

spaces

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THE BEST PARTY HOUSE IN HOLLYWOOD
CONCRETE IN THE PINES * SAVIN COUËLLE ROCKS!
 ROBERT BRUNO - MAN OF STEEL * MISSONI MAKEOVER * CHARLES & RAY EAMES

£3.50
MODERN HOMES



BLUEBAY

When architect Zoltan Pali was given a free hand from Jeff Beuth to design his home, he couldn't believe his luck! But this fantastic house perched in the hills above Los Angeles, and set at 45 degrees, was full of challenges. As you'll see, the solution proved to be spectacular.

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PHOTOS: John Edward Linden WORDS: Lynda Clark

The original house was built in 1986 and Beuth bought it three years ago.

It's situated high up in the hills in an area known as the 'Bird Streets.'

This house is on Blue Jay Way..

It's a little bit funny what people see when they buy a house. Often they have incredible insight when it comes to seeing potential and this was definitely the case for property developer Jeff Beuth. He wanted a house which was extravagant in every way. He wanted something totally Hollywood and he told Zoltan that the end result was to be 'an entertainment house.' Somewhere to invite his friends and work colleagues and a place for him to unwind and relax. But although Zoltan was excited, it turned out to be nowhere near as easy as it first sounded.

The original house was built in 1985 and Beuth bought it three years ago. It's situated high up in the hills in an area known as the 'Bird Streets.' This house is on Blue Jay Way. The original structure was just plain ugly. The job seemed easy to begin with as anything would have been preferable to what was already there. But building into the side of a steep Southern California hill isn't that simple. They have earthquakes. Lots of them. Although technically a renovation, it quickly became clear this was actually a new construction.

The biggest challenge was the fact that the house sits on a very steep slope and the new house had to fit into the hillside. Beuth wanted a house which was one large open space with no walls. He wanted it to feel like it was floating. From the front, the house appears to be suspended in the air with the main living area on the first floor and the bedrooms above. But at the back, Zoltan cleverly designed the house to go down two stories into the hill. There he put the real entertainment area that Beuth had originally asked for. It includes a library, a gym, a cinema, and another kitchen. Below that, he added another sitting room. This was a totally personal space for Beuth and houses his 27 foot long

Expressionist artist Danny Maltzman's distinctive work sits well in the space, while the steel and walnut staircase cleverly connects all four levels.

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sofa, a white marble bar and teak panelled walls. 'There is also a huge disco ball in there so I'm sure it's his place for chilling out and taking some time out,' says Zoltan.

Basically the house is made up of two rectangular boxes. The main part is totally transparent with breathtaking views of downtown Los Angeles, Long Beach harbour, the Getty Centre and the Pacific Ocean. 'This is a view to die for. No one can build in front so it's there forever. It's like looking through a wide-angle lens. It gives a totally different perspective to what is there. It's a compressed space but when you look out, it feels like you have wide peripheral vision. It's really very special and can be rather surreal.'

The steel and walnut staircase dominates the centre of the house and connects all four levels. Intriguing pictures by artist Danny Maltzman are a convincing choice and work well on the large white wall behind the billiard table. The main living area is huge but because of the clever way it has been designed, doesn't give the impression that the space is actually around 3600 square feet. The way Zoltan has divided up the space is both unique and very subtle. The sitting and dining room are separated by two long limestone blocks fitted with a stainless steel trough and black stones. From this come the constant and rather sensual sounds of trickling water which relaxes the listener and give a sense of being outdoors. Zoltan designed the oversized walnut dining table that teams perfectly with the clear zigzag Perspex chairs and sputnik chandelier. Beyond are the two long grey felt sofas. Since the room is completely surrounded by glass, once again the sweeping views are very impressive.

The kitchen is kitted out to prepare a meal fit for any Hollywood mogul. Designed with the needs of a master cook in mind, the polished concrete floor, stainless steel

islands and aluminium laminate cabinets make this area very high-tech but still quite user-friendly. 'The kitchen had to be just right. I feel that I have used the right materials and put all the important components together so that the space works very efficiently. It's very easy to clean but also fits in really well with the rest of the house.' From here, massive sliding glass doors open onto the concrete deck and the pool.

The upstairs master bedroom is straight out of a Hollywood movie set. The limestone bath and shower sits in a glass box. The walnut platform bed creates the perfect backdrop for the rest of the room including a classic Mies van der Rohe white leather daybed. 'It's a very "glam" room. You can sit in the bath and still feel part of the space because you can see through the glass walls. It is an extension of the idea of floating in air.' Zoltan points out.

'I am particularly interested in new materials and technologies and how you incorporate them into new structures for the betterment of the environment. That process is what generates the form. It determines the way you choose to solve a problem. I always want to find beauty along the way. But if I have to make a choice, I sacrifice the new for beauty, since architecture is not about being the next new thing. This house is very special to me. You feel like you are floating in space. It's a great sensation. You also get to feel the connection with all the levels. It was quite a task to get it just right because building on a 45 degree angle isn't that simple. But the end result made it all worthwhile. You have the best of both worlds since you can be part of the rat-race below but can escape and watch it all happening in the distance. Hollywood and Los Angeles are not always the easiest places to live in but up here it's really very special. You really do feel you are flying!'

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The main living area is huge but, because of the thoughtful and elegant design, it wears its 3,800 square feet effortlessly.



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