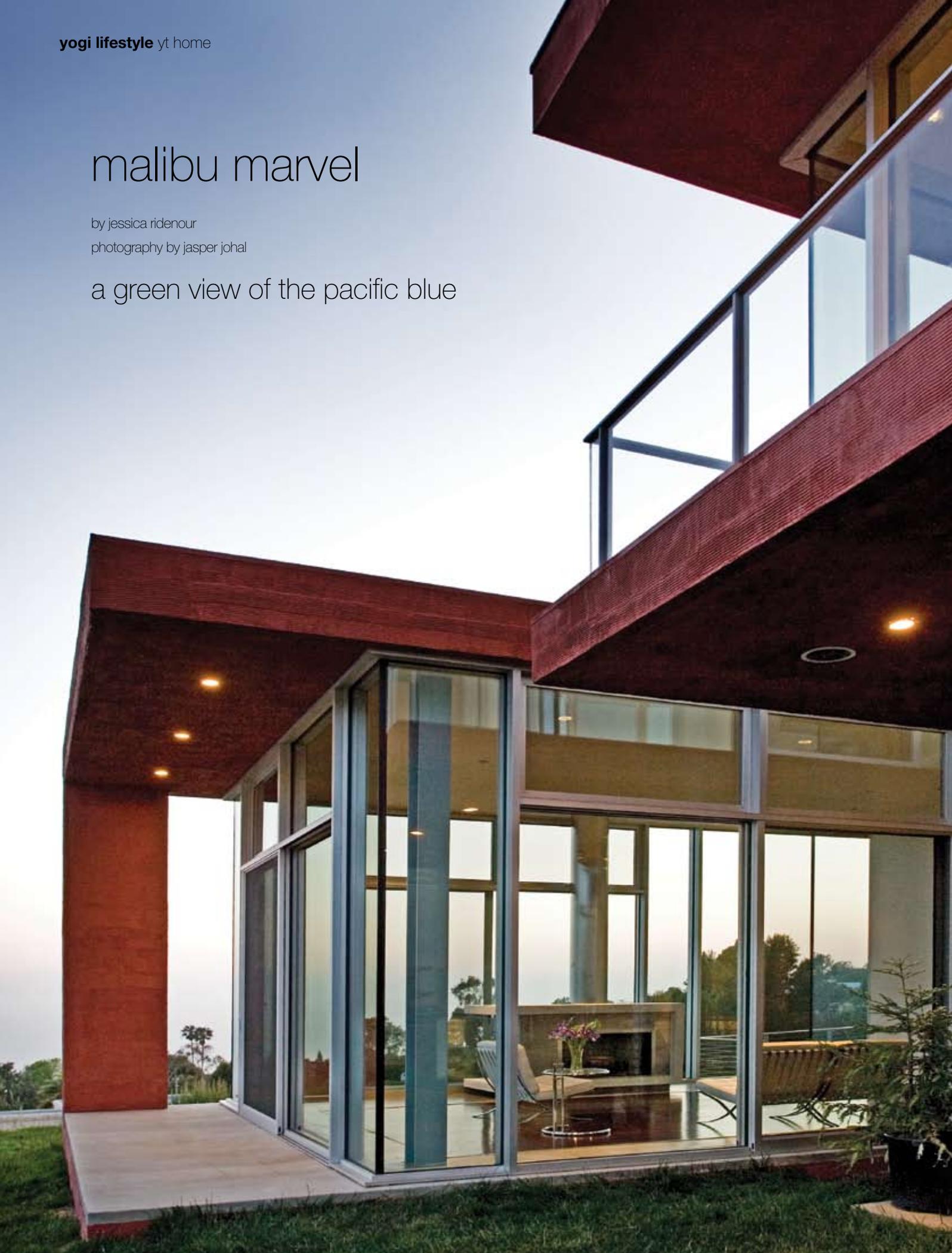


malibu marvel

by jessica ridenour

photography by jasper johal

a green view of the pacific blue





If you close your eyes and try to imagine the epitome of a Malibu dream home, it might look something like Georgia Goldfarb's and Walter Zelman's chic seaside abode. The hilltop habitat, which is only accessible from bougainvillea-emblazoned switchbacks that wind gracefully up the coastal mountainside, is far from the hustle bustle of the Pacific Coast Highway, while still keeping a watchful bird's-eye view from above. Not that anyone would be interested in what's going on in lower-level homes though, because the most breathtaking view is straight ahead, where blue sky meets even bluer water (on this particular day, at least) and Point Dume, Catalina Island and the Palos Verdes Peninsula loom peacefully on the distant horizon.

But this home is more than just a pretty façade. Seven long years went into the planning and building of this ultra-modern, energy efficient residence high in the hills of one of Southern California's most fabled locales. Georgia and Walter just moved in last autumn, and there's still much more they want to add to their home. "We're still a work in progress," Walter says.

Georgia, who grew up in the country near Ojai, had long dreamed of having an environmentally sustainable home. She was inspired by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*—a cautionary tale of the effects of pesticides on the environment. "I believe the earth is not going to sustain itself with this overuse and sort of abuse, really, of the planet," she says. To that end, the 3,000-square-foot Goldfarb-Zelman residence features a host of eco-conscious highlights, including solar thermal hot water heating, radiant floor heating and a 3-kilowatt photovoltaic solar system connected to Southern California Edison's power grid with a net metering agreement.

The vertically stacked house, designed by architect Stephen Kanner (known best for his "pop" aesthetic), was built on an existing concrete slab that remained from the devastating 1993 Malibu fire that destroyed over 250 homes. Today, that recycled slab lies exposed in most of the home, which along with the 12-foot high ceilings and white walls, lends a clean, minimalist look. It's not only attractive in that Zen, modernist kind of way, but the slab also acts as a heat sink during the day, drawing in the warmth of the sun's energy and releasing it at night. In the living room, the slab is partially covered by a dark Brazilian wood inset in the center of the floor that was originally intended to serve as a dance floor. Guests are kindly requested to take off their shoes at the front door to keep things tidy; a handy little chair built into the "shoe cabinet" in the front entryway makes footwear removal a breeze.

The entire house has an airy expansiveness to it, largely because of its ubiquitous floor-to-ceiling, low-emittance, energy efficient windows, revealing a 180-degree (or more) view of the ocean from almost every room. The windows open to welcome the





In keeping with Walter and Georgia's love of parties and entertaining, the open, airy living room boasts an in-laid wood dance floor and panoramic ocean views.

A skylight infuses the bedroom with sunlight during the day, and delivers a starry show at night.





The minimalist dining room is simple and warm, offering both ocean and canyon views.



ocean breeze, which on this day is cool and inviting. According to Georgia, the windows filter sunlight, but “not enough.” The house gets darn hot in the summer, which is why they’re in the process of installing roll down shades and awnings over the windows to combat summer’s intense sun and the inevitable Santa Ana winds that parch SoCal as they blow in from the east. (As Walter said, the house is still a work in progress.)

Georgia says that having so many windows puts them more in touch with nature, including blazing sun, forceful winds and everything in between. The master bedroom’s exposed skylight—which will soon get its own shade—acts as a morning wake-up call. “I can always tell when it’s getting to be dawn because there’s so much light in here,” Georgia says. “And you can see the stars at night. It really feels like you’re sleeping outside. Because there’s so much light in here, when it begins to be dusk we don’t put the lights on. So you can *feel* the day ending.”

Maintaining that connection to nature was a driving force in the design of the house, and the architect obliged by creating horizontal planes that constantly pull the eye outward to the views the lie beyond the glass walls. Georgia wanted to have a country home, but their professions—she’s a pediatrician and Walter is a scholar at USC’s School of Policy, Planning and Development—kept them tethered to the city. Instead, they built their sustainable refuge on the city’s edge, with plenty of green expansiveness to cure their country cravings.

Surrounding their home is a grassy defensible zone jutting horizontally out into the infinite blue yonder, which will hopefully offer protection from potential fire. They’re letting the grass grow longer so it can reseed and doesn’t need as much moisture. Georgia likes the irregularity of it. The outside of the dwelling itself is painted a warm red, a shade that Walter refers to as “Georgia red” because of the endless amounts of mixing Georgia did to create the perfect color.

They also plan to plant fruit trees in their yard for an added measure of sustainability. Georgia was inspired by a trip to Czechoslovakia, where nearly every home she saw had a garden and fruit trees. “I’m trying to do what I can,” she says, “and I really feel that if people did more of that, they’d feel much more connected to the earth and appreciate the life cycles of other entities.”

The Goldfarb-Zelman home allows its inhabitants to live in full appreciation of nature and its cycles, offering living proof that green can be gorgeous.

“I wanted to build an eco house and we got a beautiful house that’s also an eco house,” says Georgia, who’s also a yoga enthusiast. “I wanted to reach out to more people to show them that you can have eco houses and they can still be attractive. And just you can think of yourself as a regular person.”

Greener Home, Inside and Out

These days it’s getting easier to eat green, wear green and even drive green, but what about live green? LOHAS-leaning home and construction supply companies are springing up all over. Here are a few for your earth-conscious home improvement needs.

Eco-furniture Pioneer Breaks New Ground

Thomas Bina & Environment Furniture Inc., one of the leading designers of eco-chic furniture, is proud to announce a new store opening in South Coast Plaza. Not only will the retail space be filled with Bina’s stunning reclaimed Brazilian peroba wood furniture, tables and accent pieces, the entire retail space is constructed with sustainable materials, paints and finishes.
South Coast Plaza
3333 Bear St.
Costa Mesa, CA
environment-furniture.com

Environmental Home Center

Operating out of Seattle for over a decade, the good folks at Environmental Home Center are best known for their sustainable building materials, natural carpets and people-friendly cleaning sup-

plies, as well as their energy-efficient installation and conscious business practices.
environmentalhomecenter.com

Building for Health Materials Center

Covering a wide array of products, from planet-friendly paints, stains and finishes, to sustainable furniture, energy-efficient home appliances and solar panels, the Building for Health Materials Center can provide you with all your home’s needs, from finished basement to green roof.
buildingforhealth.com

Plan-It Hardware

Plan-It Hardware is more than just a clever name, it’s a one-stop shop for the do-it-yourself-er with a heart. From nontoxic glues and paints, green plumbing and lawn and garden needs, to high-efficiency appliances and solar panel kits, if you’re looking to green-up your place, do it the earth first way—Plan-It.
planithardware.com

Living Green Store & Gallery

This gallery is filled with environmentally sound ideas and artistic solutions. Whether it be design ideas or materials, Living Green offers the best alternatives to standard materials for creating healthier homes and work spaces, with all-natural, nontoxic, refurbished and recycled products.
1000 Culver Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA
310.838.8442, livinggreen.com

Cisco Home

Experience greatness with hand-crafted furniture design that benefits both human health and the health of the planet. Nontoxic materials such as water-based glues, natural latex foam and hemp ensure a positive philosophy toward the environment, as well as your lifestyle with furniture made to measure.
440 N. La Brea Ave.
Los Angeles, CA
323.932.1155, ciscohome.net

KJM Real Estate’s Green Building Resource Center

KJM Real Estate, one of the country’s first green real estate brokerages, launched a Green Building Resource Center that was developed in coordination with Global Green USA. Located in KJM’s Beverly Hills office, this supply store contains environmentally friendly products and services for home construction and renovation projects.
8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 99
Beverly Hills, CA
310.432.7200, KJMrealestate.com

Accent on Sustainability

From salvaged wood furniture, organic bedding and hand-loomed rungs, to cooper sinks and eco-friendly floor and wall covering, Earth Accents offers sustainable home interior design choices for the socially conscience.
2665 Main St.
Santa Monica, CA 90405
866.223.9990, earth-accents.com