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David Thompson designed the living room as an extension of the front porch.



A photograph of a modern house interior. The scene is viewed through a large glass opening. In the foreground, a wooden deck with horizontal planks is visible. The interior features a wooden staircase with a white metal railing. The walls are light-colored, and the ceiling has recessed lighting. The overall atmosphere is warm and modern.

Open House

People who live in glass houses should be so lucky as to have had them designed by the ingenious David Thompson.

BY SHERISE DORF * PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL WESCHLER

It's not unusual for David Thompson and his wife, Jamie Horwich-Thompson, to welcome complete strangers into their year-old home. The dynamic duo embraces the fact that their modern house, fronted by walls of glass, invites neighbors and passersby to stop and wave. "When we first built the house, people would be walking by, and they'd stop and look, and I'd open the door and let them in because I was so excited about it. Jamie would come back from walking the dog, and there'd literally be five strangers in the house I was giving the tour to," laughs Thompson, an architect whose six-person firm, Assembledge, is currently at work on a variety of residential and commercial projects in LA, Northern California, and New York City.

In designing the 2,400-square-foot house, which punctuates the end of a street lined with Craftsman houses near Larchmont Village, Thompson aimed to integrate indoor and outdoor living as well as reflect the nature of his family, which includes two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Lyla and "pure-bred mutt" Marlee. "I don't know that I set out to create a house that would build community," says the architect, "but the truth is, if we're here, we wave, they wave back, we open the door, we start a conversation, and all of a sudden the openness of our house is bringing more strength to the idea of neighborhood, and that to me is really powerful."

Horwich-Thompson, six and a half months pregnant, agrees. "Yesterday I was standing in the kitchen making breakfast for my daughter, and I look out the window and there's this man who starts blowing kisses. And don't worry: I know the kisses aren't for me. They're for the house."

Influenced by early Modernists Neutra, Schindler, and Lautner, Thompson's sensibility clearly informed the design process, but ultimately it was his desire to create a very comfortable house for his family and visitors that held sway. "What we're always trying to do in our work is take Modernism and make it warm and accessible. Modern architecture gets a bad rap sometimes because it can be very cold and sterile, and it's more about the space than the people living in it," he explains.

Beyond the inviting exterior, the casually sophisticated interior has an open floor plan that acknowledges the need for personal spaces as well as public zones while, wherever possible, blurring the line between indoors and out.

"I think David had a very clear idea of the space, of the house, of the palette, and that's why he's so good at what he does," says Horwich-Thompson, who gave her husband "a lot of support" in pursuing his vision. The architect chose "green" options whenever possible, including sustainably grown bamboo flooring and cedar siding; a tankless water heater; radiant heating; and a skylight in the middle of the house that acts as a solar chimney and is open on hot days to release heat as it rises. "There were some



broad strokes already decided on that I agreed to and loved, and were decisions to be made here and there. I remember when we were in the kitchen for the built-in cabinet in our bedroom. "How about glass?" And David looked at me and I realized he was proud," adds Horwich-Thompson, who was a self-described vintage and flea-market furniture collector until she met her husband and appreciated his minimalist aesthetic as well.

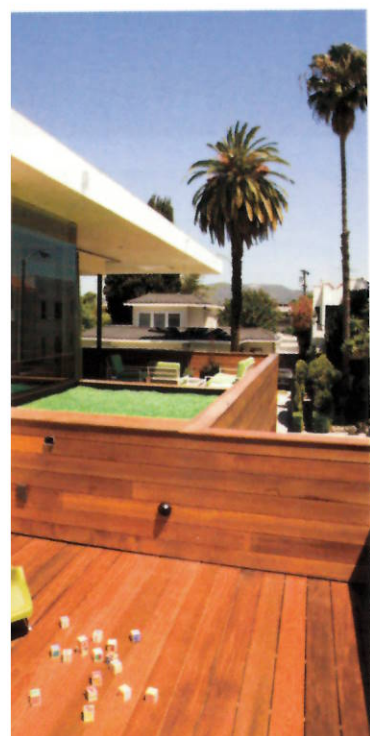
As in any modern well-thought-out home, the furniture is carefully selected. But Thompson went a step beyond, electing to design and build the pieces. "Not something I went into this planning to do," he says, "but my background's in furniture design, and I love it, so it was almost inevitable. I built the pieces as I envisioned them instead of trying to find things that might have ended up not working as well."

The first glimpse of Thompson's craftsmanship is in the entry, where the living room functions as an interior extension porch. This is the room that's most on display. With its series of modular pieces that can be configured for any seating arrangement, it sets the tone for the rest of the house: Sit anywhere, be comfortable. "Jump up and down if you want," he insists. "We didn't want

ABOVE: The Horwich-Thompson family outside their new home. CLOCKWISE ON OPPOSITE PAGE: A floor-to-ceiling wall of glass slides open to seamlessly integrate indoor and outdoor living space. A bird's-eye view of the family room with an Eames chair and a Syndecrete-and-Douglas-fir coffee table built by Thompson; the patio off the master bedroom; the ipe-wood deck outside daughter Lyla's room.



Jump up and down if you want," he insists. "We didn't want a house where our guests can't go here, or can't sit there."





ABOVE: The master bedroom's modern furniture was all designed by Thompson. RIGHT: A Noguchi lamp provides a corner focal point in the living room. OPPOSITE PAGE: Curtains by Knoll wrap around the master bedroom to afford privacy.

