

THE GREAT ESCAPE

ARCHITECTURE: MCCLEAN DESIGN

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Surprisingly, given the allure of living in the Hollywood Hills, the reality is that the lots are small, the houses cheek by jowl. This was the hurdle architect Paul McClean needed to clear in his quest to devise a 4,000-square-foot home for a client and his family that felt like a private sanctuary. A visit to the property revealed the answer in a stunning view of the city. "But it was thirty feet up," McClean says with a laugh. To capture it, he would need to elevate the home. His design evolved from that idea. "It's a very simple, almost cruciform, plan using pale materials—travertine, stone and oak—with rooms in each corner and a central living space with large glass sliders that open it to the exterior," McClean says. "Our office spends a lot of time on what we call spatial editing, figuring out how to hide a road, the neighbors' houses or a utility pole, to create a feeling of serenity." Here, the answer was to set the house back against the hillside, unfurl the lawn toward the street and border it with a slender pool. "It makes a lovely backdrop at night, with the lights reflected in the water, but at the same time it keeps you from going to the edge and looking down," McClean says. Spare yet comfortable furnishings in straightforward shapes keep the focus on the view and underline the home's tranquility.

With the main living area raised to take advantage of the scenery, McClean grabbed the opportunity to create additional rooms underneath its concrete platform that speak to the client's other wishes. Paramount was a desire for a wellness area grounded by a lap pool. "He wanted an incredibly quiet, uninterrupted area," McClean says. Slatted wood walls nod to those found in Japanese *onsen*; that sense of introspection and peace also threads through the gym, media room and guest bedroom that comprise the rest of this lower level. "

Of course, then we had to consider the entryway and how you got up to the main level," McClean says. Instead of a standard garage with a driveway, McClean conceived of an elegant circular motor court. "We used the corner of the lot to carve in the tall retaining wall, curving it around to border a wide limestone staircase that leads to the front door," he says. Paired with a simple gate, flanked by high hedges, it screens the home from casual passersby. "We managed to create an oasis in a place where it didn't seem possible." ■ [McClean Design, mcleandesign.com](http://McCleanDesign.com)



