

havens

eco-style #1

edgy & efficient

A California family captures seaside sunshine and coastal breezes to power their modernist makeover

SPECIAL SECTION!

16 pages of eco-friendly design solutions

ECO-SAVVY IDEA

Raising the ceiling from 8 to 11 feet made room for clerestory windows that let in additional light and boost air circulation.

ON THE HOUSE

STYLE 1960s rancher turned modern beach retreat

SPACE 3,200 square feet, with four bedrooms and baths, and an open-plan kitchen, living, and dining area, all focused on the ocean

SETTING Pacific Palisades, a bluff-top neighborhood between Santa Monica and Malibu

VIEW Santa Monica beaches to the south and the Sunset Point surf break to the northwest >



ECO-SAVVY IDEAS

- The pool features saline purification (reducing the need for chemicals) and its own solar heating system.
- An interlocking material called SlopeBlock helps retain the rear hill (right).
- Landscape designers Barry Champion and Nicholas Walker planted an array of drought-tolerant succulents that require little watering.



meet the family

Kristen Ding and Mitchell Chang grew up miles from the beach—she in St. Louis, Missouri, he in San Jose, California—but they met in Los Angeles, married, and settled in Pacific Palisades, near a bluff overlooking the sea. One day, while strolling along the bluff, they saw a sign beside a boxy, contemporary home with a full-on ocean view. Kristen, a graphic designer, and Mitchell, an education professor, share a passion for modern design and the beach (he's a surfer), so they bought the place despite its closed-up, fortress-like facade. After a yearlong renovation they moved with sons Atticus, 8, and Skyler, 6, into the breezy, open house above Mitchell's favorite surf break, Sunset Point. >

“MODERN HOUSES NEED TO BE WELL ORGANIZED IN ORDER TO STAY CLEAN AND UNCLUTTERED” —EVA SOBESKY, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER



their green dream

Working with architectural designer Eva Sobesky, based in Venice, California, Kristen and Mitchell asked for a low-maintenance, family-friendly house that's energy-efficient and focused on ocean views. They wanted windows on all four sides to let in sunshine and breezes, as well as forgo lighting until dark and pass on air-conditioning. They also wanted durable materials that could stand up to salt air without corroding and, when eventually necessary, be recycled. And they pre-wired the house for solar power, later installing it in 2009, when rebates and incentives brought the cost down substantially. Last but not least, they hoped to reuse as much as possible from the existing house.

site specifics

Kristen and Mitchell faced the challenges of redoing a seaside house that's broadly oriented to the west and south. Directly in the path of baking sun and ocean winds, it's also within earshot of a coastal highway. The home's hillside perch and multilevel form, projecting out on stilts in front and tucked against the slope in back, further complicated renovation efforts.

To solve these problems, Eva added windows but chose laminated glass, which cuts the sun's glare, holds in warmth in winter, and muffles sound. In summer, new clerestory windows cool the house and improve air circulation. Where the building faces the ocean, she swapped cedar cladding for enduring, low-maintenance stainless steel, then reorganized interior space to make sense on two levels: first-floor >



ECO-SAVVY IDEAS

- Energy-efficient appliances, durable CaesarStone countertops, and quarter-sawn walnut cupboards keep the kitchen's carbon footprint small.
- Laminated glass windows provide better insulation and more durability.
- An open floor plan—like this dining room, living room, and kitchen—gives the feel of a much larger house in a smaller footprint.





“IF A HOUSE IS WELL LAID OUT, IT CAN GIVE YOU THE SAME FEELING AS A LARGER ONE, ONLY WITH LESS HOUSE TO CARE FOR” —EVA SOBESKY, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER



ECO-SAVVY IDEAS

- To minimize waste, the master bedroom floor was pieced together from offcuts of end-grain Douglas fir.
- On the ocean-facing facade, stainless steel siding and generous overhangs provide shelter from the salty air and intense sun.
- Cross-ventilation in the bath and throughout the house eliminates the need for air-conditioning.



private family quarters with ocean views, and top-floor public rooms with magnificent views and access to expanded decks off the back.

home eco-nomics

Reclaimed materials: Kristen and Mitchell made the green—and dollar-wise—decision to save and reuse as much of their original house as possible. By working within the old home’s existing footprint and preserving some of its framing, they saved more than \$100,000. And they kept large amounts of materials out of landfills.

Siding: Sheathing much of the house in stainless steel rather than cedar increased material costs by around \$20,000. But the steel lasts indefinitely, with little maintenance beyond a soap-and-water wash. (Cedar siding would have required the application of a clear-finish sealer every three years or so, at a cost of about \$25,000.)

Power source: While the expenditure for solar panels and installation was steep—about \$40,000—incentives and rebates cut the total in half. Supplying almost all of their home’s power and light in summer, the system slashes their electric bills by nearly 90%, or more than \$100 monthly.

Heated pool: The couple paid \$2,100 to buy and install a separate solar-heating system for their pool. The alternative, a natural gas, oil, or electric heater, would have been just as pricey, but running it would add as much as \$2,000 in annual fuel costs.

Windows: A splurge on top-grade laminated glass nudged up the price of doors and windows by about 35% over cheaper options. The trade-off is a substantial monthly savings, due to reduced heating and cooling costs (thanks to better insulation and cross-ventilation), and much more durability.

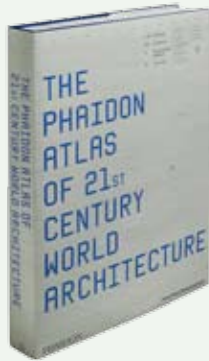
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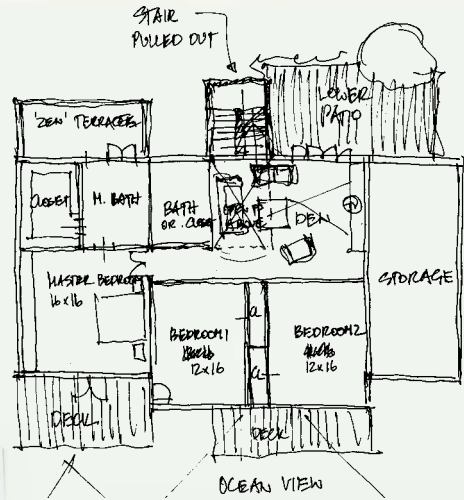
MEET THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER

Eva Sobesky

Born in Czechoslovakia and raised in Germany, Eva learned her craft under exacting superstar Frank Gehry. She's known in her own right for her volumetric, sculptural houses that embrace their California setting. Inspired by the landscape and climate of her adopted region, Eva also cites architect John Lautner's airy, angled designs as influences, along with the collaborative, multidisciplinary approach of Germany's Bauhaus school.



"For inspiration, I just open this book randomly to different pages." *The Phaidon Atlas of 21st Century World Architecture* (Phaidon, 2008)



Kristen surveys the progress.

"THE PLAN GREW OUT OF THIS SPECTACULAR SITE"

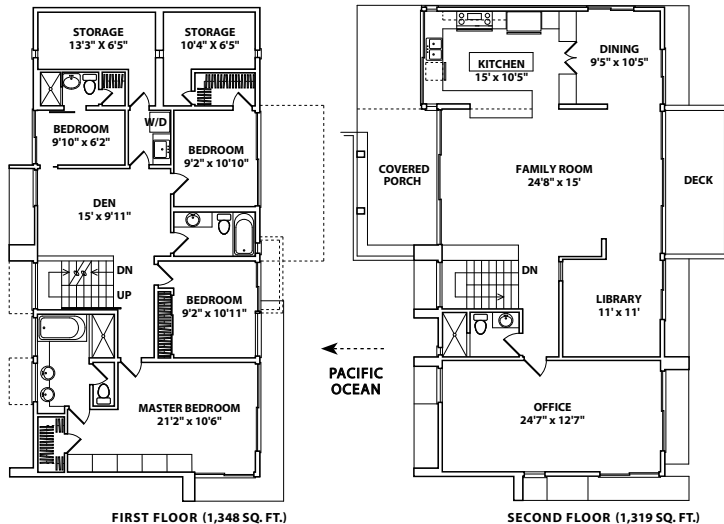


Eva's 3D model of the house

"IN THE LIVING ROOM, YOU'RE FOCUSED ON THE OCEAN, THE VASTNESS OF THE HORIZON"



Creative fuel: Julius Shulman's architectural photography



the quick tour

- The two-level design (with entry and garage below) separates public areas from private living space: Upstairs, with its direct access to the outdoors, is for playing, eating, mingling with friends; downstairs, for family time and sleep.
- The two living zones are distinguished visually and practically by their materials' palettes—the rugged cement floor and walnut cabinetry upstairs; the warmer, cozier Douglas fir below.
- The open floor plan features adaptable areas:

for example, a 10-foot-long table in the office converts to a stage for convivial dinners on crowded holidays.

- Built-in furniture in many rooms conserves space, making the house feel larger than it is and lending cohesiveness.
- Carefully placed windows capture specific views that celebrate Southern California: to the south, the Santa Monica Pier; to the west, the Catalina Islands; to the northwest, a well-known surf spot (Sunset Point). 🌊