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INSIDE STORY

SWEET HOME  
ALABAMA

See page 23

# Builder

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

OCTOBER 2009

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## BUILDER'S CHOICE 2009

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# SUNSET PLAZA RESIDENCE

## Los Angeles

ARCHITECTS DAVID THOMPSON AND Kevin Southerland got lucky with the client and the site for this house. "He was very interested in the mid-century movement and wanted something in the Hollywood Hills that would make a major statement," says Thompson. "But he was also open to being progressive and building something that made sense now."

Studying precedent wasn't a stretch, considering three of the giants of that era—Richard Neutra, Carl Maston, and Rudolph Schindler—had all designed homes in the Hills. Inspiration also came easily, given the site's panoramic views of downtown L.A., the ocean, and the canyon. "One thing we like to do in a lot of our projects is look at the square footage of the lot rather than the square footage

of the house," says Thompson. "We try to utilize as much of the lot as possible. In this case, 90 percent of it was usable."

Of course, modern building codes make some of those mid-century signatures—large expanses of glass, cantilevered levels—especially difficult. "It takes more effort now to create that sense of lightness, creativity, and freedom," says Thompson. "It was easier back then to go with single panes of glass and not have to worry about energy efficiency and seismic codes."

But they pulled it off in what may be the ultimate homage. The house looks like it's been nestled on its promontory since the mid-century, but it's built to withstand the earthquake many consider to be inevitable.—K.S.

### GRAND

**Category:** Custom home, 3,500 to 6,000 square feet  
**Entrant/Architect:** Assembledge+, Los Angeles  
**Builder:** Eric Engheben, Topanga, Calif.  
**Developer:** Brad Blumenthal, Los Angeles  
**Land planner:** Jonny Appleseed Landscaping, Beverly Hills, Calif.

