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BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING MODERN HOMES MAGAZINE

# Living etc

THE HOMES MAGAZINE FOR MODERN LIVING

## GLOBAL HOMES

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## SUMMER IN THE CITY

Hot interior looks and dazzling deco ideas for cool modern spaces



# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Words Sarah Essex  
Photography Anthea Gerrie

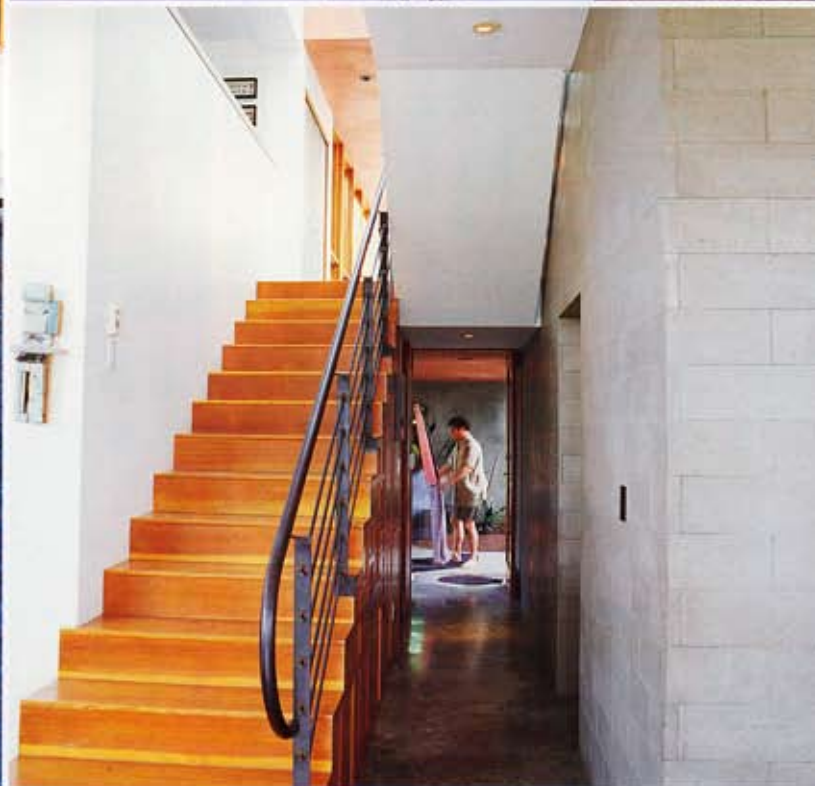
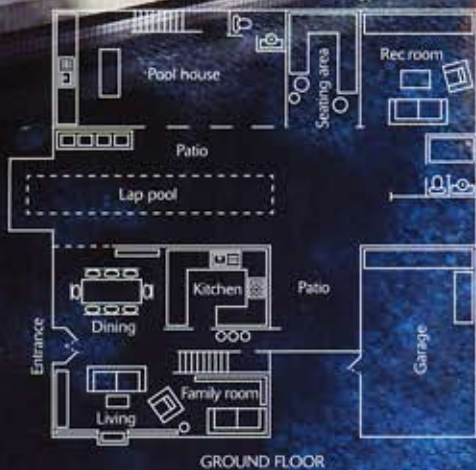
Stairs lead to the roof and a hot tub, the greenhouse, and a sea of solar panels. 'We produce

enough surplus power to sell to the electricity company during the daytime,' says David.

Tranquil by day  
and romantic by  
night, the outdoor  
seating area is  
shielded from the

midday sun by  
the glass corridor,  
which runs the  
length of the  
extension.

When architect David Hertz set about creating his dream family home, he had two aims: to make it eco-friendly and to make it a whole lot of fun – for small children and big kids alike



**ABOVE** Expanding into the plot next door made room for the pool and play area, which includes a pinball machine for the kids and a lounge area complete with a firepit for

the adults. **RIGHT** Concealed cupboards under the stairs are perfect for hiding clutter and even house a loo. The corridor leads from the living area to the back

door, where there's a complete alfresco kitchen and outdoor shower, so sandy feet and surfboards can be rinsed off after a trip to the beach.

**K**ids rule in the home of David Hertz and Stacy Fong. The first clue is literally on the doorstep, where side-by-side adult and pint-size front doors open into the home David, an eco-architect, built to be as environmentally friendly – and sociable – as possible.

"We like to think of our home as a day spa," he explains, leading the way along a glass bridge that connects the upper floor of the two houses that form the U-shape basis of his home. It overlooks the delightful outdoor living area, where children and friends converge at weekends.

"People come by to go to the beach or just hang out," Stacy says. "It feels like we've all gone to Bali for the day!" Not that Venice Beach, California, is an area you'd want to escape from – in the past decade it's become a holiday destination in itself. But it wasn't always like that, says David, a surfing nut who chose the area because in the Eighties it was the only affordable place within reach of the waves.

"Venice was scary when I moved here – there were gangs, robberies, even the occasional murder. Today, it's still the most diverse community in LA, with a >>



**THIS PICTURE**  
Eleven-foot-high ceilings make the living room really airy. The lounge is a Le Corbusier. The sofa is by Cassina.

**INSET** The front of the house is glass. The concrete dining table was designed by David. For similar, try Modus.



### Instant ways to detox your environment

- Toxin-absorbing indoor plants are great for creating a calm, clean vibe in your home.
- Opt for non-toxic paints (water-based instead of solvent-based) and use old-fashioned cleaning products, such as vinegar and baking soda, rather than chemical-packed hi-tech sprays.
- Cut exposure to synthetic chemicals by using eco-friendly washing powder on bed linen. Also keep electrical items in the bedroom to a minimum – the less electrical static in the air the better.



THIS PICTURE  
David's wire-free  
design means  
solar panels  
power underfloor  
heating and  
provide enough

hot water for the  
family. INSET The  
view from across  
the street shows  
both phases of  
the property, built  
three years apart.



## Home truths

**What are your design influences?** We love combining classical designers like Eames, Starck and Le Corbusier with ethnic pieces, set against a background of simple, humble materials.

**What about your entertaining style?** It's always informal, always outdoors and there's always music.

**Are you messy or tidy and how did this affect design decisions?** Stacy is compulsively organised, so storage was top of her list. I fight my tendency towards chaos and we try to teach the kids without being unreasonable.





sense of "anything goes" in the architecture. You can be as experimental as you like.'

It meant David, who once worked for California's most famous innovative architect, Frank Gehry, could build an unusual glass and concrete home without any fear of offending the neighbours. And Stacy worked with him, designing furniture and fixtures in what they call 'humble' materials – pine, glass and Syndeconcrete, the mix of concrete and recycled material David invented 20 years ago.

The house has a surprisingly small footprint. 'We fitted our home onto a 40 x 90ft plot 10 years ago', explains David. 'When the plot next door became available, we were able to expand and create the outdoor play area we'd always dreamed of.' Although you can't see the sea, it's close, and David designed the house to take advantage of the marine air and brilliant light that saturate the neighbourhood. High windows and screened doors let in cooling breezes, while solar panels, which feed into tubes beneath the concrete floors and benches, assure toasty feet via underfloor heating on chilly evenings. 'It's completely clean, there are no wires. We don't even need a booster for hot water.' >>

**TOP LEFT** Food is served from an open kitchen, separated from diners by a high counter: 'It allows for conversation while keeping cooking clutter from view,' Stacy

explains. She chose professional caterers' shelving, but Wards does stainless-steel shelves for £77.22. The stools are by

designer Lisa Krohn, but Chair Maker can do bespoke. **ABOVE** On the first floor, sliding glass panels can turn guest rooms into a huge play space for the kids.



**TOP LEFT** The beds in Collin's room incorporate lots of storage drawers. The huge window pulls in loads of light. **ABOVE** Floating shelves hold Max's models,

keeping his bedroom floor clutter free. **TOP RIGHT** The children's artworks are among the pictures on display on the back stairway.

**ABOVE RIGHT** David's special lightweight eco-blend called Syndecrete was used to make all the worktops, bath tubs, sinks and floor tiles in the house.

The ground floor of the original house is a large, open-plan living area divided into quarters. You enter into the 'formal' living room – not that life is ever anything but informal in this busy home – with a more intimate TV room behind it housing downsized armchairs for the Hertz's children, Max, eight, Sophie, 11, and Collin, 12. Clutter is kept out of the small corridor leading from the living area to the back door thanks to fitted cupboards, occupying every inch of space under the stairs.

Upstairs, the extension provides the guest rooms the family home had lacked before, with sliding glass panels to allow the new rooms to be used flexibly – which means that when there are no overnight visitors, the top floor can be turned into a huge playroom for the kids' large-scale models.

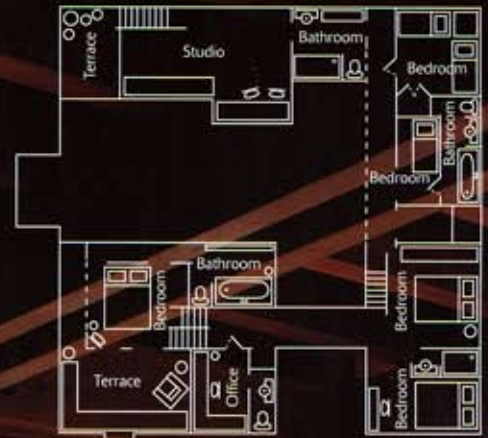
The children's rooms, along the long glass bridge that connects the two buildings, also bask in light thanks to large windows and more translucent sliding doors, and there's even a child-scale bedsit where the kids have friends to stay.

But despite the innovations and clever use of light and space, it's the alfresco life his family love that David had in mind when he created their flexible, fun home. □



THIS PICTURE  
Even the master  
bedroom is  
equipped for  
outdoor living,  
with its own  
sleeping porch

and an outdoor  
fireplace for  
chilly evenings.  
INSET The floating  
wall behind the  
bed conceals a  
dressing area.



‘Venice was scary when I moved here. Today it’s still the most diverse community in LA, with a sense of “anything goes” in the architecture’