

LOS ANGELES

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## ■ BETWEEN THE LINES ■

WRITTEN BY HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN LINDEN

AFTER NEARLY A DECADE AND A HALF CONSTRUCTING SOME OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FINEST HOMES, MAURICIO OBERFELD FOUND HIMSELF FACING HIS TOUGHEST CLIENT YET: HIMSELF. "As meticulous and demanding as I am as a builder, I've discovered that I am much more so as a client," laughs Oberfeld, a principal of Bel Air-based Dugally Oberfeld.

<b>HOME BUILDER</b> Mauricio Oberfeld, Dugally Oberfeld, LLC
<b>ARCHITECTURE</b> Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA, Studio Pali Fekete/SPF:a
<b>INTERIOR DESIGN</b> Simon Hamui, Aevum/Grupo Hagan
<b>LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE</b> Andrea Cochran, FASLA, Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture
<b>BEDROOMS</b> 5   <b>BATHROOMS</b> 8   <b>SQUARE FEET</b> 9,000





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“Having to wear both hats made for some interesting experiences during construction,” he says. “In fact, this may have been one of the toughest projects I’ve ever done.”

Luckily he knew exactly where to turn for help, beginning with Mexico-based architects Alberto Kalach, a longtime friend, and his own father-in-law, Moises Becker. Specialists in contemporary urban design and site planning, Kalach and Becker deftly executed the latter and determined the optimal spot to place the sprawling modernist structure Oberfeld envisioned on a challenging hillside lot in West Hollywood. Its actual design, however, was wisely left to local architect Zoltan E. Pali, FAIA, of Studio Pali Fekete /SPF:a in Culver City.

**CAVE IN**

The hushed tones of the family room are defined by the soft gray sofa by Cassina and the Maxalto chair, found at Diva in Los Angeles. The painting on the left is an oil on canvas by Will Cotton; Alison Van Pelt’s *Nude* is to the right.

**TAKE OUT**

A trellis partially shades an outdoor dining area just beyond the living room. The marble table was designed by Simon Hamui; the chairs are of canvas and teak.





**GREAT DIVIDE**

To separate the living and dining areas, Hamui designed a rectilinear bar made of wood and pietra serena stone, with glass shelves and a lift for a television that can rotate toward either space. The sofas and chair are from Holly Hunt.





**OPEN BAR**

The aluminum-and-glass wine cellar was designed by Hamui and stands opposite the home theater.

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Pali appreciated his predecessors' work on the site, designing a slender, 24-foot-wide and 200-foot-long L-shaped residence to maintain as much outdoor space as possible. "The slenderness achieves natural light in all parts of the house," say Pali. "There are no deep spaces, and light floods in from all sides, which gives the home quite a beautiful feeling."

The main level—which includes the kitchen and living and dining areas—is fronted by glass walls, as is the second level housing the bedrooms and bathrooms. White Swisspearl panels, a cement composite product, clad the structure. Pali used the same material to construct the distinctive narrow louvers arranged on the upper level that deflect sun



**BOXED MEAL**

Hamui chose gray-stained rift oak for the Del Tongo kitchen cabinets, which were found at Matibu Home Boutique. The Caesarstone countertops are from Stone Connection in Van Nuys, and the appliances are from Ferguson. The hanging globe is by Moooi.





**STYLE SELECTION**

Designed by Jeremy Pyles for Niche Modern, this trendy pendant infuses two complementary colors in its modern, rounded-square form. *Encalmo-Stamen Modern Pendant Light*, \$1,295; [nichemodern.com](http://nichemodern.com)

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and contribute a measure of privacy. Ranging in depth from 5 to 12 inches and spaced between 5 and 16 inches apart, they bring a dramatic vibrancy to the façade. “The louvers create what I call an ethereal texture on the building,” says Pali. “Light bounces off and into the interior spaces.”

Throughout, the design was informed by the notion that the exterior walls would remain sacred. “Thus, the interior walls never actually ‘touch’ or ‘engage’ the exterior walls,” says Pali. “So, in essence, they float in plan, and the view lanes created connect one space to the other.” It’s just one aspect of the project the architect contributes to his collaboration with the client. “Mauricio is a talented builder. He knew how to do these things in his head but had never realized them in physical terms. Doing so pushed both our intellectual abilities.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL ABRAHAM

**CONVERTIBLE TOP**

The built-in shelf and dining room table were designed by Hamui and crafted of wenge wood; the table features a narrow, removable acrylic vessel that runs across the top. The chairs are from B&B Italia, and the colored blown-glass pendant lights are by Niche Modern. Ed Ruscha’s *So* hangs on the wall.





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For the interiors, Mexico City-based designer Simon Hamui, of Aevum/Grupo Hagan, sought “a pure, clean and geometric language that would coincide with the contemporary architecture, yet maintain a warm and earthy feeling throughout.” Hamui selected the interior furnishings and also contracted the woodwork, fireplace, lighting and built-in elements. Natural wax-finished woods, such as dark baked ash on the floors of the living and dining areas, and the natural basalt limestone found in the entry, speak to the organic aesthetic.

Outside, the landscape’s subtle design—the work of Andrea Cochran, FASLA, of Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture in San Francisco—quietly highlights the architecture. “I tried to create a seamless transition,

**SUPER SOAKER**

The large, freestanding ovoid tub by Hastings declares the master bath’s luxurious nature. The stainless steel bath filler is from Boffi; slabs of Jerusalem Gold found at Stone Connections cover the heated floor.



**REFLECTIVE MOMENT**

“My greatest concern was building something that was warm and inviting,” says Oberfeld. “I have a family, and it was imperative that this house feel like a home—comfortable and cozy, yet architecturally whole.”



**STYLE SELECTION**

Swedish designer Staffan Hultgren created this chaise, part of Gloster's Riviera collection, which supports two Textilene vinyl slings on its teak-and-stainless-steel frame. *Lounger, price available upon request; gloster.com*



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a clean and amenable program that reflects what was done with the home's interiors and doesn't compete with its architectural vocabulary," says Cochran. "The lawn tones everything down so it's not so bright."

Looking at the completed project, Oberfeld is happy to report that the client is indeed satisfied. "I didn't want a house that reflected the modern movement of the '50s or even a contemporary. I wanted a technologically forward house of today that wouldn't try to be anything it's not," he says. "That's a house that I'm confident will remain timeless." **L**



**ROW HOUSE**  
Silver travertine patios create a sense of open space around the house. "As I imagined wrapping the structure in Swisspearl, the louvers came to mind," says architect Zoltan E. Pali. "I envisioned making fins of the material, almost like an assemblage, and placing them at 90 degrees to the building."



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