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# HOVER CRAFT

GERHARD HEUSCH  
ELEVATES CALIFORNIA  
MODERNISM WITH  
HIS PANORAMIC  
HILLSIDE HOME

LIKE THE FIRST GENERATION OF ÉMIGRÉ Modernists working in Los Angeles in the '20s, 44-year-old German-born Gerhard Heusch has long been inspired by the California landscape – so much so that when given the chance to build his own personal manse in Beverly Hills, Heusch decided to take full advantage of the 35,000 square feet of heavily-wooded hillside that abutted the back of the property. “I didn’t have any idea what I was going to build when I first bought the property,” says Heusch, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. “But I did know I wanted to have these views to the front and the back. So the design was driven by the site itself.”

Innovative and elegant, his solution uses 10 surprisingly narrow columns to raise his home – which resembles a sleek, modernist box wrapped in floor-to-ceiling glass – 14 feet above the ground. This ensures privacy and guarantees jaw-dropping views from

RICH PALETTE: ASIDE FROM A STEEL, STUCCO AND GLASS STRUCTURE, MATERIALS AND COMPONENTRY IN THE THE OAK PASS HOME INCLUDE A BULTHAUP KITCHEN, BOFFI FIXTURES, BRAZILIAN WALNUT FLOORING, COLORED GLASS BY CESAR COLOR AND PORTUGUESE LIMESTONE







literally every room in the house. "That became the theme," says Heusch, whose firm, Heusch Inc., designed Jennifer Lopez's Conga Room, as well as other fashionable L.A. eateries and bars.

Heusch and his design associate, David Wick, who previously worked with Eric Owen Moss and Hodgetts + Fung, carried the "floating" theme through the majority of their design choices. The 10-foot interior walls, packed with the maximum amount of insulation, are separated from the floor and ceiling by recessed "shadow lines" to give the impression that they, too, float. Similarly, bathroom cabinets hover against walls of glass, plasma screens hang in mid-air, and doors and curtains, placed on sliders, disappear into recessed walls when opened. Nonetheless, Heusch's Oak Pass residence, as it's called, still feels homey, thanks to the ample use of natural materials, such as Portuguese limestone in the kitchen and

guest baths, and dark, durable Brazilian walnut flooring, utilized inside and out.

But how do you lift a 3,200-square-foot, three-bedroom, four-bath house into the air and still maintain necessary infrastructure, like plumbing and heating? "Basically everything, including drainage, had to go through the support beams, the floor and the ceiling," says Wick of the 18-month construction project.

The building's aesthetic and structural success has inspired the architects to consider using Oak Pass as a model for other clients. "It's a simple solution that can be applied to numerous architectural sites," says Wick. "It really makes a lot of sense." While it might be tempting to view the overall result as an attempt to merely mimic classic Modernism, Heusch's work is utterly reverential, upholding the movement's ideals and serving as a tribute to its stylistic tenets. **PAUL YOUNG**

