



The Long View

▶ A chance meeting and an intuitive gamble brought one couple the beachside house of their dreams

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THAT RAREST of things, a vacant lot along Ocean Front Walk, had come up for sale near where Samy and Hedy Kamienowicz were living in Venice. They bought the property in 2007, then sat back and wondered how to find an architect who understood the

challenges of building along the beach. Hedy was in the Mid Wilshire flagship of her husband's Samy's Camera stores when one of the managers strolled over and announced that there was a guy renting equipment who said he was an architect. Samy and Hedy liked Dan Brunn from the moment they met him. The young USC and Harvard graduate had never designed a coastal home, but the couple sensed he was smart, and they trusted him. "It was—how do you call it?—happstance," says Samy.

For his part Brunn had acquired highly coveted clients, ones who made few requests and had complete faith in their



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TUNNEL VISION

1. Hedy asked for a window onto the ocean in the master bathroom shower.
2. The couple's bedroom was placed on the top floor to afford them the most privacy.
3. Fifteen-foot-long cantilevered overhangs on each story protect the house from the sun while framing the outdoors in a way that adds volume to the relatively low-ceilinged indoor spaces.



architect, though Sammy admits to being initially surprised by the amount of steel in the three-story structure, which was completed last year. It was Brunn's answer to the toll that ocean air takes on wood. He also employed technology that reduces frames for sliding glass from a couple of inches to a mere half inch—practically invisible. The glass glides along tiny roller bearings, a Swiss invention being used for the first time in California. One of the goals, after all, was to craft a house as open to the water and sky as possible.

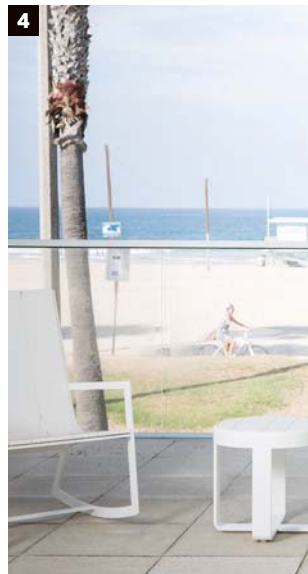
Decades ago the Kamienowicz had raised their two daughters in a traditional Valley home, so the move into a clutter-free environment, with its forever sight lines and fresh air, has been a dramatic turnaround. Early on the project was dubbed the “Flip Flop House,” partly because of a unique feature: large solid panels on the third floor that swing open onto the beach. The idea was that any art mounted on that wall could then be shared with passersby. The couple are still pondering what to put there. “Graffiti?” jokes Sammy.

The pair also revel in the fact that from just about any point in the house they can see their grandson Jack surfing at the Venice jetty, one of his favorite spots. And there's no matching the sunsets. “You sit there sipping a little sake or tequila, and it doesn't get any better,” says Sammy. His one regret: He wouldn't mind more wall space for his considerable photo collection. ■

WATER WORKS

- 1. A reflecting pool helps cool the house and creates scenery along the ground-floor wall that shields the owners from bike path traffic.
- 2. The second-story living room flows into the kitchen and the dining room. In one corner Sammy displays pieces from his camera collection, including an antique Deardorf, an Olympus that was the first single-lens

- reflex camera, and the first “electric-eye” Kodak.
- 3. A tub in the master bathroom looks out at an atrium that's flanked on one side by the wall of rotating panels.
- 4. Sammy and Hedy on the living room terrace, decorated with a statue by L.A. artist Larry Bell, who has become a friend of Sammy's through his interest in photography.



**GOING
TO
THE
SOURCE**



**CLEAN
SLATE**

> That he was starting essentially from scratch helped Dan Brunn, who was 29 when he began work on the “Flip Flop House” eight years ago, to integrate technology that would have been next to impossible in a remodel. For one, the Israeli-born architect grouped the appliances in the kitchen and laundry room along one wall, hiding the wiring behind opaque glass from the Italian design firm Valcucine. The paneling, paired with the company’s glass-fronted cabinets, enabled Brunn to subtly extend the ocean horizon—reflected off the surface—through the rooms. A temperature-controlled rooftop vent, meanwhile, sucks ocean air into the house when it becomes too warm, allowing the owners to forgo air-conditioning. As the house took shape, the neighbors apparently liked what they saw. Brunn is now working on four other projects along the boardwalk.

