKS): REVEREND GADGET, DRAPERY: FABRIC OUTLET PLUS, SLIDING DOORS: FLEETWOOD ALUMINUM PRODUCTS, STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: J. E. GUZMAN CONSULTING ENGINEER, GENERAL CONTRACTOR: WILLIAM KENT DEVELOPMENT.

Opposite, top: Most of the master bath is limestone, except for the glass-tiled wall anchoring the cantilevered walnut vanity. *Opposite, bottom:* The pool area is composed of ceramic mosaic tile and concrete.

Above: The master suite's custom platform bed backs up to the glass-enclosed shower. *Below:* The subterranean lounge has walls paneled in teak leftover from the exterior. Antonio Citterio's Spoon stools serve the bar in Carrara marble.

