

CALIFORNIA HOMES

The Magazine of Architecture
The Arts & Distinctive Design

MODERN

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A Remodel
In Los Feliz
Remains True
To Its Architectural
Heritage

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The restored and renovated home takes advantage of the same magnificent wooded views that were an important element in the original 1960s era design by USC School of Architecture professor of architecture Waldo Adams Kirkpatrick.

BELOW The living room features a pair of le Cousteau leather chairs and a view of the trees in Griffith Park.
OPPOSITE The chairs at the bar facing the kitchen are from Design Within Reach.





When Los Angeles designer Ryan Brown found a modern house designed in 1961 by USC School of Architecture professor Waldo Adams Kirkpatrick, he felt it was ripe for a sensitive restoration.

Respecting the structure's design heritage and history, while maximizing its livability was a daunting but welcoming challenge for Brown, an ardent historian of the architectural history of Los Angeles. The project became the central drama of the hit Bravo series, "Flipping Out," as Ryan, his brother Joshua, and his business partner, Jeff Lewis, worked to restore the home's faded charms.

Everything about this property in Los Feliz Oaks appealed to

Ryan Brown on a deeply personal level. "I love the neighborhood. People walk their dogs here, they know their neighbors. You can walk down to the cafes on Hillhurst and Los Feliz," he says.

"The Oaks" is a venerable section of Los Feliz, set in the Hollywood Hills adjacent to Griffith Park. It is home to a rich assortment of early twentieth-century and Modernist architecture in a setting that is both lush and sophisticated. The house is built against the hills, taking advantage of the vistas and the topography. There are city views at the front of the house, wooded views at its rear. You can see both Hollywood and downtown from a peaceful, secluded place.

BELOW The master bedroom has a sloping ceiling, a custom door designed by Ryan Brown and an antique Japanese bench.
OPPOSITE Leading upstairs is a floating staircase with a railing that matches its outdoor counterparts.





Ryan and Joshua Brown grew up north of Malibu. Their father was a builder and their mother worked in interior design. Southern California, its history and its architecture, are in their DNA. "We work a lot in Hancock Park, and in the historic areas of the Hollywood Hills," Ryan says. "It's fun for us to imagine what a house looked like when it was originally built, and try to restore it."

The house features classic post-and-beam construction with abundant glass, the hallmarks of the USC School of Architecture. In order to restore the house authentically, they consulted the "Building Biographer," Tim Gregory, the Pasadena-based architectural historian who can trace the complete history of a house, from its original blueprints to its most recent owners.

"Waldo Kirkpatrick is a good representative of what is known as the USC School of Architecture, not just because he taught there, but because of his interpretation of post-World War II architecture," says Gregory. "Their residential architecture, mostly post-and-beam, featured open floor plans, generous use of glass and built-ins, and the linking of the interior space with the exterior through the use of sliding glass doors and patios. His book, *The House of Your Dreams: How to Plan It and Get It*, captured a national audience."

The house in Los Feliz did not require as much renaissance as others the team has worked on. "It was clean inside," Brown recalls. "It had been well maintained, but a recent remodel had used horrible materials. It had to be gutted."



The roof was replaced, the exterior re-covered in hand-troweled, smooth finish stucco, concealing an all-adsorbed wood finish, which transformed the look of the house. "The wood siding didn't make any sense for the design," says Ryan.

"The pool is at the front of the house. It required a new privacy gate of aluminum and frosted glass. A concrete stairway bordered by a drought resistant garden of stones, succulents and olive trees leads to the front door."

The interior design started with new floors. They used pilong wood. "It's a walnut, very hard to come by. It's an amazingly warm wood, with lots of tonal variations. We used it throughout the house, except in the bathrooms," says Brown.

A wall was removed between the living room and the kitchen, and the void filled with a bar and casual seating area. The room is flooded with light from the Fleetwood doors which vanish when opened. "When the sliding doors are open, you have twenty foot wide spaces that are completely unencumbered. It's an amazing sensory experience," the designer

says. The furniture was kept sleek and simple, allowing the tactile qualities of the nubby cotton upholstery, polished woods, leather and stone to create both visual interest and a natural sense of warmth.

As with most older houses, the kitchen required extensive renovation to bring it into the twenty first century; an open plan, stainless steel appliances and a built in Miele espresso maker all combined to create an excellent cooking space.

Working with a combination of custom designed contemporary furniture and Modernist classics, Brown embraced Wilko Kirkpatrick's original design at every turn, designing indoor and outdoor stairway railings that matched the existing exterior terraces, and leaving windows uncovered to take advantage of the views.

"There's no room for error in contemporary design," he says. "Because there are so few elements involved, every one of those elements must be perfect. Architecturally, and from the construction end, everything must line up flawlessly." Just as professor Kirkpatrick would have taught. □

ABOVE An egg shaped tub in the master bath is called "Napoli" and was designed by Victoria Albert. RIGHT The swimming pool is located in the front of the property. Ryan Brown preserved the mature trees and added bamboo for privacy. The garden was designed around rocks and succulents in harmony with the Southern California climate.

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—Ryan Brown

